

Inspection of an outstanding school: Rainow Primary School

Round Meadow, Rainow, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK10 5UB

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 June 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy to attend this caring and welcoming school. They value the strong bond that they have with their friends and the trust that staff afford to them. Pupils ensure that this trust is repaid by living up to leaders' high expectations of them.

Pupils feel like they are part of a big family when they come to school. The strong pastoral care that leaders provide helps pupils to feel safe. Pupils know that staff will listen to their worries. Leaders deal with any incidents of bullying quickly and effectively.

Pupils spoke proudly of their many achievements, both in and out of the classroom. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well in their learning. They grow into confident members of their local community.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are polite and kind to each other. They learn to be respectful of others' differences.

Pupils relish all the opportunities that leaders provide. They benefit immensely from the geographical setting of the school and the rich outdoor experiences that this brings. From Year 2, leaders provide regular residential experiences which encourage pupils to build qualities such as resilience and a sense of adventure.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have made many improvements to the curriculum since the COVID-19 pandemic. These changes reflect leaders' high level of ambition for all pupils to learn a broad and purposeful curriculum. Some of the changes that leaders have made, such as those in reading and mathematics, have rapidly become embedded. Pupils are learning increasingly well in these subjects.

Across all subjects, there has been a sharp focus by leaders on identifying the key knowledge that pupils should learn and when this should be taught. This begins right from the early years. The curriculum in the Reception Year prepares children very well for their key stage 1 learning.

In a few subjects, leaders' improvements began more recently. They have not had enough time to become embedded. In the main, teachers use their strong subject knowledge to present learning clearly. They typically use effective strategies to ensure that pupils remember what they have learned. At times, however, these checks on learning are too heavily based on what teachers decide to emphasise. This means that, over time, the knowledge that pupils retain does not reflect the entirety of what leaders intend them to learn. Therefore, pupils occasionally develop gaps in their understanding without teachers realising.

Leaders have given reading a central place in the curriculum. For example, they have successfully introduced a new phonics programme. From the beginning of the Reception Year, children learn sounds and letters in a logical order. They read books that help them to practise the sounds that they have learned. Older pupils in key stage 2 continue to enjoy reading. They read for pleasure often. Leaders have ensured that pupils continue to develop their reading skills throughout their time at school.

Leaders are skilled in how to identify the needs of pupils with SEND. They do this accurately and quickly. Leaders provide staff with detailed information about how to support these pupils well. Most pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. Where needed, leaders have put well-considered individual learning plans in place. Staff deliver these effectively.

Pupils behave impeccably. From arrival in the Reception class, children form strong relationships with staff. These continue throughout the school. Pupils develop a strong understanding of teachers' expectations. This leads to a calm and mutually respectful atmosphere in the school. Staff trust pupils to behave sensibly, and they do. This means that learning is rarely disrupted.

Older pupils relish their responsibilities as prefects, reading buddies and planet protectors. They make a tangible contribution to the wider life of the school. Playground leaders organise play for their younger peers at breaktimes. They understand the importance of ensuring that everyone is welcome and included.

Support for pupils' personal development is exceptional. Leaders have woven together a broad, rich set of experiences into their 'pupil promise'. This is successfully incorporated into the curriculum so that the maximum number of pupils can benefit. No one is left out. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about how performing on stage builds their confidence and how they push themselves beyond their comfort zone in their outdoor learning.

Leaders and governors share a detailed and honest understanding of the school's strengths and priorities. They work closely with staff to ensure that the quality of education continues to improve. Staff recognise that workload in a small school can

sometimes be challenging. However, they are unanimous in their appreciation of the support that leaders provide.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know pupils and their families exceptionally well. Leaders have ensured that staff understand any risks and potential dangers that pupils may face. Staff keep this training at the forefront of their minds, even when concerns are infrequent. There is no complacency.

Leaders follow up any concerns diligently. They work with external agencies to ensure that pupils receive the help that they need. This includes highly effective support for pupils' emotional health and well-being.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. They are taught to understand danger and risk and to know what to do to get help if they need it.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some of the improvements that subject leaders have made to the curriculum are at an early stage of development. In a few subjects, this has led to inconsistencies in teachers' understanding of the essential knowledge that pupils need to retain. This hinders teachers in assessing how well pupils have secured that knowledge in their long-term memory. Leaders should ensure that teachers have a firm and shared understanding of the essential knowledge that should be taught and what it means for their practice.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in December 2015.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	111203
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10199486
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Paula Riordan
Headteacher	Jonathan Norris
Website	www.rainowpri.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 December 2015, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector completed deep dives in these subjects: early reading, history and mathematics. He met with subject leaders, visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work and spoke with teachers and pupils. The inspector listened to pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector also spoke to leaders and pupils about the curriculum in several other subjects.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation. He spoke to the headteacher and senior leaders throughout the inspection. He also met with the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator.

- The inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also spoke with a representative of the local authority by telephone.
- The inspector held meetings with the staff responsible for safeguarding and scrutinised the single central record. The inspector considered leaders' safeguarding processes and procedures. He observed pupils during social times and discussed safeguarding with them.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. He also took into account the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Ben Hill, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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