

Inspection of Ravensden C of E Primary Academy

Vicarage Close, Ravensden, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK44 2RW

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 July 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Everyone has the opportunity for their 'light to shine' at this small school. Pupils are part of an inclusive community. They grow in confidence because of the kind relationships that exist across the school.

Pupils know the school values well. These help them to make wise choices in their behaviour and learning. They use the values to guide their interactions with others. Pupils know that their teachers expect their best efforts, and they respond with enthusiasm. Right from the start in early years, pupils learn to work and play together.

Pupils behave well around the school. At breaktimes, pupils of all ages play happily in the spacious grounds. Older play leaders organise games so that everyone is included. Bullying is rare. Pupils are confident to share any worries with adults who they trust to help them. Any incidences of unkind behaviour are swiftly resolved.

Pupils enjoy memorable moments from a wide range of trips that enrich the curriculum. They can take part in sporting clubs at lunchtime and after school. Clubs before and after school have a 'family feel'.

Pupils and their families appreciate all that the school offers, typically commenting, 'Ravensden is a wonderful, caring school that puts the children first.'

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

Leaders have developed a rich, broad curriculum. In most subjects, and in the early years, this is in place well. Teachers regularly recap what pupils have previously learned. They make links with what pupils already know when introducing new ideas. This helps pupils to tackle tricky concepts with confidence. Pupils have plenty of practice with new learning so they can become fluent and confident. During lessons, teachers check that everyone understands what has been taught before moving on. They are quick to spot when an extra explanation or challenge will help pupils. In most subjects, pupils remember their learning well and are ready for their next steps.

In a few subjects, leaders' curriculum plans are still evolving. Leaders are less clear about what pupils need to understand and remember at each point. Teachers do check how well pupils are faring in lessons, but opportunities to revisit and consolidate new ideas are less well developed. As a result, pupils achieve less well in these subjects.

Leaders have prioritised the effective teaching of early reading skills. Staff are well trained to teach the phonics curriculum, which is clearly set out. Teachers make regular checks to ensure that pupils get precise teaching that matches their needs. Pupils have plenty of reading practice through books that are pitched at the right level. This helps them to apply their phonic knowledge confidently. Pupils who need

extra help with reading get this promptly. Most pupils quickly learn to read. Pupils of all ages enjoy the books their teachers read with them. Older pupils read a wide range of high-quality texts with enthusiasm and understanding.

Leaders include pupils with a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in learning. Staff receive extra training and advice from external professionals to help them to work effectively with pupils with SEND. Adults know pupils and their additional needs well. Staff use a range of strategies and provide support to help pupils to access learning alongside their peers. Systems to evaluate the effectiveness of this extra help are not yet well established.

Pupils know the school rules and behave well. 'Shine' ambassadors look out for pupils demonstrating the school values throughout the day, and these moments are celebrated in regular assemblies. Pupils are courteous during lessons. They take turns when working together and are respectful to their teachers. Lessons proceed smoothly, without distraction.

Leaders help pupils to develop as responsible citizens. Equality is a core school value. From the early years, pupils develop tolerant attitudes to others. Pupils organise bake sales to raise funds for charity and share their harvest donations with a local foodbank. Pupils, including pupils with SEND, take on leadership positions, such as being members of the school council.

Since joining the multi-academy trust, leaders at every level have worked together to make improvements and to secure accountability. Staff benefit from working with other schools in the trust. Leaders take their responsibilities for staff well-being seriously. While staff appreciate this care, there are times, in such a small school, when workloads are high. Leaders are currently constrained in their ability to evaluate the effectiveness of all aspects of provision due to the breadth of their roles.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Everybody takes safeguarding seriously. Well-trained staff record any concerns promptly. Leaders work effectively with families and external services to help to keep pupils safe. Leaders carry out and record appropriate checks on adults before they start working at the school. Leaders check regularly that agreed safeguarding processes are firmly in place and are effective.

Pupils understand and use the systems across the school, such as worry boxes or calm corners, to let trusted adults know when they need any help. Pupils learn about online safety and healthy relationships through the curriculum.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the curriculum is evolving, and the most important learning and vocabulary at each point are less clearly defined. In these subjects, assessment systems are less well developed. Some pupils develop gaps and misconceptions over time. Leaders should refine planning for these subjects so the key learning is clear. They should ensure teachers have the expertise to implement these plans effectively.
- The current leadership structure does not enable all leaders to fulfil their roles effectively. Some leaders have limited opportunities to accurately evaluate what is happening and ensure it is making a difference. Leaders, including the trust, need to clarify leadership roles and responsibilities and ensure that all leaders can carry out their roles highly effectively.

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	148334
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10288585
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	85
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jenny Jenkins
Headteacher	Anna Spyropoulos
Website	www.ravensdenprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Ravensden Church of England Primary Academy converted to become an academy school in January 2021. When its predecessor school, Ravensden Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- The school is part of the Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust.
- This is a smaller-than-average primary school, including pre-school provision for two-year-olds.
- Leaders provide before- and after-school care for pupils attending the school on the same site.
- Leaders do not use any off-site providers of alternative education.
- As the school is designated as having a religious character, it is inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The last section 48 inspection of the school took place in February 2016. The school will receive its next inspection within eight years of this date.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with school leaders, including representatives of the trust and governing body, including the chair of trustees and the chair of governors. They also met with subject leaders and the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors spoke with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead and other staff to discuss safeguarding in the school.
- The inspectors considered the 38 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 26 free-text comments. No responses were received from the Ofsted surveys for pupils or staff.
- The inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences of school life and their learning in lessons to understand what it is like to be a pupil at this school. Inspectors also observed the behaviour of pupils at breaktimes and around the school.

Inspection team

Lynne Williams, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Rod Warsap

Ofsted Inspector

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