

Inspection of a good school: Runwell Community Primary School

Canewdon Gardens, Runwell, Wickford, Essex SS11 7BJ

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 July 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good 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. The inspector is recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

At Runwell Community Primary School, most pupils are welcoming and helpful. Pupils learn the school's 'high five' values of kindness, bravery, hard work, respect and honesty. Most pupils use these values daily in how they act and learn in the classroom, which means they feel happy and safe in school.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils. Pupils often behave well and concentrate when learning. Most pupils enjoy their lessons and talk knowledgeably about their studies. Some pupils, though, do not behave as well as they should. Staff's attempts to address this negative behaviour are not as successful as they need to be, meaning that bullying and poor behaviour reoccur. A small number of pupils and parents have, therefore, lost confidence in staff.

Pupils have a wide range of exciting opportunities available to them. They enjoy a range of lunchtime and after-school clubs, including a choir, an art club and various sports clubs. Pupils recently dressed up in traditional clothes to celebrate different cultures within the school and community as part of a Heritage Day. These sorts of experiences enable pupils to understand the diverse world that we live in.

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

Leaders have designed and put in place a well-planned curriculum in all subjects. They have identified the most important knowledge that they want pupils to learn. The curriculum builds on what pupils have learned previously. This helps pupils to see the links between different subjects.

Teachers' good subject knowledge helps them create high-quality learning experiences in the classroom. They regularly revisit what they have taught before. This helps pupils to

remember important knowledge. There is a sharp focus on teaching vocabulary. Pupils know and can use key words with confidence. For instance, pupils in Year 1 can use key words to make comparisons between their school life and schools in Victorian times. Teachers assess pupils' knowledge and understanding to ensure that pupils are progressing well.

Leaders have prioritised reading across the curriculum. Learning to read starts when children begin in Nursery Year. All staff have received high-quality training in the phonics scheme. This enables staff to implement the scheme with consistency and precision. Staff support weaker readers well to catch up with their reading. Books are well matched to pupils' reading knowledge. Pupils take books home regularly, so they can read with their parents. As pupils get older, they continue to develop their love of reading. They learn a range of skills to develop their understanding of what they are reading. As a result, they become more confident readers who read well.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff have highly effective training to be able to adapt the curriculum to meet individual needs. This enables pupils with SEND to remember more of the curriculum and to progress well. Some parents do not feel that their children receive the right support in lessons. This is because they do not recognise the impact of the work that the school does with their children.

Leaders have a new, clear behaviour policy in place, yet it is not followed consistently by staff. The sanctions for poor behaviour are sometimes not given and are not always effective. Therefore, the new policy does not always have the intended positive impact. This means that there are some unacceptable behaviours and bullying that take place around the school.

Leaders prioritise pupils' well-being. There is a visiting therapy dog, a school counsellor and coaching available for pupils. Pupils access a wide and appropriate personal development programme. This brings together a taught scheme, assemblies, the high five values, emotional well-being and world events. Through all of these approaches, pupils learn to celebrate what makes them and others unique.

Leaders are committed to achieving the school's vision and improving outcomes for pupils. They are considerate of staff's well-being and workload. Governors support and challenge leaders appropriately.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders' processes for safeguarding pupils are clear. Leaders ensure that all staff receive appropriate safeguarding training. Staff know that they need to report concerns straightaway. Leaders respond to concerns and ensure that effective support is put in place for vulnerable pupils and families.

Leaders work alongside a range of external organisations to ensure that pupils receive the specialist teaching they need. This includes teaching pupils to stay safe online, on the roads and when using their bicycles. Pupils can describe in detail how they do this.

Leaders ensure that all pre-employment checks are thorough and accurate, and governors are robust in holding leaders to account for these.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' behaviour policy is not consistently applied by staff. This means that some pupils continue to misbehave too often. Leaders should ensure that behaviour systems and processes are used well by all staff to ensure pupils behave consistently well.
- Some parents do not understand how the provision is delivered for their children with SEND. This has meant that some parents have a more negative view of SEND provision than they should. Leaders should ensure that there is clarity given to parents about the processes and practice that they use so that parents understand the school's provision for pupils with SEND.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2014.

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	137054
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10288498
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	415
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Dawn Hutson
Headteacher	Rachel Anthony
Website	www.runwellprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The headteacher started at the school in November 2021.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection 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 their evaluation of the school.
- Deep dives were carried out in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work. The inspector listened to pupils from Reception, Year 1 and Year 3 read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other senior leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator. A meeting was held with members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.

- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector scrutinised the single central record of pre-appointment checks and reviewed safeguarding documents and systems. The inspector spoke to leaders, support staff, members of the governing body and pupils to evaluate the culture of safeguarding in the school.
- The inspector considered the 121 responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including 96 free-text comments. The inspector also spoke to parents at the school gate, and looked at correspondence sent directly to the inspector. The inspector considered 34 responses to the staff survey. A range of staff were spoken to during the inspection. The 118 responses to Ofsted's survey of pupils' views were also considered, and pupils were spoken to throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Katie Devenport, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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