

# Inspection of a good school: Rocks Park Primary School

Lashbrooks Road, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 2AY

---

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 September 2023

## **Outcome**

Rocks Park Primary School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils feel welcome and happy at this school. They enjoy relaxing and socialising in the woodland playground and having swimming lessons in the school pool. As one pupil put it: 'Everyone is so kind and comforting; this school feels like my second home.' The school teaches pupils to be kind and to care for each other. Older pupils take great pride in their roles as buddies for younger children. Pupils behave calmly in and around school. They respect the teachers and show great maturity in lessons as they concentrate on their learning.

Pupils know the school's values of care, resilience, positivity, independence and aspiration well. They strive to uphold these values in their friendships and in their work. Teachers award coveted 'golden badges' to recognise when pupils demonstrate the values, as well as for pupils' wider achievements. The whole-school community looks forward to golden badges being awarded in assemblies each week, where pupils take pleasure in celebrating one another's success.

The school has high expectations for all its pupils. Children in Reception are taught how to be independent and inquisitive learners. As pupils get older, they develop strong knowledge and understanding across a broad range of subjects well.

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

The school is determined that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), will learn the same ambitious curriculum from Reception to Year 6. The school has set out coherently what pupils must understand and remember by the end of each stage of their education. In some subjects, such as mathematics, art and science, the curriculum is well developed. Other areas such as geography, music and religious education are being further refined to highlight the most important knowledge so that pupils can make stronger connections between previously learned and new concepts.

In Reception, the curriculum lays strong foundations for children's future learning. Adults skilfully foster in children a curiosity about the world as, for example, the children fill up containers, weigh pans full of sand and mix earth and water in the mud kitchen. By the end of the Reception Year, children are well prepared for learning the curriculum in Year one.

Assessment is used more effectively in some subjects than others. In mathematics and art, teachers systematically revisit past learning to make sure pupils remember key knowledge before moving on to new ideas. In these subjects, learning is firmly embedded in pupils' long-term memory. However, this practice is not yet consistent across the curriculum. During lessons, teachers use questioning to check that pupils fully understand, but they do not always address misconceptions as they arise.

Where the curriculum is most established, teachers have secure subject knowledge. Teachers work effectively together to break the curriculum down into smaller steps. They adapt how knowledge is taught, so all pupils, including those with SEND, learn the same content. They present the curriculum in ways which help pupils build on what they have learned before. For example, pupils develop their understanding of number using knowledge of place value to round increasingly complex numbers. In art, they use different drawing techniques to shade lighter and darker areas of portraits when learning how to sketch faces in proportion.

Overall, reading is taught well. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the school recognised a more consistent and systematic approach to the teaching of early reading was needed. A new phonics curriculum was introduced, which begins as soon as children start school in Reception. This has been successful, with most pupils learning to read quickly. However, some weaker readers do not get the precise support they need to attain as well as they should. There are many opportunities for pupils to read widely across the curriculum and for pleasure. Pupils relish taking part in book challenges and meeting authors. Writing for the school newsletter gives them a valuable insight into being authors themselves.

Pupils are taught to value difference. They learn about varying beliefs, cultures and relationships. The curriculum introduces pupils to great artists, scientists and historians from different backgrounds. Assemblies promote the school values, which help pupils learn about being a respectful British citizen. Pupils develop leadership skills through applying for roles in the 'safety squad', as 'playground buddies' and as part of the 'sports crew'. Pupils talk knowledgeably about how to stay healthy and safe, especially when using the internet. Right from learning about the colour monster in Reception, pupils learn to recognise and respect their own and others' feelings, emotions and preferences.

Governors are highly knowledgeable about the school and carry out their statutory duties effectively. They are passionate about supporting and challenging the school so that all pupils have the very best start in life.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, checks on what pupils understand and can remember are not securely in place. Consequently, some pupils do not attain as well as they could, because gaps in their learning are not identified quickly enough. The school should ensure that assessment is used consistently well across the curriculum to check on pupils' learning and address misconceptions and gaps in learning promptly.
- Support for weaker readers is not as precise as it could be. Consequently, these pupils do not catch up as quickly as they could. The school should ensure that all staff have the training, knowledge and confidence to provide weaker readers with precise support that enables them to quickly become fluent readers.

## 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 2018.

## 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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114471
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10287860
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	202
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Paul Ireland
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Longton-Howarth
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.rockspark.e-sussex.sch.uk">www.rockspark.e-sussex.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	20 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in September 2023.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- 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 this evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.

- Views of pupils and staff were gathered through Ofsted’s online surveys, interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- The inspector reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding through scrutinising safeguarding records and discussions with leaders, staff and pupils. The inspector considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils’ interests first.
- The inspector reviewed a range of the school’s documents, including self-evaluation reports, minutes of governing body meetings and behaviour incident logs.
- The inspector observed pupils’ behaviour during lessons and at playtimes. They spoke with pupils about bullying, behaviour, and leaders’ expectations of pupils’ behaviour.

### **Inspection team**

Jo Brinkley, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023