

Inspection of The Rissington School

Mitchell Way, Upper Rissington, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL54 2PL

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 November 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	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 12 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Rissington is a friendly and welcoming school where everybody gets along. Pupils are kind and respectful. They showcase the school's values of 'aspire, belong and challenge' in all they do. For example, older pupils include younger children in games at lunchtime to make sure that no one is left out.

The school expects the best of everyone. Pupils rise to these high expectations. They work hard in lessons and take pride in their work. Staff take quick and effective action when disruption to learning or bullying occurs. Pupils know that adults are always on hand to provide advice and improve things. This makes for a happy and safe school.

The curriculum highlights important issues, such as mental health and well-being. Pupils learn to use various strategies that help them manage any worries. This considered approach allows them to develop resilience and independence.

Pupils regularly share their skills and talents. In 'spotlight' assemblies or reading in front of the whole school, pupils delight in celebrating their own and each other's successes.

The great majority of parents and carers are complimentary about the school's work and would recommend it to others. Many commented on the positive atmosphere and strong sense of community.

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

The headteacher has instilled a culture in which everyone works together for the benefit of pupils. A strong spirit of teamwork exists here. Since the previous inspection, the school has opened a second site and has significantly increased the number of pupils on roll. Collectively, leaders, staff and governors have successfully managed the changes. They have ensured strong academic outcomes for pupils over time.

The school makes communication and reading a top priority. In early years, staff choose songs, rhymes and books to develop children's vocabulary and interest in the world around them. For example, in the pre-school, children use words such as 'sunny sizzle' and 'rainy drizzle' to describe the weather. Staff implement the phonics and reading programmes successfully. They draw on assessment information well to pinpoint pupils who need extra support. Teachers inspire a love of reading in pupils. They make book recommendations to expand pupils' reading interests. Pupils of all ages talk animatedly about the books they read. They leave Year 6 as confident and avid readers.

In many subjects, the mixed-age curriculum sets out the most important knowledge and concepts that pupils need to learn and build on over time. Staff skilfully link knowledge from one subject to another. For example, older pupils know and

understand more about art in the Shang Dynasty by exploring artefacts in history. However, the school recognises that its work is not complete in a few subjects. This means that pupils' learning is not as deep as it is in the rest of the curriculum.

The school has implemented a new and ambitious mathematics curriculum. It sets out what children and pupils need to learn from pre-school through to Year 6. Teachers revisit prior learning to secure pupils' knowledge. They encourage pupils to use vocabulary accurately. In early years, children apply their learning of shapes through carefully designed play activities. However, in some of the other curriculum subjects, learning activities are not challenging enough. When this occurs, it limits pupils' ability to apply their knowledge.

The school has an increasing number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Early identification ensures that pupils get the support and guidance they need. Staff adapt approaches so that pupils experience success in ways that are right for them.

Typically, pupils behave sensibly in class. They are motivated to earn class 'pom-poms' rewards and house points for doing the right thing. Pupils' attendance is excellent because they enjoy coming to school. Swift and effective action is taken when pupils miss too much school.

Pupils have many opportunities to learn beyond the classroom. By contributing to important projects, such as reducing food waste, they play a part in considering the impact of their actions. Pupils lead assemblies to develop the confidence to speak in front of an audience. They can explain the risks of drugs and alcohol on the human body. Pupils make sure that regardless of difference, everyone is welcome and accepted. All of this prepares pupils well for life beyond primary school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, the curriculum does not set out the most important knowledge and concepts that pupils need to learn and build on. As a result, pupils' understanding is not as detailed as it is in other subjects. The school should ensure that it defines the knowledge and concepts so that pupils build on their learning and have the same depth of understanding as they do in other subjects.
- On occasions, the implementation of the wider curriculum is not fully effective. Some learning activities do not help pupils acquire information well enough. The school should ensure that teachers select activities that enable pupils to build on their knowledge.

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

Unique reference number	115525
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10288146
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	246
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Hannah Dewey
Headteacher	Sue Dawe
Website	www.therissingtonschool.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 November 2011, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is located over two sites that are about two miles apart. The Upper Rissington site opened in September 2015. It has an on-site pre-school that caters for three-year-old children. This is managed by the governing body.
- Changes in leadership have occurred since the previous inspection. The headteacher took up post in September 2017. The deputy headteacher became the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator in September 2023.
- All teaching staff have joined the school since the previous inspection.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other staff. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body and held a telephone call with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, history and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with the school, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors discussed the curriculum in some other subjects and looked more widely at pupils' writing.
- The lead inspector listened to children in Reception Year and pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 reading to an adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors met the designated safeguarding lead, checked the single central record of adults working in the school, took account of the views of staff and pupils, and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during breaktime and lunchtime. They spoke with pupils and staff about behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff to discuss how the school supports their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start and end of the school day. They considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments, and responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Dale Burr, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Evans

Ofsted Inspector

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