

Inspection of Roundthorn Primary Academy

Roundthorn Road, Oldham, Greater Manchester OL4 5LN

Inspection dates: 6 and 12 December 2023

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

The headteacher of this school is Joelle Hardman. This school is part of Focus Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Helen Rowland, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Spencer. There is also an executive principal, John Taylor, who is responsible for this school and one other in the trust.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Roundthorn Primary Academy as an academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. 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 of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Warm relationships lie at the heart of Roundthorn Primary Academy. Pupils flourish in the knowledge that this school expects the best from them, both academically and in preparation for life as responsible citizens. Many pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well.

Pupils arrive at school happy and keen to learn. In lessons, they listen attentively. Pupils move around the school sensibly and quietly. Pupils are polite and welcoming towards visitors, for example by holding doors open for them and smiling in greeting.

From the outset, children in early years learn about their feelings and emotions. The school encourages pupils of all ages to talk to staff if they have any concerns. Pupils value the respectful relationships that they have with staff. They know that their opinions matter.

The school provides an exceptional programme to develop pupils' learning beyond the academic curriculum. Pupils benefit from a wide range of exciting trips, as well as visitors coming into school to speak about a range of topics. The school is ambitious for pupils' future. Older pupils take part in science lessons at a local college to further develop their enthusiasm and knowledge of the subject. They learn about potential career choices. Across the school, pupils are encouraged to take on various leadership responsibilities, such as being a 'friend of Roundthorn' or a health champion.

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

The school has carefully designed the curriculum content that pupils will learn from Nursery Year to Year 6. It has ensured that pupils are taught this information in a logical order, which helps them to build up their knowledge over time. The school places a sharp focus on children in early years developing their knowledge of vocabulary. This consideration for pupils developing a rich language continues throughout the school. As a result, pupils, including those with SEND, learn well.

Teachers consistently deliver subject content following an established structure that allows pupils to revisit previous learning. Teachers check for misunderstandings or gaps in pupils' knowledge. On occasion, in a small number of subjects, the checks that teachers carry out on learning do not help them to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge. This means that a small number of pupils do not have the information that they need to make connections in their learning.

The school encourages pupils to develop a love of reading. It makes sure that pupils read from a wide range of texts written by different authors. Through class and whole-school events, pupils share and celebrate the books that they have been reading. In Nursery Year, children start learning to hear and identify sounds and rhyming patterns. This prepares them for learning to read. From the beginning of

Reception Year, children learn written letters and their matching sounds. They quickly gain a secure knowledge of the phonics curriculum. The school ensures that pupils read books that contain only the sounds that they know. This enables them to read with fluency and confidence. In the main, staff deliver phonics sessions effectively. However, on occasion, staff use incorrect terminology. At times, the activities that staff choose do not help pupils learn as well as they could. Nonetheless, many pupils learn the phonics curriculum securely and achieve the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with SEND quickly. It makes sure that they have the necessary support to be successful learners. Where appropriate, this includes seeking professional advice. Staff ensure that pupils with SEND are involved in all aspects of school life.

Pupils are enthusiastic learners. They enjoy acquiring new information and actively participate in their own learning. During lessons, most pupils concentrate on the task and know not to disturb others. Pupils throughout the school take pride in their work. At breaktimes, pupils play cooperatively with each other. Older pupils model positive behaviours for the children in early years through their role as play leaders.

The school seizes every opportunity to help to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain through a wealth of learning experiences. For example, pupils learn about current affairs. In early years, staff use stories to challenge stereotypes. Across the school, pupils raise money for various charities around the world and in the local area. The school makes sure that all pupils, including those with SEND, can participate in a range of clubs, such as those for cookery and art. Pupils learn about fundamental British values in an age-appropriate way. They learn about, and celebrate, the differences between people across a range of cultures, faiths and backgrounds.

Staff are proud to be part of the school community. They appreciate the consideration given to their well-being and workload. For example, they welcome the time provided to complete training in preparation for any changes that are introduced.

Members of the trust and the local governing body work effectively to ensure that the school's priorities are successfully addressed. They are knowledgeable and are rigorous in fulfilling their roles. This means that they are well placed to support and challenge the school. Trust leaders and governors maintain a clear oversight in ensuring that the school delivers a high-quality education to all pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, staff do not deliver the phonics programme as clearly as the school intends. This means that some pupils do not learn all that they should to gain secure phonics knowledge. The school should ensure that staff have the relevant training to develop their expertise and implement the phonics programme as effectively as possible.
- In a small number of subjects, the checks that teachers make on learning do not identify the gaps in pupils' knowledge. This means that, on occasion, some pupils' learning is disconnected. Teachers should make sure that the assessment information that they gather enables them to identify clearly and address misunderstandings or gaps in pupils' 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	140100
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10290237
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	245
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Spencer
CEO of trust	Helen Rowland
Headteacher	Joelle Hardman
Website	www.roundthornprimaryacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 February 2011, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of Focus Trust.
- The school is led by an executive principal and a head of academy.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school runs an on-site breakfast club.

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.

- The inspection began on 6 December 2023. It resumed and was completed, with the same inspectors, on 12 December 2023.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the executive principal, the head of academy and other leaders in school. The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors. She also met with the CEO of the trust, members of the board of trustees and members of the trust central team. The lead inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to a range of pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in other subjects and looked at documentation and samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector observed a range of pupils from Year 1 to Year 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors talked with pupils in meetings. An inspector visited the school breakfast club and spoke to pupils during breaktime.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also spoke with some parents and carers during the inspection.
- Inspectors also reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and for staff.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including school policies, school improvement documents and a sample of documents for pupils with SEND. Inspectors also looked at minutes from local governing body meetings, information about pupils leaving and starting at the school, and records relating to pupils' attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interest first.

Inspection team

Sheena Clark, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Olivia Barnes

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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