

# Inspection of Rockcliffe First School

Grafton Road, Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear NE26 2NR

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Inspection dates: 7 and 8 February 2024

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Good**

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The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Early years provision

**Outstanding**

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?**

Pupils love attending this school. From the moment they arrive, they are welcomed into the 'Rockcliffe family'. Pupils grow in confidence and learn to be considerate of others. They learn and play happily together. The saying 'Every day is kindness day' is heard throughout the school. Pupils try hard to live up to it.

Staff know pupils and their families exceptionally well. The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is very effective. These pupils play a full part in all aspects of school life and achieve strong outcomes.

The youngest children make a great start to their education in the Nursery class. They are quick to learn routines. Through activities such as 'beach school', they develop independence and resilience. Older pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities such as being 'wellness gurus' or school councillors.

Behaviour in lessons and outside the classroom is exemplary. Pupils strive to meet leaders' high expectations. They enjoy their lessons and work hard. They achieve high standards in most subjects. Pupils feel safe at school. Incidents of bullying are rare and dealt with quickly. Pupils are very knowledgeable about risks to their safety when online. They know when and how to seek help if they feel worried or upset.

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

Leaders, including governors, have a clear ambition for pupils to be ready for the next stage of their learning. Pastoral leadership is excellent. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the support their children receive.

The school's curriculum is broad and sequenced. Staff receive effective training and support. Their subject knowledge is strong. Pupils enjoy a wide range of educational visits. They make regular use of the local area, such as the nearby beach and quarry. Pupils have a strong understanding of their learning in most subjects. However, a few foundation subjects need further development. In these subjects, pupils do not get enough opportunities to revisit previous learning. Consequently, some pupils struggle to remember content they have covered. Leaders know this and are reviewing these subjects.

Provision for pupils with SEND is excellent. Strong communication with parents ensures that staff identify pupils' needs early on. The school makes good use of external expertise and specialist staff. Staff are well trained to support pupils with SEND. They provide them with a range of highly effective support. This includes specialist equipment, reassurance from adults and repetition. This support allows pupils to meet the school's expectation of 'catch up and keep up'.

Leaders expect that all pupils should be fluent readers by the end of Year 1. Children in Nursery class enjoy a wide range of stories, songs and rhymes. Most know letter sounds by the time they enter Reception class. Children are keen to learn to read.

All staff receive training to deliver the school's phonics programme. Pupils have regular opportunities to learn and practise sounds. Their reading books match the sounds they learn. Pupils who are at risk of falling behind receive extra phonics sessions to help them catch up. Parents receive regular information about the sounds their children are learning. Most pupils practise their reading at home. Almost all pupils achieve well in phonics and are fluent readers by the time they start Year 3.

The mathematics curriculum is well sequenced. Teachers introduce new learning with precision. Pupils gain a thorough understanding of mathematical concepts. They have regular opportunities to apply their knowledge through solving problems. Most pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons and achieve good outcomes.

The school's programme for the personal development of pupils is superb. Pupils value the 'Rockcliffe Superpowers', such as resilience and empathy. Staff teach and celebrate these throughout school life. This work has a positive impact on behaviour. Through a sequenced programme, pupils learn about relationships and equalities. There is a strong culture of social responsibility. Pupils respect the work of groups such as anti-bullying champions. Eco-warriors speak with enthusiasm about their award-winning project on sustainable plastic. Pupils contribute to community events. They take part in the local carnival and perform in care homes.

Children thrive in the early years. The sequenced curriculum provides a strong start to key stage 1. Staff work in partnership with parents. They are skilled at adapting provision to meet children's needs. As a result, all children have full access to learning. Staff are adept at developing children's language and social awareness through conversation. Children show remarkable cooperation and interest in their learning. Well-planned activities and resources support this. Children achieve strong outcomes. They are very well prepared for the next stage of learning.

## **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 foundation subjects, pupils do not remember content as well as they do in subjects such as mathematics or art. This is because, in these subjects, the curriculum does not provide regular opportunities for pupils to revisit and apply their knowledge across different programmes of study. The school should continue to review these subjects, ensuring that key learning is reinforced more regularly within each key stage.

## 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>	108583
<b>Local authority</b>	North Tyneside
<b>Inspection number</b>	10297252
<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	266
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Local authority
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Mary Evans
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sharron Colpitts-Elliott
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.rockcliffeschool.org.uk/">www.rockcliffeschool.org.uk/</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	12 and 13 December 2011, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school offers wraparound childcare on site.

## 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 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 met with the headteacher and with governors. The lead inspector also held conversations with a representative of North Tyneside local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders about provision for pupils with SEND and considered relevant documentation and practice.

- Inspectors spoke with teaching and support staff and considered responses to Ofsted’s staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors met with pupils throughout the inspection, both formally and informally, during breaktimes and in lessons.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and art. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons, talked with pupils and looked at pupils’ work. Inspectors also spoke with pupils about their learning in other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the content of governing body minutes and other documentation.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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’ interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire, and spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors considered pupils’ behaviour in and outside lessons. Inspectors also considered school behaviour records and spoke with pupils about behaviour.

### **Inspection team**

Ian Dawson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Olie Flitcroft	Ofsted Inspector
Annalei Bartlett	Ofsted Inspector

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