

Inspection of RAF Benson Community Primary School

RAF Benson, Wallingford, Oxfordshire OX10 6EP

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 February 2024

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

RAF Benson Community Primary School is a welcoming and friendly school where pupils are happy and feel safe. Pupils understand the school values of kindness, resilience and responsibility, and demonstrate these daily. Behaviour is exemplary. The school has high expectations for how pupils and adults should treat each other. Pupils are determined to behave superbly and live up to the school's expectations.

Many pupils join and leave the school at different times. Leaders are ambitious for all pupils' achievement during their time at the school, regardless of how long they are on the school roll. Pupils are supported to work hard in lessons, and outcomes are improving. Overall, pupils now achieve broadly in line with the national average.

The school provides pupils with exceptional opportunities that enrich their learning and well-being. Staff work relentlessly to support pupils and their families when parents are on deployment. This creates a strong sense of community in the school. Pupils love following the adventures of George the squirrel as he travels around the world with a deployed parent. They benefit from the unique location of the school and enjoy events, such as camouflage days or experiencing Royal Air Force (RAF) life through 'cook-a-thons' in the school hall judged by RAF chefs.

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

The provision for early years is exceptional. Children demonstrate a secure knowledge of the ambitious curriculum they have learned. They make links between topics confidently and enjoy sharing books and stories with each other. The school expertly teaches children challenging vocabulary, which they love to use with one another and with adults. Children focus independently and are excited to learn, which helps them to achieve highly. Staff build excellent relationships with parents, and this helps parents to support children's learning at home confidently.

The school has designed an engaging curriculum across all year groups. It promotes diversity to inspire pupils. For example, pupils study a range of interesting artists in art and design lessons. Staff have created a precise sequence of learning that builds pupils' knowledge over time. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified quickly when they arrive at the school. Staff make skilful adaptations to their teaching so that pupils with SEND learn the same ambitious curriculum as their peers.

Pupil mobility is high. Staff take careful account of this and prioritise checking pupils' understanding when they first join. This helps staff to understand pupils' needs when they arrive, especially in English and mathematics. The school has identified that ongoing checks of pupils' learning is an aspect to be further strengthened. In English and mathematics, staff encourage pupils to recall key content by revisiting previous learning. This builds pupils' fluency and confidence. The most recent low key stage 2 published outcomes in mathematics do not reflect the secure provision and achievement in place currently. In some other subjects, staff do not consistently

check that pupils can recall the most important knowledge and skills they have been taught. This leads to some gaps in pupils' understanding over time.

Pupils love to read. Older pupils are inspired by the books that their teachers read to them. Teachers deliver the school's phonics programme effectively. This begins as soon as children start in Reception. Staff are quick to identify any misconceptions and provide helpful support to pupils so they keep up with their peers. The books that pupils read are well matched to the sounds they are learning.

Pupils' attendance is excellent. The school supports pupils and families expertly if attendance becomes a concern. Behaviour in and around the school is first-rate. In the words of one pupil, 'We have supreme standards.' Pupils play superbly together at social times and have a strong degree of concentration in lessons.

The school has designed an exceptional curriculum to enhance pupils' wider development. The school's work to ensure that all pupils are resilient and ready for new challenges is commendable. Staff provide a plethora of opportunities to support pupils when parents are on deployment. Pupils enjoy a rich range of sporting and artistic opportunities, such as cross-country races and learning to play a brass instrument.

Leaders at all levels know the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors provide appropriate challenge to help the school further improve. Staff feel well supported to manage their workload. They receive a wide range of training, which helps them to teach effectively. Staff are proud to work at the school and appreciate the sense of community within the school and on the RAF base.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school is refining how it checks pupils' understanding in foundation subjects. Pupils' recall of key content is variable, and the school is not consistently clear what the gaps are. The school should prioritise checking pupils' understanding, and staff should use this information to adapt their teaching to support pupils to achieve highly across the curriculum.

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	123028
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10332124
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	155
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Nikki Gassan
Headteacher	Steph Fawdry
Website	www.raf-benson.oxon.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	13 and 14 September 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is situated inside the RAF Benson base.
- The school does not currently use 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 second 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.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, history, and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.

- The inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- 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' interests first.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documents provided by the school and observed pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons.
- The inspectors met with members of the governing board and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents shared through Ofsted Parent View, and an inspector also talked with parents.
- The views of staff were gathered through surveys and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors gathered pupils' views throughout the inspection, including during classroom visits and at playtimes and lunchtime.

Inspection team

Simon Woodbridge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lizzie Jeanes

Ofsted Inspector

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