

Inspection of a good school: Rickleton Primary School

Vigo Lane, Rickleton, Washington, Tyne and Wear NE38 9EZ

Inspection dates:

20 and 21 March 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, parents and staff alike are, rightly, proud to be part of this wonderful school community. Pupils say that 'there is a place for everyone at Rickleton'.

High aspiration is at the heart of Rickleton Primary School. Across the school day, pupils live up to the high expectations set for them by the school and each other. Over time, pupils develop a deep and rich knowledge of the topics that they have studied. For example, they draw on their previous learning in history with ease to talk about how periods and events link together. They can discuss their growing knowledge with confidence. Pupils achieve highly across the ambitious curriculum.

The school expertly develops pupils' character to mould them into the leaders of the future. A myriad of pupil-led responsibilities ensure that pupils support each other to be safe, happy and included in all aspects of school life. For example 'mini medics' support their friends' mental health, while 'play-based leaders' help younger pupils to enjoy their playtimes. Pupils say that 'bullying is not stood for at Rickleton'.

Behaviour at all times is excellent. Pupils work together harmoniously in their lessons. From the youngest to oldest, pupils demonstrate a clear commitment to their education.

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

The school aims for pupils to aspire to be anything that they desire to be. It has designed its curriculum around 'aspirational concepts'. These concepts introduce pupils to a range of interesting careers across all subjects. The knowledge and skills that pupils gain from their journey through the school curriculum allow them to achieve very well and be ready for their next stage of education and beyond.

Staff are experts in the teaching of reading. Regular staff training ensures that pupils experience good practice when learning to read and comprehend texts. The youngest children learn to read swiftly and accurately from as soon as they start school. Those who require additional help to keep up with the reading curriculum receive it quickly. The school's sharp focus on developing pupils' reading fluency skills ensures that older pupils read widely and with confidence and enjoyment.

The school is resolute that all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), receive the same opportunities and high expectations as their peers. Staff ensure that the extra help and support that pupils may need to succeed are in place. The approach to the wider offer for pupils with SEND is inspirational. Staff teach pupils important life skills to serve them beyond their time at Rickleton. The 'preparation for adulthood course' sees pupils learn to cook, use a washing machine and travel safely by public transport. The expertise across the school is abundant and school staff are now supporting mathematics practice across the local authority.

The youngest children in the school settle in quickly. They are excited by the learning opportunities in the early years unit. During the inspection, pupils relished the opportunity to investigate the school site for signs of spring. Staff expertly developed children's language by discussing the blossom, buds, catkins and daffodils with them. The school's relentless focus on accurate number formation in early years serves children well as they move into key stage 1.

Pupils are clear about the school behaviour system, but staff rarely have to use it. Pupils have developed strong self-control in line with the school rules and values. They display courtesy and manners beyond their years. Lessons are not disrupted, so pupils can maximise learning time. Pupils feel that they do not always have to ask staff to sort out minor differences of opinion and playground issues, as 'peer mentors' are on hand to help them to solve their problems. Pupils value this support, and that of all school adults, highly.

The school has left no stone unturned in the pursuit to offer pupils the very best for their wider development. The extensive personal development programme supports pupils to develop a sharp sense of equality, fairness and respect for all. Older pupils talk about protected characteristics and fundamental British values with maturity. Pupils see being able to 'be who you want to be' as vitally important.

The range of school clubs and sporting opportunities is vast. There is something for everyone. Last year, almost every pupil attended one of the school's clubs. These clubs include cross-stitch, coding, choir, chess and a countless number of sporting teams. Pupils of Rickleton achieve very highly in sporting competitions and leagues. For example, the school is proud of the girls' football team, which has been league and county winners for the last three years.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 September 2014.

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	108818
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10297265
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	425
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kirsty Ross
Headteacher	Jan Price
Website	www.rickletonprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher and deputy headteacher are new to post at the school.
- The school currently uses one alternative education provider.
- The school provides wraparound care for its pupils, in the form of breakfast- and after-school clubs.

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 the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector 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 pupils' work.

- The inspector also reviewed the curriculum for the early years and assessment procedures for other subjects.
- The inspector listened to pupils read from Years 1, 2 and 3.
- As part of the inspection, the inspector held discussions with school leaders, members of the school's governing body and a representative from the local authority and spoke to a parent via the telephone.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, at lunchtime and at playtime. The inspector also spoke with groups of pupils.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents provided by the school, such as the headteacher's termly report to the governing body, the school self-evaluation and school improvement planning.
- The inspector considered the responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including the free-text responses. The inspector also reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil questionnaires and met with staff to discuss their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Mark Dent, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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