

# Inspection of R A Butler Junior School

South Road, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 3DG

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Inspection dates: 8 to 9 May 2024

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Outstanding**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade

**Good** (ungraded inspection – 22 to 23 November 2022)

The headteacher of this school is Emma Vincent. This school is part of Saffron Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Caroline Derbyshire, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Barrs. The head teacher is also the executive headteacher, who is responsible for this school and one other.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils flourish in this caring community and they understand their place in a much larger, richly diverse world. Pupils meet their teachers' overwhelmingly high expectations and achieve incredibly well. Pupils are safe. Staff have pupils' well-being at the forefront of their minds. Pupils take care of each other.

Pupils value their education. They love their school and are very happy. They participate with enthusiasm in lessons and attend regularly. They listen carefully to their teachers. Pupils understand that their actions and words can affect how others feel. They reflect on their friends' views and resolve any disagreements without help from adults. They are highly respectful to everyone.

Pupils appreciate the significant extra-curricular opportunities on offer to them. They gain new sporting and artistic skills. Pupils dance, sing, act and compete in regional competitions. They build confidence and show courage through public speaking. A range of trips and visits enhances their cultural knowledge.

Pupils develop important leadership skills and take on responsibility. Older pupils organise and referee sporting events. They lead assemblies and give master classes to their peers in areas of the curriculum. The 'ethical entrepreneurs' develop financial and business knowledge. They promote recycling and fair trade within the school and local area.

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

The school's highly ambitious curriculum nurtures compassionate, knowledgeable and vocal global citizens. The curriculum instils in pupils the '6 Rs'. These are important, positive values which put pupils in good stead for their future lives.

The knowledge pupils gain builds well on what they have learned before. Teachers possess excellent subject knowledge through the precise training they receive. Teachers present with clarity. They check rigorously that pupils understand. Pupils recall knowledge with ease and rapidly get to grips with complex ideas.

At the heart of the curriculum is the development of pupils' language. Pupils read with fluency and retell stories in detail. They apply a range of reading strategies to help them make sense of more demanding texts. The books they read enrich their knowledge of world cultures and religions. Pupils embrace difference and celebrate what unites them. They do not tolerate any form of prejudice.

Across the curriculum, pupils use accurate subject specific vocabulary to explain their learning. They discuss sophisticated ideas spontaneously in pairs and groups. This helps them to refine their understanding. In mathematics, for example, pupils reason with confidence. They synthesise knowledge to solve complex problems and to be creative in art and design. In science pupils carry out precise scientific enquiries. They work well independently. As a result, pupils, including those with

special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), demonstrate tremendous resilience. Any pupils who fall behind in reading and mathematics receive precise support and they catch up.

Pupils learn about major issues across the planet such as child labour, war and the experiences of refugees. This helps strengthen pupils' understanding of human rights. They empathise with those less fortunate. They raise funds for a range of national and international charities.

Pupils write at length in a range of styles with considerable accuracy. They craft imaginative stories and debate, persuade and inform. This further equips them with a voice to defend their rights. They articulate their views and represent others on the school council and steering group.

The provision for pupils with SEND is exemplary. Leaders adopt innovative approaches to ensure pupils with complex needs access the curriculum. A highly inclusive culture permeates the school. Pupils understand the importance of equality. Pupils therefore encourage and help their friends with SEND with kindness and sensitivity. Pupils, including those with SEND, achieve exceptionally well. Outcomes in mathematics, reading and writing are significantly better than national averages.

Leaders have won the hearts and minds of staff, parents and other stakeholders. Parents unanimously endorse the outstanding quality of education their children receive. Staff are happy because leaders support them to be at their very best. Leaders are rightfully sharing their expertise in other schools in the trust and further afield.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **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>	136328
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10295027
<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	365
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	David Barrs
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Caroline Derbyshire
<b>Headteacher</b>	Emma Vincent
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.rab.academy">www.rab.academy</a>
<b>Date(s) of previous inspection</b>	22 – 23 November 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is a member of Saffron Academy Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) 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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the CEO, other trustees, chair of governors, other governors, the headteacher, other leaders, subject leaders, teachers and support staff. The inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history,

design and technology and science. These included discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons, meetings with staff and pupils, scrutiny of pupils' work and a review of any curriculum documentation. They also scrutinised other curriculum areas and pupils' work.

- 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 considered the views of pupils, staff and parents. There were 67 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 60 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. There were 140 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. The inspectors considered 140 free-text responses from parents. Inspectors also spoke to parents.

### **Inspection team**

Adam Cooke, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Laura Hewer

Ofsted Inspector

Carley Holliman

Ofsted Inspector

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