

Inspection of a good school: Rolvenden Primary School

Hastings Road, Rolvenden, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 4LS

Inspection date: 26 June 2024

Outcome

Rolvenden Primary School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Ben Vincer. This school is part of the Tenterden Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Stuart Reeves, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Clive Thomas.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are surrounded with care and kindness at this small, friendly school. The school's motto, 'Small school – Big difference', captures their experiences here. Pupils enjoy playing and learning together. They have positive relationships with staff and each other. They trust in adults to keep them safe and to resolve any fallings-out, which are rare.

The school is calm and well ordered. Pupils know that they are expected to work hard and behave well. They take pride in their achievements. At playtimes, pupils get along well, whether involved in skipping challenges, enjoying the wooded area or active in ball games. They encourage each other, and shouts of 'Well done,' or 'Good pass,' are commonplace.

Pupils are proud of their roles in the wider life of the school. Some of these, such as head boy and head girl, have been secured following speeches and a voting process, giving pupils an experience of democratic elections.

Parents are very positive about the school. They describe how it has a 'family feel'. A parent summed up the views of many in describing it as 'giving the children confidence to grow and become kind young adults by the time they leave'.

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

The school has carefully crafted an ambitious curriculum that builds knowledge effectively as pupils move through the school. From Years 1 to 6, this is well sequenced. Pupils in mixed-age classes, but different year groups, are very clear about how the expectations of them are slightly different because of the year group they are in. The school recognises

the need to ensure the early years curriculum is more precisely linked to Year 1 to ensure children have the knowledge they need in all subjects, ready for Year 1. The school is in the process of bringing this about to further support children as they move on from Reception.

Staff have strong subject knowledge, which supports them well in delivering the planned curriculum. They regularly check that pupils are understanding and learning the intended curriculum. Any pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs quickly identified. This helps staff to adapt learning so that pupils with SEND do well and experience success.

The school rightly prioritises helping pupils learn to read. Recent revisions to the reading curriculum, including the approach to teaching phonics, have been successful in raising standards. Leaders also have further developments planned. Children start to learn phonics straight away in Reception. They benefit from reading books which are well matched to their phonics knowledge. This helps them to practise their reading, which builds their confidence and fluency. Any pupils who start to fall behind are quickly identified and given the help they need to catch up quickly.

Pupils read with increasing confidence and understanding as they move through the school. They also enjoy being read to or using the school's welcoming library space. The school ensures that pupils are exposed to a wide range of authors and styles of writing, including poetry. The very youngest children in Reception join in enthusiastically with familiar stories and rhymes. Older pupils enter enthusiastically into discussions about plots and suggest meanings of new vocabulary.

Pupils are confident and competent mathematicians. In Reception, children develop a secure understanding of number. As they move through the school, pupils build strong computational skills, which they apply to solving problems of increasing complexity with enthusiasm. Pupils relish the wide range of mathematical challenges that they are set.

Pupils are keen to come to school, and they attend regularly. In classes, pupils behave well. They follow instructions, listen to their teachers and work diligently in pairs or groups. The school's values of creativity, resilience, engagement, aspiration, teamwork and enjoyment are meaningful and motivating for pupils. They value the rewards they are given in assemblies to celebrate these and aspire to demonstrate the attributes in all they do.

Pupils are positive about the wide range of clubs that are provided for them to explore their interests and talents, such as learning to ride a bicycle, team-building or walking for well-being. They value the chance to go swimming regularly in the school pool and appreciate how exercise helps to keep them healthy. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including online.

Governors are very knowledgeable about the school. They are developing even clearer ways of working with the trust to ensure that the school continues to go from strength to strength. Staff are positive about the support and training they are given and how their workload is considered.

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 has not yet fully considered some aspects of the knowledge and skills children need to learn in readiness for key stage 1. Consequently, children moving into Year 1 do not always have the prior learning they need. The school should continue to implement its plans to make further improvements to the early years curriculum.

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 November 2012.

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	147563
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10322037
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	85
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Clive Thomas
CEO of the trust	Stuart Reeves
Headteacher	Ben Vincer
Website	http://www.rolvenden.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up the role in May 2022.
- The school is part of the Tenterden Schools Trust, which it joined in November 2019.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

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 inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with school leaders. The lead inspector also met with the representatives of the local governing body and had a separate meeting with a representative from the trust.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to pupils read.
- 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 reviewed responses to Ofsted's parent, pupil and staff surveys and considered an email from a parent.
- The inspectors talked to staff to gather their views about the school, including with regard to their workload and well-being. The inspectors met with several groups of pupils, as well as speaking to pupils during lessons and at playtime.

Inspection team

Deborah Perkins, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Louise Ling

Ofsted Inspector

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