

Inspection of Rodmersham School

Rodmersham Green, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 0PS

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 July 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

The school values of 'family', 'fairness' and 'fearlessness' shine through at this school. All pupils, from the very youngest years upwards, can talk about these values and their importance to their lives. As one pupil explained, being 'fearless' is about 'having a go' and 'trying new things'. Nowhere is the concept of being 'family' more evident than in the school's response to the recent fire. While pupils were educated at different sites, the school ensured their high-quality education was sustained. Reading remained a key priority, and regular opportunities to come back together as a school ensured that pupils still felt part of the strong school community. This ensured that the return to school was seamless as a result.

Pupils achieve very well in this school. They do well in end of key stage assessments, but this is not all. Pupils are articulate, and can talk with confidence and real enjoyment about what they know. Conduct is exemplary, and pupils take responsibility for their behaviours and the way they treat one another. Positive and warm relationships, founded on respect, underpin all interactions in this school. As a result, pupils are happy and feel safe. As one parent explained, 'My children are nurtured well by caring staff.'

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

The collaboratively designed curriculum identifies the information that pupils need to know. The sequence of knowledge and skills is carefully developed and ensures the highly effective building of learning as pupils progress through the planned curriculum over their time in the school. This is in place from the early years upwards, and creates solid foundations for learning which are then built on.

Connections between current and prior learning are regularly referenced and connected through well-designed activities. These support pupils to remember their learning in the longer term. This, coupled with the precise and knowledgeable teaching they receive, means that pupils achieve exceptionally well. Pupils talk with confidence and fluency about their learning, using subject-specific vocabulary at an increasingly sophisticated and independent level.

Pupils are keen to engage in learning and are gripped by discussions and debates in lessons that encourage them to think deeply. All pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are keen to ask and answer questions. Staff check pupils' understanding carefully, and adapt their input to ensure that learning is secure and misconceptions do not persist. As a result of this, and the well-understood systems and routines in school, low-level disruption is very rare, as lessons are focused places of learning.

Reading is a key focus in this school, and books are everywhere and readily engaged with. Whether this is in the reading sheds on the playground, the library space, the book corners in every classroom, or the regular opportunities to read and be read to, pupils are enthused by texts. Phonics is taught well, and precise interventions are

used well to support the increasing fluency and confidence of children who find reading more challenging.

Despite being a small school, the wider development opportunities for pupils are wide and varied. Clubs change regularly and, as one pupil explained, 'There is always something to interest you.' Pupils learn about the wider culture beyond their school gates, including visits to the local church, a virtual tour of a synagogue, and visits to a Gurdwara, as well as celebrating the different cultures that reside within their school community.

The personal, social, health and economic education programme is well designed to ensure that pupils develop an understanding of how to keep themselves safe and how to maintain healthy relationships. The school has further ensured that topics such as finance and money are threaded throughout this experience, so that pupils are well prepared for the world outside of school. This includes Year 6 pupils engaging with the 'fiver challenge', where they plan and market their own businesses. For example, one pupil this year bought seeds and grew plants from these to open his own garden shop.

Leaders and governors have a clear passion for ensuring the best for the pupils in their care. They are evaluative and draw from a range of research and thinking to inform their actions and next steps. Leadership is truly a shared responsibility, and there are well-established systems to ensure that all staff engage with both the design of curriculum thinking and to reflect on and refine this over time. This is what continues to secure ongoing high-quality education for all pupils in the school, from Reception right through to Year 6.

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 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	118346
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10296259
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	132
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Roche
Headteacher	Nicola McMullon
Website	www.rodmersham.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 November 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- At the time of the inspection, the school had recently returned to its site following a significant rebuild as a result of a fire.

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.
- The inspection team held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers and pupils. The lead inspector met with the members of the governing body,

including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also held a meeting with a representative from the local authority.

- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, French and geography. For each deep dive, 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 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 inspection team took account of a range of other information, including the school's development plans, school policies and minutes of governors' meetings.
- The team spoke with pupils about their experience of the school. They took account of the views of parents and carers and staff through conversations and responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Marian Feeley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Howard Fisher

Ofsted Inspector

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