

# Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Rowan Gate Primary School -Three Sites and Two Satellites

Finedon Road, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire NN8 4NS

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Inspection dates:

25 and 26 February 2025

## **Outcome**

Rowan Gate Primary School -Three Sites and Two Satellites has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

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

Rowan Gate is a lovely school. This is the view of many parents and carers and pupils. It is clear to see why they say this. Pupils are exceptionally well cared for at this welcoming and supportive school. Staff know the pupils incredibly well. Their detailed knowledge of each pupil's special educational needs and/or disability enables them to provide precise support so that pupils flourish.

The school continues to provide a high-quality education across all of its sites. Staff have a united passion for pupils to achieve their highest potential. Their commitment to following the 'Rowan Gate way' ensures that all pupils experience a familiar and consistent approach. Pupils develop strong working relationships with staff. Pupils know staff will support them to learn and will look after them.

Pupils engage well in their learning. They have positive attitudes to their education. Pupils who are nonverbal are helped to communicate their needs and desires. Staff's detailed understanding of how these pupils communicate means they can respond accurately to how pupils are feeling. This ensures that these pupils do not become anxious or frustrated.

The personal development of pupils is excellent. The school provides them with a vast range of experiences that prepare them well for their next steps.

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

The school continually refines its ambitious curriculum. This is structured into different pathways to meet the various needs of pupils. Each pupil's education, health and care plan (EHC plan) is carefully considered, and pupils' needs are fully assessed. This allows staff to place pupils in groups that best support their learning. Staff check pupils' knowledge and skills against their individual targets. This ensures they know how well each pupil is progressing through the curriculum. Staff use these checks to plan the next steps that challenge pupils to learn and develop further. All pupils develop the knowledge and skills they need to reach the ambitious outcomes set for them.

Staff deliver a curriculum which enables pupils to build on their very early learning experiences. The children and younger pupils who are grouped together are exceptionally well prepared for their next steps. Meticulous planning details what progress through the curriculum looks like for each child.

The school fosters a readiness in pupils to learn with the resilience they need to achieve. The learning environment is carefully structured to suit pupils' requirements, paying careful attention to any sensory needs. Pupils enjoy well-planned therapeutic activities. These provide excellent opportunities to develop pupils' interaction and communication skills. Some pupils access subjects from the national curriculum at a level that is appropriate for them. They develop their understanding of English and mathematics through a well-structured curriculum.

There has been careful consideration given to how best to develop pupils' ability to read. Staff help pupils understand sounds and link them to the letters they represent. This then builds into the school's chosen phonics approach for early reading. The pupils who can read do so with increasing confidence. Staff build enjoyment for reading in many ways, including skilfully using sensory stories to capture pupils' attention.

Staff help pupils to develop their resilience when managing change. They anticipate transitions and provide pupils with appropriate cues to help them to adapt. Staff regularly review any potential causes of unsettled behaviours. This allows them to identify any bespoke support pupils may need to help them to manage their emotions. Because pupils are helped to communicate their needs, they are less frustrated, and so many remain calm and focused on their learning.

Some pupils find it difficult to attend the school due to medical reasons or their complex anxieties. A team of dedicated staff support families to ensure that all pupils' attendance improves.

Pupils have extensive opportunities to engage with the local community. Trips and visits develop their understanding of the wider world. Some of these include local places of worship and places of interest that build their cultural awareness, for example the local museum. Pupils are involved in charitable activities. Lunchtime clubs broaden pupils' learning, support teamwork and develop their understanding of different emotions. Pupils learn about healthy lifestyles, relationships, making choices and different types of families.

They are taught about how to keep themselves safe. All of these experiences develop pupils as individuals and prepare them well for their next steps.

Staff feel well supported. They appreciate the effort made to reduce their workload and improve their well-being. The actions of school leaders to continually improve the school are highly effective. The governing body provides appropriate checks to ensure that all statutory responsibilities are fulfilled.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **Background**

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 outstanding for overall effectiveness in March 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131079
<b>Local authority</b>	North Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10347498
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	296
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Samantha Baker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Laura Clarke
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.rowangateprimary.co.uk">www.rowangateprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	26 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Rowan Gate Primary School is a special school for pupils with a range of additional needs. It predominantly supports pupils with autism, severe learning needs and those with speech, language and communication needs. All pupils are supported by an EHC plan.
- There has been a significant growth in pupil numbers since the last inspection. This has led to additional premises being acquired and the expansion of existing school buildings. The school now operates from five different sites.
- There is a 'head of provision' for each school site.
- The headteacher was absent at the time of the inspection. The strategic deputy headteacher is the acting headteacher of the school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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.
- Inspectors met with the acting headteacher and other senior and curriculum leaders. The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair and vice-chair of governors.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- Inspectors observed behaviour in lessons and at other times around school.
- 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.
- Inspectors took note of the responses received on Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and considered the results of Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Dave Gilkerson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Caroline Barton

Ofsted Inspector

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