

Inspection of a good school: Rakegate Primary School

Rakegate Close, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV10 6US

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 June 2023

Outcome

Rakegate Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff listen to pupils at Rakegate Primary. They pay attention to any worries they might have and check that they are safe. Staff also ask pupils for their ideas about how to improve the school. Pupils appreciate this and respond well when adults ask them to take on jobs and responsibilities. For example, pupil council members, digital ambassadors and pupil mental health champions all play their part in looking after others. Pupils of all ages are confident that they are safe in school.

Leaders have high expectations of behaviour. Consequently, most of the time, the school is a calm and orderly place in which to learn. Poor behaviour can happen, but adults manage it well. Occasionally, bullying occurs. It is not common and adults find out about it and quickly stop it. Good behaviour and hard work are noticed and rewarded. This encourages pupils to do their best.

In class, pupils learn a lot in many different subjects. However, in a few subjects, the curriculum could be even better. Early reading is taught very well. The school has many books and bright displays that celebrate what pupils know and can do.

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

The headteacher has built up an effective leadership team. Together with governors, they lead the school with well-informed and values-driven ambition.

Leaders have established effective systems and routines for teaching early reading. Staff understand expectations and work hard to implement the school's well-resourced phonics programme. In the Nursery, adults support children to learn and develop language. They teach them to listen carefully and to be interested in stories, rhymes and songs. Formal phonics lessons start straight away in Reception and continue throughout key stage 1. This consistent approach continues into key stage 2, where adults help any pupils who need extra support. In all classes, there is a firm commitment to developing pupils'

competence and enjoyment of reading. This is apparent in pupils' knowledge of books, author visits, daily story time and in the broad range of books available in school. All pupils enjoy uninterrupted, focused reading time each day.

The curriculum is also well organised in most other subjects. In design and technology, for example, leaders have identified the content they expect pupils to learn each year. The curriculum includes supportive resources for teachers and pupils. This gives staff the information they need to teach well and with confidence. As a result, pupils are taught the right things in a logical order. It also makes it easier for staff to check on the quality of their learning. This approach to curriculum design can also be seen in other subjects. However, in a few subjects, the curriculum and assessment are not as well developed. In these subjects, pupils do not build up all the knowledge they need to help them with future learning. Leaders know this and have already included improvements to these subjects in their development plans.

Staff appreciate the quality of curriculum guidance they receive from leaders. It makes it easier for them to plan lessons and helps to reduce their workload. Indeed, most staff report high levels of satisfaction at work and value the team spirit.

Leaders identify any special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. They provide extra support in class and make sure that everyone is included in lessons and other activities. Some aspects of SEND leadership and provision have improved recently, and this is helping to strengthen practice further. However, a few inconsistencies remain in the way leaders check on the quality and impact of provision.

Staff take many opportunities to extend pupils' learning beyond classrooms. The early years classes include well-equipped outdoor areas where children exercise their minds and bodies. Older pupils go on regular trips, including a residential visit in Year 6. Leaders work supportively with families to make sure no one is left out.

Leaders encourage pupils to make decisions about the school. For example, school councillors have suggested ways to improve the toilets. Furthermore, pupil librarians, house captains and other roles all help pupils to develop a sense of responsibility.

Leaders' attention to the discipline of school uniform, respectful behaviour and regular attendance communicates high expectations and instils pride in the school. This helps lessons to run smoothly and supports all pupils to acquire good habits. Indeed, from the carefully presented displays of pupils' work to the well-maintained school premises, a pride in the school and its pupils shines out.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has robust systems for checking on pupils' welfare, whereabouts and for keeping them safe. Governors and staff stay up to date with training and know about the risks that pupils may face. When safeguarding concerns arise, staff act quickly to share information with the right people.

Staff also do much to teach pupils about staying safe. Pupils, too, have a role in this. For example, pupil digital ambassadors asked their peers about their online experiences and made an informative video about e-safety.

All the correct checks on adults in school are completed and recorded. The school site is kept secure.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in a few foundation subjects is not as well developed as in other subjects. Currently, the important knowledge that all pupils should learn and remember is not clearly identified. This means that staff are not always sure what to focus on or what to assess when they check on pupils' learning. Leaders should continue to develop the curriculum in these subjects so that pupils learn and remember content that will help them with future learning.
- The leadership of SEND has recently adopted some new and improved approaches, but these are at an early stage of implementation. Consequently, some aspects of oversight and practice are not as consistent as they could be. Leaders should continue to develop more consistency in the provision for pupils with SEND. They should do this so that all pupils with SEND are supported to achieve as highly as possible.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2018.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	104304
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	10282688
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	468
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Martin
Headteacher	Sarah Horton
Website	www.rakegateprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 and 14 March 2018

Information about this school

- The school provides before- and after-school childcare on the school site.
- Leaders do not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, and design and technology. In these subjects, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at pupils' work. The inspector also looked at the curriculum in other subjects to check how they were organised and taught. He listened to some pupils reading to a member of staff.
- The inspector looked at published performance data about the school and a range of school documents. These included information about pupils' behaviour, attendance, the curriculum, extra-curricular activities, governance and school improvement planning. He examined documents published on the school's website.

- The inspector asked school leaders, pupils and parents about safeguarding arrangements and safety routines. He examined the record of employment checks on school staff and looked at other records.
- The inspector talked informally with pupils, parents and staff to gather general information about school life. He took account of the responses to Ofsted's staff, pupil and parent surveys. He spoke with some parents at the start of the school day, and visited the before-school breakfast club and an after-school sports club.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in class, at lunchtime, on the playground, at clubs, and at other times during the day.
- During the inspection, the inspector had formal meetings with the headteacher, other leaders, school staff, pupils, governors and a local authority officer.

Inspection team

Martin Pye, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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