

Inspection of a good school: Rushden Primary Academy

Goulsbra Road, Rushden, Northamptonshire NN10 0YX

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 February 2024

Outcome

Rushden Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

The principal of this school is Lindsay Edwards. This school is part of Greenwood 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 (CEO), Wayne Norrie, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mike Hamlin.

What is it like to attend this school?

Rushden Primary Academy is a thriving school. Pupils are happy and safe here.

The school has set out a curriculum designed to help all pupils to reach high standards. Pupils achieve well. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils talk about the lessons they enjoy and what they have learned.

Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils are courteous and polite. They move around the school in a respectful manner. Lessons are calm and pupils concentrate well on their learning. Pupils play well together at playtime. They can choose to use the large library area to catch up on homework, read books or play word games on computers. Pupils say that they benefit from these opportunities at lunchtimes.

The school works hard to support and help its families. Parents and carers value the pastoral support that the school gives its pupils. As one parent explained, 'The school really cares for its pupils and offers them a wide range of learning.' Many parents are supportive of the school and the range of improvements the school is making for pupils' quality of education.

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

Reading has an important place in the curriculum. High-quality texts are included in the English curriculum. Pupils experience literature from a range of cultures. They enjoy using the extensive library. This provides pupils with a range of authors to appreciate and learn from. Children start learning letter sounds as soon as they begin school in the early years. Daily phonics lessons get children off to a good start with learning to read. Any children

who need more help get extra practice. This helps them keep up. Reading lessons continue into key stage 2 so that pupils develop skills to critique and respond to what they read. Pupils describe how these lessons help them to develop confidence in reading with expression.

The school has worked hard to ensure that there is an ambitious curriculum in all subjects for all pupils. This begins in the early years with a range of opportunities provided to lay the foundations children need for later learning. Pupils can describe how the school is helping them improve and get better at their work. For example, pupils have time in lessons to reflect on what they have already learned about mathematical concepts or artistic techniques. This helps pupils to remember what they have learned. They develop secure knowledge of the subjects they study. Teachers provide pupils with time to improve and correct their work so they do not develop misconceptions. Occasionally, staff's subject knowledge is not as strong as it needs to be to deepen pupils' understanding even further. When this is the case, pupils do not always receive opportunities to achieve the depth of understanding that they could.

Pupils value time given in lessons to help build their confidence at speaking in front of others. The school plans projects into the curriculum, such as making a puppet show so that pupils can perform in front of their class. This is to practise using new vocabulary and speaking to different audiences.

Pupils are very clear about the school rules for behaviour. Pupils understand the values that underpin the rules of 'respect, pride and achieve'. They agree that the rules are fair. Attendance is good and the school works hard to maintain this.

The school gives pupils leadership roles such as heritage heroes, school councillors and skills ambassadors. Pupils in these roles lead events such as fundraisers. They are proud to be raising money for a new pergola in the school grounds. Pupils' voices are heard, including through the school council which has helped introduce changes to school life such as where pupils can sit in the dinner hall. Pupils develop an understanding of what it means to undertake civic duties.

The school creates opportunities for pupils to think about their future ambitions. Pupils can identify potential careers such as being architects, police officers and technicians. They understand some of the attributes they must develop for these roles, including being a good listener, having the ability to work in a team and being able to think creatively.

A number of teachers have joined the school recently. The school has ensured that staff have been able to work together quickly as a new team. Staff value the consideration given to their well-being and workload. They benefit from a range of ongoing training. Trustees have clear approaches to oversee and check on school improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all staff have secure subject knowledge of all the subjects they teach. As a result, some do not always adapt how they teach the curriculum so that pupils deepen their knowledge. The school should ensure that all staff have the necessary subject knowledge across all subjects so that they can support pupils to develop their understanding fully, helping pupils to achieve as highly as they can.

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 June 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' 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	141032
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10298501
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	389
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mike Hamlin
CEO of trust	Wayne Norrie
Principal	Lindsay Edwards
Website	www.rushdenprimaryacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	14 and 15 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The principal was interim principal from January 2023 and became the substantive principal from September 2023.
- There have been a number of staffing changes since the previous inspection.
- The school does not currently make use of 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 inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the principal, senior leaders and teachers. They met with a trustee, the CEO and members of the trust's senior team.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the inspector 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.
- The inspector also reviewed the curriculum in history.
- The inspector considered the views of parents who responded to Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector reviewed responses to the staff surveys. She held discussions with staff and pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.

Inspection team

Donna Moulds, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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