

Rushton CofE (VC) Primary School

Sugar Street, Rushton Spencer, Macclesfield, SK11 0SG

Inspection dates 4–5 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The headteacher and governors have successfully maintained a high-quality education for the pupils since the last inspection.
- Strong teamwork, led by the headteacher, contributes to the consistently high-quality teaching that pupils receive in both classes.
- Teachers plan and teach lessons in a way that builds rapidly on what they already know and can do. Marking is very effective.
- Pupils make rapid progress throughout the school. Pupils are making progress in reading, writing and mathematics at a much faster rate than usually seen.
- By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, many have reached the standard expected at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils do very well across the full range of subjects the school provides.
- Pupils' behaviour and application in lessons is excellent. They concentrate fully on the tasks they are set.
- Pupils show a great deal of care and consideration for each other. They say they feel safe at school.
- There is no complacency. The headteacher and governors want to continue to improve the school. However, their plans for improvement are not focused sharply enough to help them to achieve this.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in eight lessons. Several observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. The inspector spoke with pupils on the playground and in lessons, heard some of them read, and held a meeting with a group of older pupils.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including the school's plans for improvement, and policies about keeping pupils safe. He also examined the work in pupils' books, and a range of data about their progress.
- The inspector held discussions with teachers, the headteacher, three members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority.
- The views of parents were analysed using a survey carried out by the school as well as the 13 responses on the Parent View website. In addition, the views of five parents who spoke to the inspector were considered.

Inspection team

Christopher Parker, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes.
- All of the pupils are White British.
- There are no pupils who are disabled and who have special educational needs at school action (pupils who need extra support with their learning). The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- No pupils are supported through the pupil premium. This extra government funding supports those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those children who are looked after by the local authority, and pupils who have a parent serving in the armed services.
- The government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2, do not apply because pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4.
- All members of the teaching staff have been appointed since the last inspection.
- A special educational needs coordinator works at the school for two half days each month.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Take a sharper and more focused approach to planning for improvement by setting clear – and, wherever possible, measurable – targets and timescales against which the headteacher and governors can evaluate the success of improvement plans.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Most of the children start school with the skills and abilities expected for their age. Last year, in all areas of learning, a much higher proportion than that seen in schools nationally reached or exceeded the goals set for the end of the Reception Year. This year, the children are making rapid progress due to the interesting activities that the teacher organises for them.
- Pupils continue to make rapid progress, with the result that, by the end of Year 2, attainment is above average in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2013, all of the pupils in Year 2 reached the higher Level 3 in reading. The school's focus on improving writing has had a notable impact, and pupils' workbooks show they are making rapid progress.
- In Years 3 and 4, pupils sustain rapid progress. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 4, many pupils are working at the level expected by the end of Year 6. Last year, some of the pupils achieved beyond this level in reading. This is because older pupils are encouraged to read challenging novels, such as *The Chronicles of Narnia*.
- Pupils do very well in reading, because it is strongly promoted. However, in 2013, some Year 1 pupils did not do as well as expected when their knowledge of letters and sounds was checked. The school responded promptly, and most of these pupils have now caught up and are reading and tackling unfamiliar words confidently.
- Many older pupils produce writing that is interesting to read and very carefully presented. The pupils write in a range of subjects, and their work often builds towards a finished piece of work through a series of activities. Work on display, for example, about Roman buildings and the Roman army is of a high standard.
- The most-able pupils say that they rarely find work to be easy and often have to give the problems they are set a good deal of thought. They say that they enjoy the challenges they are set. Work in their mathematics books clearly shows that they are they are challenged to use what they learn to solve problems in different contexts.
- The very few disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make excellent progress. As a result, the pupils in Years 3 and 4 who have received additional support, both within school and from visiting specialists, have caught up with their classmates and are working at the level expected for their age.
- Pupils do very well in a range of subjects. In science, for example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 used their knowledge of how to carry out a fair test to investigate what would happen when various solids were mixed with a range of liquids. In physical education, as a result of expert coaching, pupils are developing good catching, passing and moving skills for basketball.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, attitudes and application. They expect pupils to do very well from the start of the Reception Year to leaving the school at the end of Year 4. The high level of consistency in the quality of teaching in both classes results in pupils making rapid and sustained progress.
- The teachers plan in considerable detail and teach lessons that build on what the pupils already

know and are able to do. As a result, pupils do exceptionally well across a range of subjects. Any concerns about a pupil falling behind are dealt with quickly by the special needs coordinator in consultation with the class teacher.

- The number of pupils in each class is comparatively small, allowing the teachers and teaching assistants to frequently check pupils' progress and provide further explanations where a pupil may need extra help. Teaching assistants contribute very effectively to teaching and managing the mixed age groups in each class.
- Marking is of a high standard, and feedback from teachers is very constructive. In discussion, the pupils say how much their teacher's comments help them to improve their work. The clear guidance which they receive ensures that they make rapid gains in developing both their literacy and numeracy skills.
- The youngest children are excellently taught, both inside and outside the classroom. The adults question and prompt very effectively to promote the children's speaking and listening skills. For example, when children visited 'the garden centre', the teaching assistant took the opportunity not only to develop a conversation but also their skills in counting money.
- The teaching of the sounds that letters make (phonics) is very effective in Reception and in Years 1 and 2. A more robust approach to checking the pupils' knowledge of letters and sounds has been implemented to make sure that they have a very secure foundation to reading. As a result, all pupils are making rapid progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The last inspection report commented that, 'The school operates like one giant family, where everyone looks out for each other and all get on well as friends, regardless of their age.' This continues to be the case. One pupil commented that, 'Everyone on the playground is my friend.' Behaviour at play and around the school is excellent.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They concentrate fully on their work. Pupils say they thoroughly enjoy learning, and older pupils commented on how much they like the activities, such as those the teachers planned for World Maths Day. Pupils' enjoyment is evident in the high levels of application that they display in lessons.
- All of the parents who responded to the online questionnaire express strongly positive views on behaviour. In lessons, pupils listen carefully and settle very quickly to the tasks the teachers set them. They contribute confidently in lessons. This was very clear when Year 3 and 4 pupils were writing 'eyewitness accounts' of Boudica leading the Iceni against the Romans.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Checks are carried out on all adults to make sure that they can work with children. Policies to keep children safe are in place, and all members of staff have recently been retrained. Guidance for adults to follow should they have any concerns about a pupil's well-being is prominently displayed in the staffroom.
- Pupils say they are unaware of any bullying. They know how to stay safe when using the internet. The governing body's e-safety committee contains a pupil representative. Pupils say they feel safe at school, and surveys of parents' views indicate that they strongly agree. Attendance is above average.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The governors and headteacher have very successfully managed a complete change of teaching staff in recent years. Parents say their concerns about the retirement of very established teachers have evaporated in what they see as a seamless transition. As a result, they continue to hold the school in very high regard.
- The headteacher very carefully tracks the progress of the pupils. Because the number of pupils in each cohort is small, he analyses progress over a five-year period so that he can spot any emerging trends or patterns. What is clear from this information is that the rate of progress in writing has accelerated in recent years in response to actions taken following the last inspection.
- The appraisal of teachers is carried out systematically. Targets focus on maintaining high standards, and are related to the professional development needs of each member of staff, the school's priorities, and the many leadership roles successfully undertaken by the teachers. Pay increases are linked to performance.
- The headteacher leads the teaching team by example and by robustly checking the quality of teaching. His observations are sharply focused on pupils' learning and progress. His feedback to teachers is candid, and very clear where a small change might be made which could lead to pupils making faster progress. There is no hint of complacency.
- The school's plans for ongoing improvement do not reflect the very thorough checks that it makes on its own performance. Current plans are not focused sharply enough on exactly what is to be improved. The criteria against which the headteacher and governors can evaluate success are not precise enough for them to assess the impact of the actions they have taken.
- The subjects and topics the pupils are taught provide them with many interesting opportunities to learn and make rapid progress. The pupils read, write and apply the skills they learn in mathematics in a range of subjects. The curriculum is enriched by many visits and after-school clubs, such as board games, multisport and gardening.
- The extra funding for sport is being used to provide the pupils with a greater range of opportunities for physical exercise, both during and after school. A sports coach leads games lessons and after-school clubs. The teachers are also working alongside a coach to improve the teaching of physical education. Pupils greatly appreciate their regular swimming lessons.
- The local authority keeps a watching brief on the school's performance through an annual review. Where additional assistance is requested – for example, to implement changes to the way teaching in the Reception and Year 1 and 2 class is managed – the local authority has arranged specialist support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are involved in a wide range of activities in school which allow them to assess for themselves how well the school is doing. They are well informed about the quality of teaching
 - Governors receive regular reviews of the school's performance through the headteacher's detailed reports. They have recently held a meeting on a Saturday to take their discussions beyond their usual business meeting in order to reassess and consider how they can play a more strategic role in the school's future
 - Governors went to considerable lengths to ensure that they recruited the teaching staff to maintain the high standards which have been established over several years

- Governors set the headteacher demanding targets for maintaining and improving the school’s performance, and they assure themselves that the teachers’ appraisals are carried out diligently
- Governors check that arrangements to make sure that the pupils are kept as safe as possible are up to date and meet current requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	124272
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	441268

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	34
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Pool
Headteacher	Richard Sutton
Date of previous school inspection	15 October 2007
Telephone number	01260 226303
Fax number	n/a
Email address	office@rushton.staffs.sch.uk

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