

Rushmere Hall Primary School

Lanark Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 3EJ

Inspection dates

28–29 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The new headteacher's resolve to improve the school is impressive. He is clear about what the school needs to do in order to develop further and is setting a strong course of rapid improvement.
- Governance is a strength of the school. Skilled governors know the school well and make frequent monitoring visits to check progress against the school's development plan. The governing body holds school leaders at all levels to account for the actions they take.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers are conscientious and keen to improve through taking part in the wide range of training offered by the school.
- Additional adults are efficiently deployed across the school and effectively support pupils with their learning. They work closely with teachers in the classroom to ensure that all pupils can take part in lessons. This includes those from the Hearing Impaired Unit and Speech and Language Unit.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good across the school.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and the overwhelming majority of parents agree. There are effective safeguarding procedures at the school.
- Pupils' overall attendance has risen in 2017. Staff are taking effective, appropriate action for the small proportion of pupils for whom attendance is below the national average.
- The early years provision is well led. Children enjoy coming to school and are well prepared for the transition to key stage 1.
- Outcomes for pupils have improved since the previous inspection. Overall standards have risen in key stage 1 and pupils' outcomes by the end of key stage 2 were in line with national standards or above in 2016.
- The teaching of phonics is now a strength of the school. There has been a big improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in 2017. However, the numbers of disadvantaged pupils who reach the expected standard in phonics is still lower than other groups.
- Pupils make significant progress in reading and writing by the end of Year 6. However, teachers do not always give pupils sufficient opportunities to practise writing at length across the curriculum in key stage 2. Similarly, there is scope to improve the effectiveness of guided reading sessions in key stage 2 so that pupils deepen their reading skills.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes in phonics for disadvantaged pupils so that they are in line with other groups nationally.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - developing consistent opportunities for pupils to write at length across the curriculum in key stage 2
 - enhancing guided reading sessions at key stage 2 so that they effectively develop pupils' reading skills
 - ensuring that leaders' and manager's monitoring focuses on writing across the curriculum and reading at key stage 2.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The new headteacher is unwavering in his determination to improve all aspects of the school's work. He has an ambitious vision for the school's future that is shared by governors and staff.
- Middle and senior leaders share the headteacher's high expectations. They understand their roles and are effective in performing their duties. Their clear sense of direction has helped all staff to focus on improving the standard of teaching and, as a consequence, this has had a positive impact on pupils' learning. This shared sense of hope and ambition was encapsulated by one leader saying that the 'pace and potential to improve at the school is at its strongest in the last 20 years'.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate. Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to be done next. Improvement planning is detailed and continually sharpened to focus on areas that will make the most difference to pupils.
- Teaching is good because leaders and governors use performance management procedures effectively. Targets are closely matched to the needs of the individual and the school. Staff spoke positively about the range and depth of training they receive. This helps staff to improve outcomes for pupils and thus achieve their targets.
- Pupils learn through a broad and balanced curriculum. The school uses specialists to support the teaching of French and music. Displays around the school show the breadth of pupils' learning, ranging from descriptions of Roman soldiers to aboriginal art and poetry about visiting the seaside. This range of activities ensures that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. For example, when learning about Viking runes, pupils also considered the Viking religious beliefs. Equally, in Year 6 the pupils learn about six different major religions as part of their topic work.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. For example, the election of a Prime Minister for the school and the work during refugee week promotes values such as democracy and respect.
- Leaders use the additional funding that they receive for physical education and sport premium effectively. Specialist training for staff has improved the quality of provision in sports such as cricket, tennis and gymnastics. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a range of extra-curricular activities, including Zumba, cricket and Gaelic football. As a consequence, participation in sporting activities has increased.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively. This has a positive impact on the achievement and welfare of pupils who are disadvantaged. In 2017, there has been a big improvement in the numbers of pupils in receipt of pupil premium reaching the expected standard or above in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1.
- The overwhelming majority of parents are happy with the school. Almost all of the parents who responded to Parent View said that they would recommend the school to others. One parent spoke for many by saying that, 'It's a great school with hard-working, dedicated staff who always put the children first. Both my children have been very happy at the school. They have thrived both academically and in becoming well-rounded individuals.'

- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective. Pupils from both the Hearing Impaired Unit and the Speech and Language Unit integrate seamlessly into the school. The school has an experienced special educational needs coordinator, who collaborates effectively with parents and external agencies to ensure that pupils receive appropriate support. As a consequence of the effective use of additional funding, its impact on pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has been to ensure that they make good progress from their starting points.
- Since the last inspection the school has received effective support from the local authority. A standards and excellence officer has worked with Rushmere Hall governors to ensure that they are clearly holding school leaders to account. This support has contributed to the improvements at the school.
- Although pupils make significant progress in reading and writing by the end of Year 6, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise their skills or write at length across the curriculum in key stage 2. Where this is the case, expectations are not high enough and pupils are not able to develop their writing skills in a wide range of contexts. Similarly there is scope to improve the effectiveness of key stage 2 guided reading sessions.

Governance of the school

- Governance of the school is effective because governors have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Appropriate use is made of the experience and talents of each governor. An audit of governors' skills has been completed so that each committee has the best people on it.
- Since the previous inspection, a new chair of governors and a new vice-chair of governors have been appointed. They are highly ambitious for the school and work closely with the headteacher. They lead the governing body with a steely determination to improve the school for the benefit of the pupils.
- Governors work closely with school leaders to produce and evaluate plans for developing the school. There is a clear structure to governor monitoring that enables them to see clearly the areas in which the school has become more effective and prioritise the areas which require further improvement. Notes from governor monitoring show that governors regularly challenge leaders about pupil performance information and question when it is below the national average. Equally, these frequent visits give governors an opportunity to check on progress towards the targets in the school's development plan. Consequently, governors effectively challenge and support the school because they know it well.
- The governing body rigorously check the arrangements for the appraisal of staff including the headteacher. Salary increases are clearly linked to performance and pupil progress to ensure that good teaching is rewarded.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A strong safeguarding culture exists within the school. Rigorous checks are undertaken

to ensure that only suitable people work with children in the school and the single central record meets all statutory requirements.

- A robust safeguarding system is in place and procedures are clear if staff have any concerns. These are quickly investigated and referrals are made to relevant external agencies when necessary. Precise records are kept by the school of any concerns and how they have been followed up.
- The designated safeguarding lead is well trained. She ensures that vulnerable pupils are well supported by the school and works effectively with their families as well as outside agencies.
- Staff are up to date with all government safeguarding guidance, including 'Prevent', which identifies the support available to pupils who are vulnerable to extremism or radicalisation. Members of staff clearly understand the importance of safeguarding and the school's procedures.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. The vast majority of parents agree that pupils at the school are well taught.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teachers make effective use of their subject knowledge to plan interesting lessons that proceed at an appropriate pace. Across the school, pupils take responsibility for their learning and settle quickly to tasks because they want to learn. There is a positive ethos of the importance of learning from making mistakes. As a consequence, pupils feel safe to take risks and are not worried if they get something wrong.
- The teaching of phonics has improved. In the early years and key stage 1, teachers and teaching assistants have received high-quality training that is being used consistently by teachers to create well-planned phonics lessons. As a result, phonics teaching from nursery to Year 2 is a strength of the school.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Where teaching assistants are most effective, they use skilled questioning to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. Specialist teaching assistants use sign language to enable pupils from the Hearing Impaired Unit to be integrated into lessons. Equally specialist teaching assistants use a range of effective strategies to enable pupils in the Speech and Language Unit to develop their skills and understanding of spoken English. Consequently, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points.
- Staff's application of the school policy on assessment is effective. Teachers use regular assessments to identify pupils who are at risk of falling behind and take appropriate action to tackle issues as they arise.
- Pupils have opportunities to embed key writing skills in English lessons. Progress is seen from the Year 2 writing in response to the story of the 'The three little wolves and the big bad pig' to Year 6 pupils writing a description of what it would be like to be in the Edward Hopper picture 'Nighthawks'. While there is clear progress in writing in English books over time, pupils are not consistently given opportunities to write at length across the curriculum in key stage 2.

- Reading is mostly well taught in the school and pupils enjoy reading for pleasure. During the inspection, teaching assistants were observed successfully promoting a love of stories with younger pupils. However, there is scope to improve guiding reading sessions in key stage 2 as some activities in these sessions are not effective.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel safe in school. Pupils told inspectors that they are confident that any issues concerning their emotional or physical well-being will quickly be sorted out by adults. Pupils also gave examples of how they are taught to keep themselves safe, such as when using the internet or other forms of technology.
- The vast majority of parents say that their child is safe at school.
- Pupils display high levels of kindness and tolerance towards each other. An inspector saw a pupil showing great consideration and empathy when supporting their partner, who was new to the school, in paired reading work.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. The large majority of pupils listen attentively and respectfully to the teacher and to each other. Incidents of low-level disruption or off-task behaviour are rare. This is because the school has clear systems for rewards and sanctions that are understood by the pupils. Pupils told inspectors that they valued rewards for good behaviour, such as 'pride points' and 'friendship points'.
- Pupils' conduct at playtimes and lunchtimes is good. Pupils have a wide range of activities available to take part in and they conduct themselves well. Pupils have the opportunity to hold positions of responsibility at playtimes and lunchtimes. These include as peer mentors and prefects who are taught how to help other pupils resolve low-level problems.
- Pupils' behaviour as they move around the school is good and they are polite to visitors, staff and their peers.
- Pupils say that they like coming to school because the teachers make it enjoyable. As a consequence, overall attendance has risen in 2017 and is now in line with the national figure. The school has designated staff to focus specifically on improving attendance. Their work with families has been effective in decreasing the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent. Despite these actions, the attendance of some groups of pupils is improving too slowly and remains below the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes have improved since the previous inspection. This is because teaching across

the school is now good. Work in pupils' books and the school's current assessment information broadly shows that pupils' progress is good throughout the school.

- Children's needs are carefully assessed upon entry to the early years and their progress across the year is rigorously tracked. As a consequence, the proportion of children who reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has consistently been above the national average since 2015.
- The teaching of phonics is now a strength of the school. It is taught effectively to enable pupils to read well from an early age. This has resulted in big improvements in the number of pupils reaching the expected standard in 2017, with over three quarters reaching or exceeding the pass mark. While the impact of additional funding has led to a large increase in the numbers of pupils who are disadvantaged reaching the expected standard in phonics, this figure is still lower than other groups.
- In 2017, assessments showed that pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 have improved on the previous year. The performance of groups of pupils, such as those who are disadvantaged, has also improved since 2016, particularly in mathematics.
- In 2016, pupils in key stage 2 made significant progress overall in both reading and writing, while their progress in mathematics was similar to other pupils nationally. The progress of disadvantaged pupils at Rushmere Hall, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, was broadly in line with national standards for reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Similarly, pupils from the Hearing Impaired Unit make good progress, although often from lower starting points. The reason why these pupils make good progress is because they are ably supported by staff, who accurately identify each individual's needs and tailor support to meet them. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities by the end of key stage 2 in 2016, including those from the Hearing Impaired Unit, was similar to national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The Speech and Language provision for pupils in Years 1 and 2 provides good specialist support to pupils. This enables these pupils to learn alongside their peers in general classes. As a result, they make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils in Year 6 told inspectors that they feel well prepared for the move to secondary school.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of the early years is a strength of the school. The phase leader is effective because she has a very clear and detailed understanding of the issues that need to be tackled in order to move on practice in this area. A comprehensive action plan is used to ensure a systematic approach to self-evaluation, with timely monitoring used to analyse the impact of actions taken. This cycle is firmly embedded in practice and all staff share in agreeing the required actions.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils are kept safe in the nursery and reception classes because all welfare requirements are met in full.

- The phase leader uses performance management procedures effectively to hold staff to account for their practice. This is supported by detailed analysis of monitoring information alongside professional development opportunities that are tailored closely to staff needs. The impact of these actions can be seen in the rise in proportion of the children achieving a good level of development in 2017 for the second year in succession.
- The quality of teaching is good and children enjoy coming to school. The tracking of children's achievements is robust. Teachers and classroom assistants work well together to assess children regularly and plan for the next steps in their learning.
- Behaviour in the early years is good because of the quality of the relationships. Children listen to their teacher and each other. They also listen to adults carefully and follow instructions.
- Children who are disadvantaged receive additional support from adults and this helps them to make good progress. As a consequence, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who achieve a good level of development has risen from just half in 2015 to almost three quarters in 2017. There are equally well-organised interventions that secure accelerated progress from their starting points for more able children, children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or children who have additional language needs.
- The curriculum offers a breadth of motivating topics, some of which are specifically design to address emerging weaker areas of learning. The indoor and outdoor learning environments are well organised so that children develop independence and self-direction.
- The school works well with parents. They ensure a high level of engagement with open evenings, performances, 'stay and play' sessions and meetings. Parents are positive about the school and the experiences of their children. Parents contribute well to their children's progress and achievement records, ensuring a partnership approach to education.
- Transition between Nursery and Reception, as well as between Reception and Year 1, are good because they are managed effectively. As a result, children settle well.

School details

Unique reference number	124679
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10031384

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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	627
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Alex Davison
Headteacher	Paul Stock
Telephone number	01473 726027
Website	www.rushmerehallprimaryschool.com
Email address	p.stock@rushmerehall.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–4 June 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Rushmere Hall is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan or statement of special education needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school has a specialist Speech and Language Unit attached to it for 15 pupils and a specialist Hearing Impaired Unit for 10 pupils.
- The headteacher and chair of governors have changed since the last section 5 inspection. They both took up their current positions in September 2016.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited classes in every year across the school at least once, observing teaching and learning, talking to pupils and assessing the quality of their work. The headteacher and both deputy headteachers accompanied the inspectors on some classroom visits. There were also a number of shorter visits to lessons to track particular groups of pupils as well as visits to the Hearing Impaired Unit and the Speech and Language Unit.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including the school's analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, information on pupils' attainment and progress, records of behaviour and safety, governor monitoring records and safeguarding documents.
- Inspectors looked at examples of pupils' written work across a range of subjects and year groups. The inspector also separately scrutinised a range of pupils' work including English, mathematics, humanities and science books.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, staff, pupils and governors. Inspectors also listened to pupils read. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils and were available to speak to parents on the playground. They also took into account 103 responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

James Adkins, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Jenny Carpenter	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Ladner	Ofsted Inspector

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