

Riseley CofE Lower School

Church Lane, Riseley, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK44 1EL

Inspection dates

30–31 March 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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors have ensured that this is a good school, where pupils behave well and make good progress.
- Staff work collaboratively together in the best interests of pupils. There is a shared sense of pride in the school and commitment to its continued improvement.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Teachers know pupils well and plan effectively to meet their individual needs.
- Pupils behave very well, both in their classrooms and during less structured parts of the day. They know and follow the school's rules consistently.
- Parents are very positive about the school. The vast majority of parents would recommend the school to others.
- Pupils feel safe at school and they that said bullying is rare. They have great faith that staff will quickly sort issues out when they arise.
- Pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects from their individual starting points.
- The early years classes provide children with a good start to their education. The provision is led and managed well. Children benefit from the attractive environment and from teaching that is well tailored to the needs of young children.
- Governors are not fully effective in holding the school's leaders to account. They do not place sufficient emphasis on checking that outcomes for pupils remain good.
- The school's approach to assessment is not fully developed.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop and improve the school's approach to assessment by ensuring that leaders:
 - check the progress pupils make, thoroughly and regularly, including the progress made by different groups of pupils
 - are able to track pupils' progress over extended periods of time so that they can be sure that pupils are on track to reach the expected standard by the end of Year 6.
- Improve governance so that governors are fully effective in holding leaders to account, so that the school continues to improve as it extends its age range, by ensuring that they:
 - focus more closely on outcomes for pupils
 - are regularly provided with good-quality information about the progress that pupils are making
 - routinely ask more challenging questions of the school's leaders.
- Improve the way that behavioural incidents are recorded, including those involving allegations of bullying, so that patterns of behaviour can be easily identified.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Riseley Lower is a school where pupils behave well and make good progress. It is a happy school where all members of the staff team work collaboratively in the best interests of pupils. The mutually supportive atmosphere makes the school a pleasant place to work and helps to create a feeling of welcome for pupils and their parents.
- Parents are very positive about the school. The vast majority of those who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, said that they would recommend the school to others. All the parents who spoke with inspectors said that they are happy with the school.
- The school's curriculum is suitably broad and balanced. The school has chosen to take a largely topic-based approach to learning. All national curriculum subjects are taught, with many being linked to the topic. Leaders have found that pupils are more interested in their learning as a result of this approach. English grammar and mathematics are taught separately.
- Subject leaders have a deep understanding of the effectiveness of the school's curriculum, gained, for example, through observing lessons with the headteacher. Leaders work closely together and share a commitment to improving provision and outcomes for pupils. As a result, pupils are taught well about a wide range of topics. Many pupils learn to play a musical instrument such as the violin, clarinet or piano, taught by peripatetic music teachers.
- Pupils are also provided with a good range of extra-curricular opportunities. Educational visits to places of interest are used well to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they learn about. Pupils in Year 4 are given the opportunity to develop their confidence and independence by attending a residential visit with other pupils from the local area. A range of lunchtime and after-school clubs, such as gymnastics, tennis, chess and basketball, enhance the range of activities that are offered to pupils.
- A very small minority of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Consequently, the amount of pupil premium grant funding that the school receives is very small. The funding is spent in a variety of ways, such as providing additional support in English and mathematics lessons, and subsidising school trips and the purchase of school uniform. The pupil premium grant is spent effectively and disadvantaged pupils make good progress.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is spent effectively. Some of the funding is used to pay for the school's subscription to a local school sports partnership. Membership of the partnership has increased the number of competitions, festivals and other sporting events that pupils have the opportunity to participate in. Specialist sports coaches provide both expert teaching for pupils and professional development for staff.
- Additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is spent effectively. Because of the small number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, the coordinator is able to monitor pupils' progress on an

individual basis. The coordinator provides regular 'clinics' for staff, which provide useful opportunities to discuss individual pupils' needs and to ensure that those needs are met fully.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. The school focuses on a new value, such as humility or respect, every four weeks. Staff take every opportunity to reinforce pupils' understanding of the current value during lessons and other parts of the school day. Displays are used to reinforce messages about equality and other fundamental British values.
- Leaders are not fully effective in monitoring outcomes for pupils because the school's approach to assessment is underdeveloped.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school well. They visit regularly and are committed to its continued improvement. Governors provide good support to the school's leaders.
- Governors have a very thorough understanding of the challenges facing the school in the near future. They have ensured that practical matters, such as those relating to the construction of the new school building, are dealt with fully.
- Governors do not receive sufficiently frequent or detailed assessment information to allow them to check how well pupils, and groups of pupils, are doing in different subjects. Governors do not ask sufficiently challenging questions of the school's leaders to ensure that they hold them fully to account for the progress pupils make.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's single central record of pre-employment checks meets statutory requirements. The record is well maintained and shows a robust approach to ensuring that only suitable people are employed to work with children.
- Leaders have improved the way that child protection records are kept and maintained. Records are now appropriate and fit for purpose. They show clear evidence that the designated safeguarding lead has taken appropriate and timely action where necessary.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Relationships between pupils and staff are strong throughout the school. Each pupil is known well as an individual. As a result, staff know each pupil's strengths and weaknesses, and what each pupil needs to do next to improve.
- Teachers have high expectations of how pupils should behave in class and around the school. They manage pupils' behaviour consistently, following the school's policy. As a result, the school is a calm and productive place where learning is rarely disrupted.
- Teachers plan tasks that capture and maintain pupils' interest. They think carefully about what they want pupils to learn and what tasks pupils could be given to achieve

that aim. Teachers plan work at different levels of difficulty to meet the needs of individual pupils.

- Mathematics is taught well. The impact of the school's emphasis on teaching reasoning skills in mathematics is clear. Pupils show a good understanding of the mathematics they are taught, at a level appropriate to their age.
- The quality of teaching in physical education is strong. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this enables them to plan lessons effectively. Specialist teachers and coaches, such as in dance, are used well to improve the quality of teaching in the subject. As a result, pupils make good progress across the full range of areas within the physical education curriculum.
- The school's assessment system is underdeveloped. The school's method for assessing pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics was introduced in September 2015. Pupils' attainment is scored every term and improvements in pupils' scores are tracked. The system does not yet allow progress to be tracked over extended periods, such as from year to year or from key stage to key stage.

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 at school. They said that bullying is rare and that it is sorted out 'straight away' if you tell a member of staff. The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View said that they feel that their children are safe at school.
- Pupils are taught about a range of ways to keep themselves safe, at a level appropriate to their age. For example, they understand how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.
- Pupils are given a range of opportunities to take responsibility in their classrooms and around the school. For example, pupils in Year 4 take turns to operate the music system and the computer used for presentations during assemblies.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very strong and this encourages pupils to behave well. Teachers' expectations of how pupils should behave are high and they give consistent messages to pupils. As a result, pupils behave very well, both in classrooms and around the school.
- Pupils are well mannered, polite and respectful. They have a good understanding of the school's rules and their own responsibilities. Pupils are proud of their school. They remind each other about expected behaviour, such as giving a gestured reminder not to talk when the teacher is talking.
- Pupils attend school regularly and on time. The current overall rate of attendance is just above the national average. The headteacher monitors pupils' attendance carefully, particularly those prone to persistent absence, and ensures that appropriate

and effective action is taken to address persistent absence where necessary.

- The school's current system for recording behavioural incidents does not allow incidents to be analysed and patterns of behaviour identified. Allegations of bullying are not labelled as such and their frequency and those involved are not tracked.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress at Riseley Lower School. In 2016, the proportion of key stage 1 pupils who reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was just above the national average. The work in pupils' exercise books shows clearly that pupils are making good progress in a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils make good progress in learning phonics. The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been above the national average for the last three years.
- The pupil premium grant is spent effectively and disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their individual starting points. The very small number of disadvantaged pupils means that this group is known very well on an individual basis.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well by teachers and teaching assistants. Clear overviews show a range of provision in place in every class to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils' work shows that they are making good progress overall and some pupils are making rapid progress.
- The most able pupils make good progress and achieve well. As a lower school, there is no national data with which to compare the standards pupils reach or the progress they make by the time they leave the school. However, the work in pupils' exercise books compares favourably with the national curriculum's attainment targets and shows evidence of good progress.

Early years provision

Good

- Generally, children join the Reception class with skills and abilities that are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress in the early years and the proportion who leave Reception having attained a good level of development is, typically, at least in line with the national average. In 2016, many children had lower starting points and a smaller-than-average proportion achieved a good level of development.
- The early years leader has an accurate understanding of the strengths of the provision and the areas that could still be improved. She focuses strongly on each child and ensures that children's individual needs are met.
- Children in the early years are provided with a good range of interesting and motivating activities, covering all seven areas of the early years curriculum. Children's interests are noted and the curriculum adapted to accommodate them. There is a strong and effective focus on developing children's speaking and listening skills.
- The early years staff work very well together. Teaching is planned carefully and meets the needs of young children very well. Staff are highly effective in sparking children's

imagination and this helps to encourage good attitudes to learning. For example, during the inspection, a well-planned activity to hunt for the missing 'Trevor the Triceratops' both captured and maintained the children's interest for a sustained period of time.

- Children behave very well. They learn the school's rules very quickly and need few prompts to remember to follow them. Staff focus well on developing good behaviour, routines and social relationships.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective and are given a high priority. For example, procedures for dropping children off at the beginning of the day, and returning them to their parents at the end of the day, have been reviewed and strengthened.
- Good arrangements are in place to ensure smooth transitions, both when children join early years and when they move into Year 1. The good progress that children make, both in terms of their learning and their personal and social development, means that children are prepared well for the new challenges of Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	109624
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10031446

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	First
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	168
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lynda Simister
Headteacher	David Dyson
Telephone number	01234 708 218
Website	www.riseleyschool.co.uk
Email address	office@riseley.bedssch.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 May 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is in the process of extending its age range to become a full primary school. It currently takes pupils from Reception to Year 4, and also has a Nursery class. From September 2017, the school will include classes for pupils in Year 5 and Year 6. The school is due to relocate to a new site, to accommodate the extended aged range, in August 2017.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching and learning over time. Inspectors observed parts of 13 lessons, some jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked closely at the work in pupils' exercise books. They listened to pupils read and talked to them about their work.
- Inspectors looked at a range of the school's documents, including assessment information.
- Inspectors checked the school's single central record of pre-employment checks and other documentation concerned with the safer recruitment of staff and volunteers.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other leaders, a group of pupils and a representative of the local authority. The lead inspector spoke with the chair of the governing body on the telephone.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the day and with parents before school on the second day of the inspection.
- Inspectors took into account 30 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and 26 additional comments.

Inspection team

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