

Inspection of Rickleton Primary School

Vigo Lane, Rickleton, Washington, Tyne and Wear NE38 9EZ

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 June 2025

The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils attend a school where excellence is the norm. The school has high expectations for all pupils. There is a belief that all pupils can aim to be whatever they want to be. Adults' high expectations of pupils are realised. From the youngest to the oldest, all pupils achieve exceptionally well academically, socially and emotionally. The ambitious expectations set by the school flow through all aspects of school life.

The school values of 'responsible, proud and safe' are at the centre of the school's curriculum and ethos. Pupils are happy, safe and proud to be part of Rickleton Primary School. They benefit from a rich set of experiences that enhance learning and support their personal development. For example, pupils participate in residential visits that help them to develop independence and resilience. They also enjoy taking part in a range of extra-curricular clubs, such as circus skills and coding.

Pupils are respectful to each other. They have a well-developed sense of tolerance and equality. They have highly positive attitudes to their learning. This means that lessons proceed without disruption in all areas of school. Pupils thrive throughout.

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

Pupils study a rich and ambitious curriculum. The school has tailored the curriculum to the local area and its heritage. It provides pupils with a deep body of knowledge. The curriculum is well sequenced. It builds pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in a coherent way. Pupils make strong links between previous and current learning. They know how their current learning will help them in the future because of the school's 'aspirational concepts' approach. In the early years, children gain the early reading skills and mathematical knowledge they need. The curriculum in the early years prepares children exceptionally well for Year 1 and beyond. Pupils make links across the curriculum.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is carefully planned. The school identifies swiftly any pupils with potential additional needs. Staff are adept at making changes to lessons to support pupils with SEND to access learning alongside their peers. Consequently, they achieve extremely well.

The school's reading curriculum is highly ambitious. Staff teach reading very effectively. Pupils develop into fluent and confident readers. Consistent teaching of a well-established phonics programme means that pupils achieve well. This includes pupils with SEND, who benefit from precise guidance. Staff quickly identify pupils with gaps in their phonics knowledge. These pupils get effective support to make swift progress.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are exemplary at all times of the school day. Pupils know it is their responsibility to meet the school's high expectations of behaviour and conduct. They show high levels of respect for themselves, other pupils and adults.

The values of the school underpin the exceptional provision for personal development. The school ensures that the content of personal development programmes prepares

pupils exceptionally well for life in modern Britain. Pupils have a detailed and empathetic understanding of equality and discrimination. Their knowledge of protected characteristics is exemplary. Pupils show great empathy towards their differences. The school has carefully planned out a wide range of rich experiences for pupils, and the take-up by all pupils is high. The school considers carefully how to nurture pupils' talents and interests. Some pupils have additional opportunities to develop specific life skills, such as managing money and preparing meals, through a preparation for adulthood programme. There is a high focus on teaching pupils to support their own mental well-being. Opportunities for leadership and character development are extensive. Pupils relish taking on roles of responsibility, such as being a mini medic, a peer mentor or an eco-councillor.

Staff receive regular and highly effective professional development. The school prioritises staff well-being and ensures that staff workload is manageable. The governing body performs its duties with appropriate rigour. It has a clear oversight of the school's effectiveness. The school involves parents and carers in the life of the school. Parents appreciate this and speak positively about the way in which the school communicates with them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	108818
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10379342
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	423
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kirsty Ross
Headteacher	Jan Price
Website	www.rickletonprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	20 and 21 March 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides before- and after-school childcare provision. This is overseen by the governing body.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other leaders. They met with representatives from the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and music. As part of the deep dives, the inspectors 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. Inspectors also looked at pupils' work and spoke to leaders and pupils in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils during lessons and at social times.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils and parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including governing body minutes, the school's self-evaluation and development plan.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online staff questionnaire. They also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Nichola Irving, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Deb Ward	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew James	Ofsted Inspector

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