

Inspection of Rothbury First School

Addycombe, Rothbury, Morpeth, Northumberland NE65 7PG

Inspection dates:	8 and 9 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are incredibly proud to attend this happy and vibrant school. The school's vision 'to be the best that you can be by doing the best that you can do' is lived out by all who are part of the Rothbury family. The school has the highest ambition for pupils, both in their learning and behaviour. Pupils rise to meet these expectations through consistently trying their best. Pupils are safe, happy and enjoy coming to school.

Pupils show interest and enthusiasm in their learning. Their behaviour is exemplary in lessons and during social times. Pupils demonstrate high levels of respect and kindness. They are thoughtful, well mannered and polite.

The relationships between adults and pupils are incredibly warm. Staff know their pupils well and value them as individuals. They are attentive to pupils' needs. For example, staff provide art therapy sessions for emotional support for any pupils who may need it. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. One parent stated, 'The school puts the children at the centre of what they do, ensuring each child is given opportunities to flourish.' This view captures the opinions of many parents.

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

The school has based ambition for all at the centre of its curriculum thinking. It has carefully considered the important knowledge that pupils need to learn. Subject curriculums are well designed to build pupils' knowledge in a well-ordered way. In most subjects, teachers deliver the curriculum with confidence. They provide pupils with many opportunities to revisit prior learning. Teachers check that pupils' knowledge is secure before they introduce new learning. They address pupils' misconceptions quickly.

The school has created a culture where reading is celebrated. Staff stimulate a love of reading across the school. From the Reception Year, children learn letter sounds and words in a structured and well-ordered way. As pupils develop their phonics knowledge, they are provided with books that match the sounds they know. Pupils quickly gain the knowledge and skills to become confident, fluent readers. Those who struggle with learning to read are swiftly identified and extra support put in place to enable them to catch up quickly.

The school is swift to intervene if pupils are finding learning difficult. The school has taken effective action to improve pupils' multiplication knowledge after disappointing outcomes in the multiplication check in 2023. In a small number of subjects, the way the school checks what pupils know and can do lacks rigour. Where this happens, gaps in knowledge are not identified and addressed as well as in other areas. This means that, on occasions, pupils do not achieve as well in these subjects as they do in others.

Children benefit from a well-designed curriculum in the early years. Staff make sure that children get off to a flying start. Children display a love for learning. They sustain concentration in their play. Adults are expert at extending children's language through the varied learning opportunities that promote discussion. For example, when making

pumpkin soup, staff took great care teaching children the vocabulary of cutting, chopping and grating.

There are strong systems in place to ensure that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are swiftly identified. Staff make sure that pupils with SEND have access to the full curriculum alongside their peers. The school provides highly effective support to pupils with SEND. Staff provide one-to-one support where required and appropriate adaptations to the curriculum are made. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well. They are fully involved in the life of the school.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. They are focused in lessons. Pupils show determination and self-confidence. A culture of respect and care is deeply embedded across the school.

Pupils access a range of opportunities and experiences to develop their confidence, character and resilience. Through the school's personal, social and health education programme and weekly character assemblies, pupils learn about healthy relationships, tolerance and equality. Pupils display a secure understanding of fundamental British values and diversity. However, their understanding of other faiths and beliefs is less secure.

The school offers a variety of extra-curricular clubs for pupils to attend, including football, choir and Makaton. Pupils develop their skills through musical opportunities and visits. Pupils learn how to manage the risk when choosing appropriate materials to build dens. Pupils develop into active citizens through the work of the school council. They relished partnering with the parish council and other local groups to provide a school yurt.

School leaders and governors provide highly effective leadership at Rothbury First School. They work well together. Governors hold school leaders to account for the performance of the school with appropriate challenge and support. The determination for all pupils to be successful is a priority shared by all. The consideration given to staff's well-being and workload is far-reaching. Staff value the professional development on offer to them. This impacts greatly on their teaching. Staff feel valued and enjoy working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, assessment is not as effective as it could be in identifying gaps in pupils' learning. This means that gaps in pupil's knowledge are not addressed quickly enough. The school should carry out better checks so that gaps in pupils' learning can be addressed more effectively.

- While pupils are respectful of difference and diversity, they do not have a secure understanding of different faiths and beliefs. The school should develop this aspect of the curriculum so that pupils have a better understanding of a range of faiths and beliefs.

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	122221
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10320367
Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Owen
Headteachers	Cheryl Auld and Helen Duffield
Website	www.rothburyfirst.northumberland.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	19 and 20 March 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, 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 visited lessons in some other subjects.
- Inspectors met with subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, members of the governing body and the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors reviewed surveys from pupils, staff and parents, including free-text responses.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.

Inspection team

Lynn Chambers, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Sharon Common

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