

# Richard Coates Church of England School

Thornhill Road, Ponteland, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE20 9QB

**Inspection dates**

3–4 July 2018

## Overall effectiveness

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher has created an environment where pupils are able to develop both academically and socially. The wider curriculum opportunities available to pupils help them to identify and nurture their talents and to 'let their light shine', central to the school's vision.
- Leaders have ensured that the transition from being a middle school to a primary school is being well managed. The new provision in the early years is particularly strong. Leaders know that there is still work to do to ensure that the strengths in provision in Years 5 to 8 are fully replicated in newer key stages at school.
- Parents, carers, staff and pupils are overwhelmingly positive about their school. One parent's comment typifies that of many, saying, 'This school has been fabulous from day one, my child has flourished here.' Pupils are happy at school and staff morale is high.
- Leaders have ensured that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Staff are supported through good-quality training which focuses on any new material that they need to teach.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points. The standards that pupils reach by the end of Year 8 are high and, in some areas, strikingly so. The quality of writing that pupils produce is an example of this.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils are polite, courteous and welcoming. They enjoy coming to school and rates of attendance are above average.
- The progress that pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make is strong because they receive effective support in lessons. Similarly, the additional support that lower-attaining pupils receive is of a high quality. Many of these pupils leave Year 8 having made very strong progress.
- Children in the early years benefit from a curriculum that ignites their natural curiosity. Children are both settled and confident, and they are making good progress in their learning.
- The headteacher is aware that there is still work to do to ensure that the changes that the school is undergoing are as successful as they can be. She knows that some areas of assessment and lesson planning, and the teaching of some lessons, are not as strong as they could be. Sometimes, the level of challenge is not quite right for pupils.
- Nonetheless, this is a very happy school. Its ethos is inclusive, it cares about all aspects of its pupils' development and it puts its pupils and children at the centre of everything that it does.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
  - teachers use assessment information effectively to set work which provides an appropriate level of challenge for all groups of pupils in the class, including in Nursery
  - teachers watch how well pupils are making progress in lessons and that they alter questioning or change tack more effectively to maximise pupils' progress
  - lesson planning in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2 continues to improve
  - an increasing proportion of teaching ignites pupils' imagination and interest
  - the teaching of reasoning and problem-solving in mathematics is more effective.
- Raise the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - the strengths in provision in Years 5 to 8 are fully replicated in newer key stages in the school
  - target setting and assessment procedures in subjects other than English and mathematics are more effective.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher is navigating the school effectively through major changes as the school changes designation from being a middle school to a primary school. She has a strong vision and wants nothing less than the best for all of the pupils in her care. She has ensured that the ethos of school, which focuses on nurturing individuals' talents, is alive and well.
- The headteacher's leadership is characterised by care and empathy. It is underpinned by precise systems and procedures which hold staff to account and ensure that pupils strive to do the best that they can. She is ably supported by her deputy headteacher, who uses monitoring effectively to do her part in improving provision at the school. Leaders' understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school is accurate and development planning is therefore focused on the correct areas of school life.
- Senior leaders know which aspects of teaching are strong and those that require further development. Leaders use monitoring information to plan tailored training to address any areas of practice that individual staff need to improve. As a result, the quality of teaching is good and improving.
- School leaders have developed comprehensive methods of assessment in English and mathematics. Information is carefully analysed and any pupils who are falling behind are identified quickly and additional support provided. These systems are less well developed in subjects other than English and mathematics, particularly in key stage 1 and Years 3 and 4. Leaders know that strengths in provision in Years 5 to 8 are not fully replicated in newer key stages at school.
- Middle leaders know that there is a job still to do in refining the curriculum for the new cohorts at school and they are up for this challenge. They have grasped with both hands opportunities to learn from colleagues in other schools. Some middle leaders' roles have changed and these colleagues are developing skills in their new areas of responsibility effectively.
- Leaders use the additional funding they receive for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to provide adult help and relevant resources. Many of these pupils are making very good progress. The support they receive in class helps them to develop their skills well.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively to improve the academic and personal achievement of pupils known to be eligible. Spending on extra resources is speeding up the progress of those pupils who need extra support so that they reach similar standards to those of their peers.
- The curriculum widens pupils' experiences and fosters their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Teachers ensure that topics that are being studied are enriched by visits and external speakers. These help to bring themes to life for the pupils. Learning in lessons and during assemblies helps pupils to understand important British values, such as democracy and respect for others. The topics covered in citizenship lessons provide pupils with knowledge about how institutions in Britain

function, and also offer opportunities for pupils to develop thoughts and opinions about how Britain works.

- Pupils' learning is further enhanced by the variety of clubs and activities that take place. In addition to the many sports clubs on offer, the musical opportunities available are also impressive. For example, pupils run a ceilidh band and some are developing skills in the Northumbrian pipes.
- The headteacher works well with governors, parents, pupils and staff to develop policies and procedures to ensure that there is a high level of buy-in across the school community. Of note is the anti-bullying policy, which has had insightful input from both pupils and governors.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors have supported the headteacher effectively during this time of transition. They have helped school leaders to grapple with some of the challenges that these changes have brought but have also sought to grasp some of the new opportunities available to the school.
- Governors provide effective support to leaders. They meet regularly with the headteacher and other school leaders to scrutinise different aspects of the school's work. Governors challenge leaders to reflect on the quality of education on offer.
- Governors ask relevant questions to hold school leaders to account. They play their part in checking the effectiveness of safeguarding. They also challenge the headteacher to account for the use of additional monies that the school receives to support disadvantaged pupils.
- During this time of transition, the governors have ensured that the caring and supportive ethos that pervades the school has been maintained.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a culture of safeguarding at school. School leaders put pupils' safety and well-being at the centre of all that the school does. Leaders ensure that pupils understand their own responsibility for keeping themselves safe.
- The headteacher is organised and has a keen eye for detail. Systems and procedures at school are tight. As a result, processes that ensure that pupils are protected are effective. Safeguarding training for members of staff are up to date and policies are comprehensive and meet legal requirements.
- The headteacher makes sure that any pupils who are potentially at risk receive the support they require. When working with outside agencies, she is highly tenacious in this regard.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Where learning is most effective in the school, teachers plan lessons that match the abilities of different groups of pupils in the class. They then ensure that the way in which the lesson is taught sparks the interest of the pupils. Pupils rise to these teachers' high expectations, show a thirst for learning and make strong gains in their knowledge and skills. As a result, pupils become fully engaged and strive to reach the very highest levels of attainment.
- In science, for example, inspectors observed learning where questioning was used well to gauge how much pupils understood about variation within species. An engaging activity was then used to see how much variation in physical features existed between pupils in the class. The teacher then used clever techniques to ensure that pupils shared this information quickly so that pupils' understanding could be further extended in subsequent tasks. In textiles, sharp planning ensured that pupils developed subject-specific skills and vocabulary effectively. History exercise books showed a high level of engagement with some very complex concepts.
- Not all classroom practice is quite this strong, however. Sometimes, teaching does not ignite the interest of the pupils. Teachers do not always use assessment information effectively to set work which provides an appropriate level of challenge for all groups of pupils in the class. Occasionally, teachers do not notice quite how well pupils are doing, and they do not then change tack or ask probing questions to maximise the progress that pupils are making. In addition, the development of reasoning and problem-solving on the part of the pupils is not consistently strong in mathematics.
- Pupils are committed to improving their work. They make good use of any feedback that they receive by making changes and learning from their mistakes. Pupils who need additional support are quickly identified and are given help to catch up.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors said that their children were taught well and made good progress as a result. Several were effusive about the quality of teaching at the school.
- The school rose well to the challenge of introducing children in Nursery and Reception and pupils in Years 1 to 4 in the same academic year. Pupils in Years 1 to 4 this year were taught in mixed-age groups. The headteacher ensured that appropriate support was in place for staff new to teaching these age groups. The quality of teaching and lesson planning is improving in these year groups as a result. School leaders are fully aware that they need to make sure that the strengths in provision in Years 5 to 8 are fully replicated in the newer key stages at school.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. They know about different forms of bullying, including those presented by technology and social media. Pupils are confident that staff will

help them to deal with any potential issues. They say that any bullying is dealt with swiftly and robustly. Parents and staff overwhelmingly agree that pupils are safe.

- Pupils whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable receive good support in their emotional and personal development. This builds pupils' confidence and enables them to become successful learners.
- School leaders have ensured that there is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills. These include acting as school prefects, sports leaders, yard buddies and reading mentors. The school council is also active and helps to steer the charitable work of the school.
- The school uses additional finances to help the development of sport effectively. Of note is the focus on boccia and other disability sports, which help pupils who have physical disabilities to integrate fully into school life.
- Leaders are proactive in providing opportunities for pupils to develop wider skills. One example of this is the scheme designed to encourage Year 5 pupils to enhance their enterprise skills by creating their own business. This year, pupils sold baked delights at the Grainger market in Newcastle, which was highly successful.
- Most pupils take responsibility for their own learning and show positive attitudes to learning in lessons. On occasion, a small minority, however, do not fully engage in class when tasks do not spark their particular interests.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are courteous, polite and friendly. They are articulate and self-confident. They talked to inspectors about their school with pride. Pupils move around the school with minimum fuss. Behaviour on the playground is good and pupils talk happily and play together well. They show respect for their school environment and help to keep it tidy.
- Pupils understand the school's behaviour and reward system and know that it is 'good to be green', rather than suffer any potential consequences of being 'amber' or 'red'. Any occasional low-level misbehaviour is dealt with swiftly and effectively by most teachers.
- Effective systems are in place to monitor and track attendance. Rates of absence are below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent. Pupils enjoy coming to school and few arrive late to school or to lessons.
- Systems to track the behaviour and attendance of any pupils who access part of their education in alternative provision are strong. Any potential issues are followed up immediately.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- By the time pupils leave school in Year 8, the standards that they reach in English, mathematics and science are high. Their high attainment in these core subjects helps them to access learning right across the curriculum. As a result of the standards that they reach, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

- From their starting points, pupils develop strong skills, understanding and knowledge across the curriculum. Assessment information and other inspection evidence confirm that pupils make secure progress in key stage 1 and through key stage 2. The progress that they make accelerates in Years 7 and 8 in this key stage due to high expectations and a consistently strong profile of teaching in most subjects. Pupils leave school having made good progress in their learning.
- Leaders ensure that teachers place a high priority on the moderation of pupils' work. Teachers work with colleagues from other schools to ensure that their assessments are accurate. Teachers can, therefore, pinpoint individual pupils' next steps with a greater level of accuracy.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported in school and make gains in their learning. Some make strides in their learning. Teaching assistants support these pupils effectively. These pupils make good progress from their starting points and the standards that they reach are strong as a result.
- Of note are the standards that pupils who arrive at school with low levels of attainment reach by the time they leave school in Year 8. The high expectations of teachers, together with the support that these pupils receive, encourage them to strive to do their very best.
- Disadvantaged pupils also make strong progress from their starting points. School leaders ensure that these pupils are well supported in class and that they can access additional curriculum opportunities.
- Most-able pupils make strong progress because lessons contain subject content that is both interesting and stretches their thinking. Teachers have high expectations of the standards that these pupils can reach. Teachers often question these pupils deeply to push their learning on further.
- Pupils develop their writing skills very effectively. This is because teachers ensure that there are opportunities to write at length in different areas of the curriculum. Writing skills are taught well in different subjects, as well as in English lessons.
- School leaders understand the need to ensure that the teaching of reasoning and problem-solving in mathematics is more effective. The progress pupils make in mathematics is sometimes slower than other subjects as a result of some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.
- Pupils enjoy reading and many are enthusiastic readers who are developing a love of literature. In one Year 8 English lesson, pupils were seen to engage deeply in interpreting and discussing a poem about war. They spoke very articulately about their opinions and about the emotional effect of the poem.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- The early years leader has worked with vigour to establish this new key stage in school and has been very successful in doing so. She has an ambitious vision and has high expectations of both her staff and the children in her care.
- The early years leader has an accurate understanding of the strengths of the provision and where she wants to make further improvements. She has correctly identified, for

example, the need to further develop assessment procedures and their use in lesson planning in Nursery so that they are as strong as those in Reception classes.

- Leaders have developed both the indoor and outdoor learning environments so that they reflect different areas of the early years curriculum. Teachers and other adults actively use the environment to help children move forward in their learning.
- The curriculum ignites a natural curiosity in children. During the inspection, for example, children talked with passion about the discovery of dinosaur eggs in the school forest. They were articulate when talking about this and used age-appropriate technical and scientific vocabulary to describe the hatching process.
- Children are happy and confident learners. They are polite and show respect to each other. They participate in activities with enthusiasm and work well with each other, taking turns where necessary.
- Parents value the quality of provision in the early years and speak positively about transition arrangements. School leaders have ensured that they have positive relationships with parents and have ensured that the early years provision is both nurturing and safe.
- Children make good progress from their starting points. This is because teachers plan well for the individual needs of the children in their care. The learning opportunities that they provide are both exciting and well matched to the ability of the children.



## School details

Unique reference number	122370
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10048229

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

Type of school	Middle deemed primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	508
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Austin Bowman
Headteacher	Heather Cape
Telephone number	01661 823 167
Website	<a href="http://www.richardcoatesceprimary.co.uk">www.richardcoatesceprimary.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@richard-coates.uk">admin@richard-coates.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	30 April–1 May 2013

## Information about this school

- Richard Coates Church of England School has historically been a middle school, teaching pupils from Year 5 to Year 8. Plans are in place to change the school's designation to a primary school. In September 2017, the school admitted pupils from Nursery to Year 4, in addition to Year 5. At the time of this inspection, the age range of pupils on roll was 3 to 13. School leaders expect that, in September 2019, the school will operate as a primary school, with classes from Nursery through to Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is similar to the national average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- In 2017, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

- The school uses alternative providers to support some pupils at key stage 3. Currently, a small number of pupils attend the Newcastle Bridges School for some of their education.
- There have been significant changes in staffing since the previous inspection. For example, the current headteacher and chair of the governing body were not in post at the time of the last inspection. In addition, due to the changes in designation of the school, the structure of middle leadership has been altered to better align to the needs of a primary setting.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning and groups of pupils working across the school. Learning, including in the early years, was also observed jointly with the headteacher and discussed.
- Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body and school staff, including senior and middle leaders. An inspector met two representatives from the local authority. Meetings were held with the teacher with responsibility for the early years and the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors observed pupils when moving around the school and at social times. They talked to pupils in lessons about their experience at school and looked at work in their books. They talked to two specific groups of pupils to hear their views about the school and about the behaviour of other pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the 27 responses to Ofsted’s online parent questionnaire, Parent View, including their free-text responses. They also noted the 34 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 76 responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school’s view of its own performance, monitoring records, information about pupils’ progress, improvement planning and records of behaviour and attendance. They looked closely at records relating to safeguarding and child protection and at policies, including those published on the school’s website.

## Inspection team

Michael Wardle, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Kathryn McDonald	Ofsted Inspector
Colin Lofthouse	Ofsted Inspector
Andy Jones	Ofsted Inspector

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