

Rode Heath Primary School

Heath Avenue, Rode Heath, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST7 3RY

Inspection dates

16–17 May 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, including governors, are ambitious for all pupils. The promotion of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects is at the heart of the school's drive to improve standards.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils' skills inform their planning so that pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning. This helps to ensure that they make at least good progress in their learning by the end of key stage 2.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and well-being are outstanding because of the efforts that leaders take to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Governors have been active in setting the vision for the school. They provide effective support and challenge for the headteacher.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses are sometimes too generous. Plans to further develop the school lack detail.
- The most able, and most-able disadvantaged, pupils are not challenged to achieve the highest standards in writing and mathematics.
- The effectiveness of early years provision is outstanding because of the carefully thought-out tasks that teachers plan for pupils. This is evidenced by the high attainment of pupils.
- The teaching of phonics is highly effective. Pupils read confidently and with increasing degrees of fluency and expression as they move throughout the school.
- Pupils benefit from a broad curriculum which inspires their curiosity, builds their resilience to failure and develops their problem-solving abilities.
- Arrangements to safeguard pupils' welfare are effective. Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe, including when online.
- Middle leaders are very enthusiastic and bring passion to their role. However, they do not evaluate the actions that they take to improve their subjects.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and learning do not always provide feedback to teachers on how to improve their skills.
- In the early years, the richness of the outdoor provision does not match the high quality in the classroom for promoting pupils' writing and number work.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school by ensuring that:
 - leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and learning clearly identify how teachers can improve their practice
 - there is greater engagement and challenge for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, so that they achieve the highest standards in writing and mathematics
 - the learning of children in the early years outdoor environment matches the high-quality experiences that are available to them in their classroom areas.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the accurate evaluation of school strengths and weaknesses informs more clearly defined plans for improvement
 - middle leaders adopt a more rigorous approach to planning and evaluating their work to improve outcomes for pupils in their subjects
 - governors fulfil the requirements to publish information on the school's website by making sure it is reviewed and kept up to date.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have effectively built upon the strengths of the school recognised at the last inspection. The headteacher has galvanised the entire school community around the school's vision for learning. This continues to be an improving school.
- Leaders and governors share an ambition for furthering pupils' learning. This is embodied in the school's curriculum design, which focuses upon enhancing pupils' natural curiosity and learning skills. As a direct result of leaders' approach to the curriculum, pupils have high aspirations for their future.
- There is a strong focus on STEM subjects to promote achievement for all pupils. The school's highly successful 'engineering habits of mind' project is providing pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum where the achievement of all is effectively promoted. This is enhanced by a range of extra-curricular activities, trips and residential visits.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have made a concerted effort to develop pupils' awareness of other cultures. Pupils are aware of other faiths and their beliefs. This has become a strength of the school. Pupils have a strong awareness of equality and diversity issues, which are promoted from an early age. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Staff appreciate the opportunities that they have to develop their skills. They attend a wide range of courses and discuss curriculum matters in staff meetings. Their performance management targets are aligned to the school's improvement plans, which ensures that all staff contribute towards the school's development. However, the feedback they receive from leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and learning do not always provide them with the next steps to further develop their teaching skills.
- The school's focus on engineering is led well because of the passion and commitment of middle leaders. The standards achieved by pupils in design technology, computing and science are very high. However, middle leaders have not been provided with sufficient opportunities to develop and enhance management skills. Consequently, they are not monitoring the impact of their actions on standards in their subjects.
- The leadership of provision for pupils who have special education needs and/or disabilities is very effective. Arrangements to support these pupils are coordinated well through the mapping and continual review of pupils' needs, support and achievements. The use of additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs is effective because it is used to directly fund additional staff to work with pupils on their clearly defined targets.
- Similarly, the arrangements for pupils who are in the care of the local authority are focused upon pupils' individual needs and removing barriers to their education. The coordination with other agencies to support their needs is a strong feature of the school's leadership and management.
- The school uses the funding for disadvantaged pupils well. Leaders chart the support that is provided for pupils and evaluates their impact in terms of the progress pupils

make. However, leaders and governors have not ensured that this is reported properly on the school's website.

- The school's funding to develop physical education (PE) and sports is used to provide high-quality expert tuition in classes. Leaders ensure that this is sustainable by using this as an opportunity to train staff to develop their teaching of PE.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses are sometimes too generous. Their plans to develop the school lack the specific measures needed to effectively evaluate school performance. This means that leaders and governors cannot quantify the considerable successes of their actions and cannot objectively set targets for future school improvements.

Governance of the school

- Governors have led the community in the setting the school's vision for education. They have been central to ensuring that the school's main focus remains on pupils' learning. This has allowed leaders to explore the exciting possibilities of STEM subjects which are inspiring pupils to develop a love of learning.
- Governors are knowledgeable about their school. They support and challenge the headteacher by asking probing questions during meetings. This is supplemented by visits to the school where they have further opportunities to question staff on specific matters.
- Governors have a strong overview of the management of teachers' performance. They ensure that pay progression is informed by evidence of staff having met their targets. Governors make best use of an external advisor to rigorously manage the performance of the headteacher.
- Governors do not always check their statutory responsibilities, for example in the publication of information on the school's website, where some information is out of date.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that there is a strong culture of vigilance within the school. All staff, including lunchtime supervisors, receive training and regular updates. They feel confident in recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse and know how to report any concerns should they arise.
- Leaders champion the needs of the pupils above all else and work well with other agencies to ensure that pupils access the right services to support their needs.
- Leaders and governors have received training in the safer recruitment of staff. The checks on all staff appointed to the school are comprehensive and well recorded.
- Pupils feel safe. They have a very good awareness of how to keep themselves safe, including when online, because of the teaching that they receive. Pupils feel confident that they can approach staff with any concerns because of the excellent relationships between adults and pupils within the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching across the school is consistently strong. Teachers pour their heart and soul into the planning of imaginative tasks that aim to engage pupils' interests, particularly in STEM subjects. However, teaching and learning is good rather than outstanding because of the progress made by the most able, and most-able disadvantaged pupils, who are not consistently challenged to achieve the highest standards in writing and mathematics. Rather than stretching their thinking, pupils agree that the level of challenge in these lessons is 'comfortable'.
- Pupils' work in science, design technology and computing allows them to achieve very high standards, which go beyond the requirements of the national curriculum. The school's engineering project has challenged pupils to design their own water-powered vehicles, create robotic musical instruments to play in an orchestra and produce plans for their own, virtual workspace. These projects often link with industry and there is a wealth of experts who visit the school to bring pupils' learning alive.
- The quality of phonics teaching is highly effective. This enables pupils to become fluent and confident readers as they progress throughout the school. Pupil read widely and for enjoyment. The texts they read are well matched to pupils' abilities.
- Assessments identify pupils who are at risk of falling behind in their learning. Leaders ensure that support is put in place and evaluate the effect of this in pupils' overall rates of progress. The work in pupils' writing and mathematics books shows that this system of support is successful in ensuring that pupils catch up.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress relative to their starting points because of the clear identification of their needs and the support that they receive in class. All staff share in leaders' passion for seeing these pupils achieve.
- Where teaching is most effective, pupils' misconceptions are addressed by the class teacher to deepen their understanding and teaching assistants are used well to support pupils' learning.
- Parents are informed about pupils' progress on a termly basis. Report cards inform parent-teacher consultations. Parents are very positive about the school and the feedback that they receive.
- The design of the curriculum allows pupils to consolidate their writing and mathematics skills in a range of subjects. This is also true of the numerous opportunities that they have to visit places of interest through residential and day trips. However, because they are practising their existing skills, they are not extending their understanding in these subjects.
- Learning is based on accurate assessments. However, the most able pupils, and the most able disadvantaged pupils, are not challenged sufficiently to achieve the highest standards. In some lessons they are not fully engaged because their thinking is not stretched. Questioning does not probe their understanding in order for them to make quicker progress. In pupils' written work, for example, common errors persist over time in some pupils' work, such as in punctuation or grammar mistakes that go uncorrected in their written work.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have grasped the challenge of promoting the awareness of other cultures, beliefs and backgrounds. From an early stage in their education, pupils are taught about equalities, such as the work in Year 2 where they have learned about 'different families, same love'. The school hall echoes this work with displays that quote pupils' own views. Pupils reflect the considered, reflective and open leadership of the headteacher.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of British values which is strengthened by an annual residential trip to London for Year 6. Strong promotion of these values ensures that pupils are well equipped for life in modern Britain, one such example being the school's recent success in public-speaking competitions, which form part of pupils' understanding of how democracy works.
- Pupils thrive in the school's nurturing environment. They are treated with respect and are valued for their opinions and differences. Staff are excellent role models. Pupils look forwards to the next stages in their education and feel well prepared for this.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of how their learning contributes to their personal and social development. Leaders have fostered a culture of openness so that pupils can debate issues. They discuss current affairs with maturity and understanding. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Their caring and nurturing approach ensures that pupils learn in a safe, comfortable environment.
- The school effectively promotes others' faiths and beliefs through visits to places of worship and carefully matched work to follow this up. The respect that they show for others is admirable.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding because of their exemplary conduct and their ability to maturely reflect on others' points of view. There is a strong, unspoken bond of trust and expectation between staff and pupils when it comes to the standard of behaviour in school. Older pupils more than repay the faith that staff put in them by playing an active role in monitoring and resolving playground behaviour as peer mentors.
- The school council have promoted anti-bullying awareness within the school community by producing a professional leaflet on the subject, despite the fact that bullying in the school is extremely rare. Pupils trust staff to act swiftly ensure that any poor behaviour is dealt with. The school's open culture means that pupils are understanding and support one another.
- Pupils conduct around the school and at playtimes is excellent. They are polite and respectful of all adults and each other. There is no use of derogatory language.

- Pupils and parents equally value the education that the school provides. This results in pupils' high attendance which continues to be above that of other schools nationally. Leaders have robust systems in place to deal with poor attendance where necessary.
- Pupils take great pride in their work and they maintain a high standard of presentation in their topic work. They have positive attitudes to learning due to the opportunities that are available to them, especially in science. There is no disruption to lessons, although a small minority of pupils were observed to switch off in some lessons due to the lack of challenge.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils are well prepared for the next stages in their education because of the standards they achieve and the excellent personal and social development that they receive. Pupils' awareness of diversity, equality and British values are notable outcomes that contribute to their preparation for life in modern Britain. More importantly, pupils are happy at this caring and supportive school.
- Published data shows that pupils achieve in line with national averages in science. However, this is a more modest reflection of the standards that pupils achieve in their work. The school's STEM website details the vast range of imaginative projects that pupils undertake alongside their design technology, computing and engineering work. In these subjects, pupils excel.
- The transition from Reception to Year 1 is handled very well. Pupils build on the work done in the early years and the proportions of pupils achieving the required standard in the Year 1 phonics check is consistently higher than the national average.
- By the end of key stage 1 pupils achieve well, although the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, do not achieve the highest standards in writing and mathematics. Although pupils make good progress in key stage 2, this pattern is repeated at the end of Year 6.
- Effective support is provided for disadvantaged pupils, who make good progress in writing and mathematics, although few achieve the highest standards. This is evident in their work books. When reading they make strong progress, so that they read fluently with expression and understanding by the end of key stage 2.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well to make good progress from their starting points. Likewise, pupils who are in the care of the local authority receive individualised support for their needs and, again, make good progress in their learning and their personal and social development to achieve positive outcomes.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Excellent leadership in the early years has ensured that the achievement of children has continued to improve. The high aspirations of staff and the quality instruction that children receive results in high rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Children's excellent progress in other aspects of the early years curriculum result in

almost all children attaining early learning goals in communication and language skills and in their personal and social development.

- Leaders accurately evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the early years provision. Their improvements have resulted in a three-year increase in the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development which is well above national figures.
- Close links with parents are promoted through daily contact as children arrive at school. Parents appreciate the approachability of staff and speak highly of the relationships between staff and children at the school.
- The teacher plans activities that are highly effective in promoting children's curiosity, for example when describing the feel of different materials. Their understanding of adjectives is clearly reinforced through their learning and all children are able to articulate what they are learning. This is further exemplified in children's written work, where the most able children shine because of the high level of challenge that they receive in their learning from adults who impact on their education with notable effect. Children soak up these opportunities to learn and are inquisitive learners.
- Rigorous assessments inform the planning of activities for children. Disadvantaged children in receipt of additional funding are provided with highly focused individual support and achieve in line with their peers.
- Children work well in groups and they follow routines well. When working together their cooperation and communication is of the highest standard in both teacher-led and independent activities. They reflect the outstanding behaviour of other pupils in the school. They clearly feel safe as they explore the different areas of learning that are available to them. They thrive in the nurturing environment created by staff.
- There is a strong focus on reading, writing and mathematics in Reception. When on task, children sustain their focus and concentration exceptionally well. This ensures that they are well prepared for Year 1.
- Learning in the outdoor provision is less effective than the excellent provision elsewhere because there is a lack of opportunities for children to engage in the rich opportunities to use number and write that are available elsewhere in the early years setting. This is something that leaders have already identified as an area for further improvement.
- The encouragement and support of the caring staff in Reception ensures that children feel secure and that they are safe. Safeguarding in the early years is effective and all statutory welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	111159
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10032239

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	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Andrea Rutledge
Headteacher	Mr Carl Leech
Telephone number	01270 685320
Website	www.rodeheath.cheshire.sch.uk
Email address	admin@rodeheath.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 April 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the school's most recent examination and assessment results, the school's pupil premium funding, the PE and sports premium funding or the school's accessibility plan on its website.
- The school is a smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is much lower than average. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils receiving support for special educational needs is below average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plan is also below average.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in each class, which included joint observations with senior leaders.
- Inspectors examined a range of pupils' work in mathematics, writing, science and from across the curriculum. This included reviewing pupils' engineering work electronically on the school's website.
- Inspectors heard individual pupils read from key stage 1 and key stage 2 and during activities in lessons.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils formally in groups and informally around school.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 78 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and of 10 staff who completed the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors made observations of pupils' behaviour during lessons, at playtimes, lunchtimes and when pupils were moving around the school.
- Meetings were held with three governors, senior leaders and middle leaders.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and its areas for development.
- Inspectors looked at attendance and behaviour records.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding documentation and considered how this related to daily practice, as well as speaking with staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Steve Bentham, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Gary Bevin	Ofsted Inspector
Amarjit Cheema	Ofsted Inspector

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