

Inspection of Rushton CofE First School

Sugar Street, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK11 0SG

Inspection dates:	13 and 14 May 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Sarah Cockersole. This school is part of The Talentum Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Ian Wilson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Richard Hey.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Rushton CofE First School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Rushton CofE (C) First School to be outstanding for overall effectiveness, before it opened as Rushton CofE First School as a result of conversion to academy status. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish in many aspects of school life at Rushton CofE First School. The school enables pupils to 'let your light shine'. It achieves this vision because staff know the pupils very well at this small, nurturing school. Pupils rise to the school's high aspirations. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) particularly thrive. Parents and carers unanimously agree. One comment was typical of many when they stated, 'The school really lives by its values; pupils and staff are respectful, happy and aspirational in everything they do.'

Pupils behave exceptionally well. They live by the school's REACH values of 'respect, empathy, aspiration, courage and happy'. They say these 'make us nice people'. Pupils work and play cooperatively in lessons and social times. A clear and consistent approach ensures that any behavioural issues are handled promptly. Pupils know adults will listen to them and help them make better choices.

The school is at the centre of its community. Pupils get involved in many village activities. They plant sunflowers in the local area and work with a local environmental group. The school also ensures that pupils learn about other communities, faiths and cultures. As a result, it widens pupils' horizons.

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

The school has designed a curriculum that provides pupils with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed. It has carefully thought about what pupils should learn and the order in which to teach content. The curriculum in early years is particularly well considered. The school has rightly revised a small number of subject curriculums so the important knowledge pupils need to learn is more defined. However, the school has not had enough opportunity to check and ensure pupils are learning as well as they could in these subjects. Therefore, the school has not been able to identify any gaps which may exist in pupils' learning over time.

Staff deliver the curriculum as intended. They know each pupil's learning needs well. They ensure that pupils in mixed-age classes receive the learning they need. Teachers regularly check on pupils' learning to ensure that they understand in lessons and address any gaps in knowledge. Staff are adept at meeting the needs of pupils with SEND in lessons. The school quickly identifies what these pupils need and provides effective support. As a result, many pupils with SEND catch up quickly and learn as well as their peers.

Children in early years enjoy an excellent start. Warm relationships between staff and children create a safe, enriching environment where play-based learning opportunities build confidence and resilience. Staff ensure that children make links across areas of learning. For example, when drawing pictures of butterflies as part of understanding the world, staff discuss how many wings or antennae the butterfly has to check children's learning in mathematics. Children are very well prepared for Year 1.

Reading is central to all learning. Pupils read in many different subjects. Pupils enjoy choosing books from the visiting 'library van'. The school has a well-established and effective phonics and early reading curriculum. Staff deliver this well. Pupils secure their phonics knowledge and fluency from an early age. Regular checks on learning help teachers to identify pupils who need more support to help them catch up.

Attendance at school is extremely positive. The school works successfully to improve the attendance of the very small number of pupils who do not attend school regularly. Staff support pupils who struggle with their emotions and behaviour very effectively.

There is a strong focus on pupils' personal development. Staff ensure that pupils develop into well-rounded individuals who are very well prepared for middle school. The school supports pupils' initiatives to raise money for charity. For example, organising a cake sale for a local dog rescue centre. Pupils are given opportunities to lead such as being members of the pupil council, Christian council and eco-team.

A well-thought-out programme of educational trips and visitors supports pupils' learning effectively. Pupils brim with enthusiasm about these opportunities. For example, younger pupils explain how a trip to a local historic house had helped them to understand what life was like at the time of the Great Fire of London in history. Pupils attend a range of clubs, and talents and interests from home are celebrated.

The trust and governing body play a pivotal role in driving school improvement through robust support and challenge. Staff feel valued and are proud to work at the school. They feel well supported by leaders and that they work effectively as a team.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the school has not evaluated the impact that revised curriculums are having on what pupils know and remember. This means that the school cannot be sure that pupils are learning the curriculum as well as intended. It has not been able to identify any gaps in pupils' learning which may exist. The school should ensure it carries out activities to make sure pupils are learning as well as possible in all subjects.

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	146594
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10344157
Type of school	First
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	47
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Richard Hey
CEO of the trust	Ian Wilson
Headteacher	Sarah Cockersole
Website	www.rps.ttlit.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 March 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, Rushton CofE First School has become a part of the Talentum Learning Trust, a multi-academy trust. It converted to become an academy in April 2019. The trust consists of nine schools.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school operates a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school is in the Diocese of Lichfield. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in September 2017. Section 48 inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They restarted in September 2021. The next section 48 inspection will be within eight years of the most recent one.

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 this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the lead inspector held meetings with the headteacher, a senior teacher, groups of staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body and the chair of the trust, including the chair of the local governing body. The lead inspector held a meeting with the CEO and director of education of the trust.
- 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.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, geography and art and design. They met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and viewed examples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils in some other subjects.
- An inspector observed pupils in key stages 1 and 2 read to a trusted adult.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.
- The inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also took into consideration the online staff and pupil surveys. An inspector spoke to parents at the end of the school day.

Inspection team

Barry Yardsley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sarahjane Cuncannon Edwards

Ofsted Inspector

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