School report

Inspection of Roxton Church of England Academy

School Lane, Roxton, Bedford MK44 3DR

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 April 2023

Overall effectiveness	**Good**
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Early years provision	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Roxton is a caring and nurturing school. Pupils are confident, happy and proud to be themselves. They feel safe. Pupils describe their school as 'a neighbourhood where everyone can learn and grow together'. Pupils are taught to be compassionate and kind through the school's values. These are at the heart of the school's curriculum. Leaders have created an inclusive environment. All pupils embrace their differences and celebrate what they do well, through targeted support and extra-curricular clubs.

Pupils enjoy learning and look forward to coming to school. They appreciate the interesting learning activities that their teachers plan for them, such as clay modelling and creating their own art gallery. Pupils study a well-balanced curriculum. Generally, pupils are supported well. They receive the help and teaching they need to succeed in their learning.

Pupils learn how to behave in lessons. This begins from the early years. Pupils respond well to leaders' high expectations of behaviour. Bullying is rare, as pupils know what it means to have healthy and positive friendships. They help each other to sort out any disagreements. When needed, pupils tell adults about their worries. They trust adults to help and care for them.

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

Leaders have constructed an ambitious and wide-ranging curriculum. This sets out the skills and knowledge pupils need to be ready for the next stage in their education. In most subjects, leaders' curriculum plans provide detail and guidance that help teachers break down important content into small steps. Teachers plan lessons that provide opportunities for pupils to revisit and practise their learning. This helps pupils have a secure understanding of important subject knowledge that underpins more-complex knowledge. However, in a small number of subjects, leaders have not identified precisely the most important knowledge and skills they want pupils to learn at times. This means that teachers sometimes plan lessons where they try to cover too much content. Some pupils find the work too hard and struggle to remember subject-specific knowledge and vocabulary. As a result, teaching is not consistently effective in these subjects and some pupils have gaps in their learning.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of early reading. Pupils throughout the school are encouraged to develop a love of reading. From early years, children are enthusiastic about retelling and recreating class texts. High-quality phonics teaching begins in Reception. Teachers identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge and make sure that pupils catch up. Pupils develop the knowledge and skills to become fluent readers. The books they read are well matched to their reading stage, and staff support pupils to become fluent readers.

Leaders identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly. They put support in place to ensure pupils are successful in their learning. Pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. Staff are well trained to meet pupils' needs. Pupils with SEND understand how to improve their learning. They have targets that break their learning down into small, achievable steps. This helps pupils with SEND to make strong gains in their learning.

Children in the early years benefit from a well-structured curriculum. Leaders use the environment to develop children's interests and independence through the self-selection of resources. Children learn how to listen and try their best. Staff know children's next steps. They model how to use different vocabulary and encourage children to think more deeply through the questions they ask. Children choose the resources to help them learn confidently. They know how to follow the rules and routines that staff expect.

Leaders and staff teach pupils how to learn successfully. Pupils learn how to make connections, persevere and work with each other. Pupils know these skills help them to become better learners.

Pupils are proud of their school. They know what it means to be part of a community and why working together is important. Pupils respect individual differences and diversity. Pupils learn how to look after their physical and mental health through lunchtime activities, including drama club and mindfulness colouring. Pupils experience a range of opportunities to develop their confidence. For example, pupils take part in special assemblies, school trips and community church events.

Governors are well informed about the actions leaders need to take to improve the school. They work in partnership with leaders to make sure that the quality of education across the school gets better. Leaders value staff members' contributions to the work of the school. Leaders consider the workload and well-being of all staff when making decisions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise safeguarding. They keep staff up to date with training. Staff spot and report concerns promptly. Leaders and governors understand their responsibility to keep pupils safe. Leaders act upon concerns with urgency. They seek support from external agencies for pupils and families when needed. Leaders take appropriate action to keep pupils safe. They maintain detailed records of how they keep pupils safe.

Leaders carry out all the required checks on staff. These confirm the appropriateness of staff to work with children. Leaders focus on staff and pupils' mental health and well-being. Pupils learn how to stay safe online and when out in the community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders' curriculum plans do not precisely identify, and break down into smaller steps, the important content and knowledge they want pupils to remember. Teachers sometimes plan lessons that contain too much content and knowledge, so pupils do not learn as well as they should at times. Leaders should ensure that curriculum plans in all subjects provide sufficient detail and precision about the knowledge that pupils will learn to enable teachers to plan sequences of lessons that are highly effective in supporting pupils' learning.

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' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	146269
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10267763
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	62
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Jenny Jenkins
Headteacher	Alison Barden
Website	www.roxton.school
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This was the school's first inspection since becoming an academy. The predecessor school was inspected in May 2018 and was graded as inadequate. The school became an academy in December 2018 and is part of the Diocese of St Albans Multi Academy Trust.
- The school has a breakfast and after-school club.
- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- This is a Church of England primary school. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in January 2018. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within eight school years.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and art. For each deep dive the inspector discussed the curriculum with the subject leader, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also looked at other curriculum plans, including for science and personal, social and health education.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, senior teacher, early years leader, subject leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.
- To inspect safeguarding, meetings were held with the designated safeguarding lead, teachers and pupils. The lead inspector also reviewed records, policies and documents relating to safeguarding.
- To evaluate aspects of the school and leaders' work, the lead inspector met with eight governors and trust representatives, including the chair of the board of directors and the chair of the local governing body.
- The inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- To gather pupils' views, inspectors observed and spoke with pupils, including at breaktimes. Inspectors reviewed the 21 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed the 37 responses and the 37 free-text comments submitted to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents.
- The inspectors took account of the 13 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for school staff.

Inspection team

Nerrissa Bear, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Linda Bartlett	Ofsted Inspector

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