

Inspection of Robert Wilkinson Primary Academy

West End, Strensall, York, North Yorkshire YO32 5UH

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 December 2023

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

The headteacher of this school is Donna Bedford. This school is part of Ebor Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Gail Brown, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Rachel Totton.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Robert Wilkinson Primary Academy as an academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school are friendly, positive and respectful members of the school community. They are happy and feel safe in school. Parents agree that pupils are safe. Pupils know that there are well-trained staff who keep them safe. They know there are trusted adults they can talk to if they have any problems.

Leaders, staff and pupils share the same high expectations of each other. The calm and purposeful environment within school exemplifies these high expectations. The school's ambition for achievement is equally high. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are exceptional. Poor behaviour, including bullying, is very rare. Where this may occur, pupils are confident that staff deal with it quickly and effectively. Exemplary behaviour for learning shines through in lessons. Behaviours and attitudes are further strengthened through the delivery of a high-quality curriculum for personal development. Older pupils demonstrate caring attitudes to those who are younger. Pupils benefit from carefully considered provision for their well-being. Understanding of equality and diversity is evident throughout the school. One pupil summed up the thoughts of many others by saying, 'You never judge someone for being different here.'

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

The school places a high priority on pupils learning the fundamentals of early reading. In early years, staff expose children to a range of books, rhymes and songs. From these initial experiences, high-quality phonics teaching enables children to achieve well. They become confident and fluent readers. This high achievement extends to disadvantaged pupils, including those with SEND. Where pupils need extra support, well-trained staff deliver targeted interventions with clear impact.

Leaders have high ambitions for the curriculum within school. The majority of subjects have curriculums that meticulously identify the specific knowledge and skills pupils should develop over time. Teaching is precise and targets any gaps in learning to ensure that pupils make demonstrable progress. Pupils can recall what they have learned. New learning then builds on pupils' prior learning. In history, for example, pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of chronology. They are able to talk about their learning about the Mayans, Ancient Egypt, Ancient Greece and archaeologists such as Frederick Catherwood with real understanding. In mathematics, pupils showed a deep understanding of mathematical concepts. However, in a small number of foundation subjects, the curriculum does not identify essential knowledge precisely enough. The curriculum design and assessment of what pupils know and can do in these subjects are not as effective. This means that pupils are less clear about what important facts they need to recall.

Within early years provision, children engage well in their learning. They quickly develop resilience and independence. The outdoor forest school provision allows

pupils to explore, assess risk and apply their indoor learning to new contexts. Children show high levels of concentration and focus in their indoor play and their learning. They access the provision with independence. Knowledgeable staff offer effective support. Interactions with these adults promote the use of language and vocabulary. Adults help children to extend their learning.

The school's personal, social and health education curriculum is ambitious. It is carefully planned and sequenced. Pupils develop into eloquent and mature individuals who are very well prepared for the next stage of their education in terms of academic achievement, behaviour and personal character. There are many opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These include a range of visitors into school, collective worship in assemblies and links with the local church. Pupils enjoy opportunities to take up leadership roles and responsibilities within the school. For example, they can take on roles as members of the school council, the trust's pupil parliament, peer mentors and sports leaders. As the school's catchment includes Queen Elizabeth's Barracks, the school has developed a 'service buddies' system. These pupils welcome new service families to the school with a written letter and then proudly show them around school on their first visit.

Governance at the school is effective. A knowledgeable and committed governing body is well informed by regular visits to the school and through detailed reports from the headteacher. Governors use this information to hold leaders to account. The trust has effective oversight of the performance of the school. Staff feel supported by leaders. They believe that leaders consider their workload and well-being as a priority. One member of staff summed up the views of many by saying leaders 'will listen and do what they can to help'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculums in a small number of subjects are not as well sequenced as they are in others. The essential knowledge has not been identified precisely enough in these subjects. This means that some pupils have gaps in their knowledge, so their recall of prior learning is not as secure. The school should ensure that the curriculums in these subjects precisely identify the key knowledge that pupils should know and remember so pupils can build on strong recall of their prior learning when they access new 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](#)' 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	140471
Local authority	York
Inspection number	10242423
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	537
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Rachel Totton
Headteacher	Donna Bedford
Website	http://www.rwprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 November 2008

Information about this school

- The leadership team of the school has changed since the previous inspection in 2008. The new headteacher took up her post in September 2022.
- The school converted to an academy in 2013. It is part of the Ebor Academy Trust.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- There is a breakfast and after-school club under the school's management.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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 met with the headteacher, school leaders, other school staff, representatives of the governing body, representatives from the trust and some parents.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science, music 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 discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- An inspector listened to some pupils from Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- 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.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the staff and pupil online surveys and Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Richard Beadnall, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Angela Spencer-Brooke	Ofsted Inspector
David Taylor	Ofsted Inspector

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