

# Round Diamond Primary School

Whitehorse Lane, Great Ashby Way, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 6NH

## Inspection dates

27–28 June 2017

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- A combination of consistently high expectations and relentless ambition from senior leaders and governors has ensured that Round Diamond Primary is an outstanding school.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide excellent leadership, and are well supported by other very able leaders. As a result, all pupils, including those who are most vulnerable, thrive in an exceptionally positive, caring and supportive environment.
- Governors have an excellent understanding of the school's performance. They hold leaders to account and ensure that resources are used appropriately so that pupils achieve the best they can.
- Staff receive highly effective training and support. Staff continually reflect on their practice and ways they can further improve. This has developed their knowledge and skills to rapidly improve pupils' outcomes.
- Learning time is used to the full. Teaching continually engages, challenges and motivates pupils and pupils make rapid progress across a wide range of subjects.
- Throughout the school, teachers encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils are not afraid to 'have a go' and get things wrong. Pupils say that they learn well from their mistakes.
- The rich curriculum inspires pupils and equips them very well for life in modern Britain. Pupils enjoy and engage in a wide range of clubs and experiences that further enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to a superb start and learn very quickly. The proportion of children who attain a good level of development is consistently above average.
- Pupils continue to make outstanding progress, and outcomes at the end of key stage 2 are above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. This ensures that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils work and play in a consistently calm and pleasant atmosphere.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school's work. They hold the school and leaders in high regard and appreciate the hard work of all staff.
- Leaders have established an effective tracking system in almost all subjects that carefully measures pupils' progress and identifies their next steps in learning. However, leaders know that this needs further refining in humanities to ensure that all pupils achieve as impressively as they do in other subjects.

## **Full report**

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

- Develop the assessment systems in humanities to ensure that progress is closely tracked and any underachievement is quickly addressed to secure the best possible outcomes for all pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide outstanding leadership because they are tireless in their pursuit of excellence. A culture of self-improvement is strongly embedded throughout the whole school. All leaders know exactly what they need to do to continually improve and maintain the high quality of provision and pupils' outcomes. Relationships are at the core of the success of the school, with staff working exceptionally well together.
- Leaders are highly effective in managing staff performance and teachers are held securely to account for the progress pupils make. Staff benefit from strong support, advice and guidance from their line managers. Teachers, including those new to the profession, set themselves high standards, reflect on their practice and are unfailing in their commitment to improve pupils' outcomes. They are especially mindful of disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. High-quality and extensive training has led to improved teaching and, consequently, better outcomes for all groups of pupils.
- Curriculum subject leaders successfully develop their skills and use the information they gather on the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes to accurately decide the priorities for improving standards further in their subjects. The high-quality professional training and 'coaching culture' offered by senior colleagues ensures that middle leaders are able to carry out their roles effectively.
- The highly engaging curriculum develops pupils' creative skills as well as securing high academic achievement. Extra-curricular opportunities are extensive and inspire pupils, adding to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. These include a variety of artistic, sporting and musical experiences. For example, all Year 3 pupils learn to play the recorder, and in Year 5 pupils learn to play the cornet. Pupils appreciate the rich experiences the school provides for them. As one Year 6 pupil stated: 'Residential trips are fun because I conquered my fears and I tried new things.'
- The school's informative website, and the workshops provided for parents, enable them to be fully involved in understanding the curriculum and how they can support their children's learning at home. Parents are rightly proud of how the school helps their children to develop into well-rounded citizens of the future. One parent, who spoke for many, commented: 'I feel confident that the school is preparing, empowering and enabling my children to lead independent, bright futures.'
- The pupil premium grant for improving the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is used extremely well. Leaders and governors swiftly identify any barriers to learning and provide highly personalised and appropriate support to make sure that any underachievement is successfully addressed. Leaders, including governors, regularly review the impact of spending. This ensures that disadvantaged pupils make rapid progress at a greater rate than other pupils in the school, and other pupils nationally.

- The primary physical education (PE) and sport grant has been used extremely effectively to raise participation in recreational and competitive sport. Enthusiastic sports coaches work alongside teachers to teach PE, and provide a wide range of physical activities, including many after-school clubs. The school has gained several sporting awards and the school's sports teams are very successful in a variety of inter-school competitions.
- Leaders make skilful use of the additional funding for pupils who have special education needs and/or disabilities. This is used very effectively to support pupils' learning and to give them an equal opportunity to succeed. The inclusion manager and her dedicated team ensure that these pupils make rapid progress from their starting points. Leaders track pupils' excellent progress routinely. Teachers and teaching assistants provide high-quality support to pupils and their parents. Leaders make sure that pupils' welfare and well-being are given the highest priority.
- The school's specialist resource base is exceptionally well led and managed. Leaders work hard to make sure that the pupils taught in the base are fully involved in the life of the school. The provision for the pupils who attend the base is outstanding. Current assessment information shows that they make rapid progress from their individual starting points and so achieve very well.
- Parents are overwhelmingly appreciative of the way that the school provides for their children. One comment, typical of the many positive free-text messages received during the inspection, was: 'The leadership of the school is exemplary, the school is fantastic at supporting the needs of children. Both my children are supported in different ways to achieve their own potential.'
- The local authority has provided effective support and challenge to the school since the previous inspection. Recent support includes the further development of the early years provision and training for governors. As a result, both the early years provision and governance are extremely effective.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governance is a great strength of the school. Governors have a wide range of skills and experiences which they apply extremely well to support and challenge the work of senior leaders. They share the leaders' clear vision for how they wish the school to develop in the future.
- Governors' minutes demonstrate that they ask very challenging questions in order to hold leaders to account and continually support school improvement.
- Governors have an exceptionally accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, often gained from first-hand experience. They visit lessons, analyse pupils' progress data, talk to pupils and look at their work.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Governors and senior leaders check, record and regularly discuss the robust recruitment processes and the single central record.

- All staff have received the appropriate training and information to help keep children safe. This includes regular updates. Staff understand the different types of risks the community faces and are up to date with the latest guidance regarding radicalisation and extremism, female genital mutilation and child sexual exploitation.
- The school has very effective links with different agencies, including the local authority, social care and healthcare professionals. These strong partnerships ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- The school's family support worker provides vulnerable families with effective support and advice. This support has helped some of the most vulnerable pupils' attendance remain regular during difficult times.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Outstanding

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is excellent. Teachers have high expectations for every pupil, whatever their ability. Teachers organise their lessons so that they focus on accelerating pupils' learning and all pupils make excellent and sustained progress.
- Teachers know their pupils exceptionally well. Teachers' excellent questions help them to probe deeply and find out what pupils know and can do. Teachers expect pupils to explain and think further. They skilfully guide pupils to work things out for themselves. As a result of this highly effective questioning, pupils are extremely articulate and make rapid progress.
- Teachers ensure that no learning time is lost. They expect pupils to work hard and pupils respond to this extremely well. This is because teachers have created a very positive learning atmosphere. Since the previous inspection, teachers have helped pupils become more independent in their learning. Pupils are taught how to reflect on their work and to accept that learning from their mistakes can be a good thing. Consequently, pupils take risks and challenge one another in a climate of mutual support and respect. One pupil explained to inspectors that making mistakes is part of pupils' learning at Round Diamond. He added: 'It's good to talk it out so we can help each other.'
- Across almost all subjects, pupils receive consistently high-quality feedback on their work in line with the school's policy. This is highly effective in helping pupils to make thoughtful responses and improvements to their work. This feedback is instrumental in helping pupils to make rapid gains in their learning.
- Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to learning. The excellent training they receive enables them to provide timely and effective support to all pupils. Teaching assistants' questioning skills help those pupils who require additional support to become more confident and successful in their learning.

- Reading has a high profile in the school and is taught well. Teachers' strong phonic knowledge is used to plan interesting activities for younger pupils. As a result, they quickly learn to use the letter sounds to work out unfamiliar words. Older pupils participate in focused lessons to develop their comprehension skills of different texts. Topics of work, based around different books chosen by the pupils, encourage them to enjoy reading for pleasure and to improve their reading skills. This is already making a positive difference to pupils' outcomes in reading.
- Pupils were able to speak at length about their reading books and they understand that it is important to learn to read, 'so that you can go to sixth form and then university'. One pupil enthusiastically said: 'I like books that are super-long!' Another pupil explained that she preferred to, 'read in my head because it helps me to engage better with the book'. This demonstrates the typical love of reading that permeates throughout the school.
- When writing, pupils eagerly set out to find errors and correct them using resources available or through peer discussion. After editing work, pupils confidently redraft their response so that it is of a higher quality. As a result, all pupils, including those who need to catch up, make rapid progress.
- The teaching of mathematics is highly effective. Pupils explore mathematical ideas and deepen their understanding. Teachers encourage pupils to talk through problems so that they can explain how to solve them. As a result, pupils' written mathematical solutions to problems show excellent applications of their skills.
- The quality of teaching at the specialist resource base is outstanding. The pupils who attend the base make rapid progress because the teaching is highly personalised, and based on their individual needs.
- The highly effective assessment procedures in almost all subjects ensure that leaders at all levels are able to track pupils' progress and attainment meticulously in order to quickly identify individuals or groups who are at risk of falling behind their classmates. Equally, this information is used expertly to ensure that provision is put in place to meet any pupils' needs. Leaders have identified that this systematic approach needs to be further embedded in humanities in order that the school's assessment information about the progress pupils make is equally robust in all subjects.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Outstanding**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.

- Pupils clearly enjoy school and actively participate in their lessons. One pupil, commenting about the school, stated: 'It's the whole package. The work that the teachers do and the planning, they are amazing!' Pupils are confident and eager to share their learning. The way pupils help each other in lessons is exemplary. Improving learning is interwoven into every lesson so pupils learn very quickly how to reflect on their work and make it better. Pupils are confident to share their work in front of their peers, who sensitively make suggestions for improvement. For example, during an English lesson, a group of Year 6 pupils were observed improving each other's work. One pupil suggested using the word 'coated' instead of 'covered'. The second pupil replied: 'Yes, that's a more interesting word, thank you'.
- Pupils celebrate and thrive on the diversity of the school community. They learn to appreciate one another's views, needs and beliefs. One pupil, proudly showing an inspector a display of all the languages spoken in the school, said, 'it shows everyone is welcome here, it does not matter where you are from.' Pupils keenly learn to use sign language so they can communicate in different ways.
- Older pupils look after the younger children very well and greatly enjoy the many opportunities they have to undertake additional roles, such as playground monitors and organising the hall before and after assemblies.
- High-quality assemblies and the personal, social and health (PSH) education programme support pupils' development very well. During a recent 'when I grow up' day, pupils learned about many different professions, careers and higher education opportunities. Pupils considered the skills they would need to be successful in their chosen career and the manageable steps to take to achieve their goals.
- Pupils know how to stay safe online. Pupils told inspectors that there is no bullying in the school and that they have complete confidence in the staff to help them if they have any worries. This results in the happy and harmonious atmosphere seen around the school.
- Pupils who attend the specialist resource base are cared for very well. They enjoy learning because the work their teachers plan for them is relevant and engaging.
- The overwhelming majority of staff and parents who completed online questionnaires during the inspection agreed that pupils are safe and very well cared for at Round Diamond School.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils work and play in a consistently calm and pleasant atmosphere. They show a deep respect for their teachers and additional adults. As one pupil said: 'The teachers work hard to make this school the best they can.'
- Pupils are extremely engaging and polite to everyone they meet. They instinctively hold doors open, thank staff for their help and understand that excellent behaviour is essential to their success in learning. Pupils are very proud to be part of Round Diamond School and were keen to show the inspectors around the building.

- The attendance of pupils overall has been consistently above the national average since the previous inspection because the school has highly effective strategies to monitor pupils' attendance and leaders act quickly if there are any concerns. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved rapidly as a result of leaders' excellent work with these pupils and their families.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Outstanding

- Pupils have exceedingly high expectations of themselves and, consequently, are eager to make as much progress as possible. They are rightly proud of their achievements and keen to demonstrate their learning in their work. In this highly ambitious learning environment, current pupils make outstanding progress across a range of subject areas and achieve highly. As one parent said: 'I am extremely happy with the level of progress that my children are making at Round Diamond. The level of teaching is very high and I feel my children are being helped to achieve their highest potential within a very supportive environment.'
- Children enter the early years with skills that are broadly typical for their age. Through accurate assessment, leaders quickly identify the children's needs and develop highly appropriate learning experiences for them. Consequently, children make excellent progress from their starting points. The number of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has been consistently above the national average, and on an upward trend, since the previous inspection.
- Across the school the teaching of phonics is very effective. The proportion of pupils in Year 1 who reach the expected standard in the phonics screening check has been above average every year since the previous inspection, including the provisional results for 2017.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1 and the end of key stage 2 has been above the national average since the previous inspection. The unvalidated results for 2017 show that the standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 continue to be very high.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make excellent progress from their different starting points, both academically and personally. This is because of leaders' and teachers' close attention and the varying types of support implemented to accurately match their needs.
- Leaders are ensuring that the differences between the outcomes of pupils who are disadvantaged and those of other pupils nationally, are diminishing. Leaders and staff know the academic and welfare needs of these pupils very well and give them individual attention. Any barriers to learning are accurately identified and interventions ensure that they achieve as highly as others in the school and nationally. As a result, disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make outstanding progress.



- The most able pupils achieve very well at the end of key stages 1 and 2. This is because learning activities are providing effective challenge to pupils, requiring them to apply their skills in a wide range of situations. The school's accurate assessment information shows that many of the current pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are reaching high standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Although in 2016 pupils' attainment in reading was above the national average at the end of Year 6, results were not as strong in this subject as in writing and mathematics. Leaders took swift action to address this by introducing focused lessons to improve pupils' comprehension skills and by tracking pupils' progress more closely to identify any gaps in their learning. As a result, the school's current assessment information shows that high-quality interventions have been successful in improving outcomes in reading this year.
- As well as in English and mathematics, pupils' work in almost all other areas of the curriculum shows that they are making at least good progress. Work seen in art, science, religious education and PE is impressive, and demonstrates that pupils are developing high levels of skill in these subjects.
- The pupils who receive support from the school's specialist resource base make rapid progress, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because their additional needs are accurately identified on entry to the base, and pupils are given access to a highly personalised and engaging curriculum.

### Early years provision

### Outstanding

- The early years leader, who is also the deputy headteacher, is highly ambitious and has driven improvements in the setting, while establishing an effective team that works together extremely well. This has enhanced the consistency of provision between the Nursery and Reception classes and improved outcomes for all groups of children. As a result, the early years provision is outstanding.
- The Nursery provision is an excellent foundation for all children to develop early basic skills. They quickly develop independence because routines are established effectively. This contributes to a calm and orderly environment where three-year-olds are taught to learn and play successfully together.
- Children receive tremendous support from well-trained adults who have benefited from high-quality professional development activities. The curriculum is stimulating and children are constantly busy. For example, children were observed making simple words using pebbles with letters on them, and another group of children were using a large model of a zebra crossing to accurately explain to an adult how to safely cross the road.
- Adults provide a range of fun and engaging activities and make sure that no learning opportunity is missed. For example, outside, a group of children were completely engrossed in an improvised umbrella dance to music. One child excitedly said, 'I am doing happy dancing!' The adult supporting these children very skilfully guided the children's movements with the umbrellas to practise and improve their physical skills.

- Children in the Reception classes really enjoy their learning. Staff plan and provide a variety of stimulating activities both inside and outside. Consequently, there is a constant and positive buzz of purposeful activity that effectively engages the children.
- Rigorous tracking of children's progress by staff and the early years leader ensures that no child falls behind in their learning. Leaders make incisive evaluations of what is working well and what is not. Where specific goals and targets are at risk of not being achieved, extra activities are quickly planned and provided to rectify this.
- Leaders develop excellent links with parents through open afternoons, workshops and the recently introduced 'Fabulous Friday' sessions, when parents come into school with their children to observe and support their learning. Parents appreciate the school's website with its wide range of information, including video clips that explain the school's teaching approaches and how parents can support their children's learning at home.
- Throughout the early years, the correct staffing ratios and qualifications are maintained, all welfare requirements are fully met and safeguarding practices are secure.
- Children are taught very well how to keep themselves safe. Photographs and pictures remind children of important safety rules. One child confidently said, 'I'll wash my hands before I have my snack so germs don't get inside me and make me ill.' Another child commented, 'I'm tucking my chair under the table so no one trips up on it.'
- From starting points that are broadly typical for their age, children make rapid progress through the early years and a larger proportion of children achieve a good level of development than the national average. As a result, children are very well prepared socially, emotionally and academically for the next stage of their education in Year 1.

## School details

Unique reference number	117299
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10031465

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	481
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joe Tidman
Headteacher	Zoë Phillips
Telephone number	01438 219410
Website	<a href="http://www.rounddiamondprimary.net">www.rounddiamondprimary.net</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@rounddiamond.herts.sch.uk">head@rounddiamond.herts.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	6–7 June 2013

## Information about this school

- Round Diamond Primary School is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is in line with the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who receive special educational needs support is in line with the national average.

- The school provides specially resourced provision in the form of a specialist base for up to 15 pupils in key stage 2 who have speech, language and communication needs, all of whom are in receipt of a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. Consequently, the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs, or an education, health and care plan, within the school as a whole, is well above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of key stage 2.
- The headteacher is a consultant improvement partner for the local authority.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in every class and attended an assembly. Several of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- A wide range of pupils' workbooks were looked at by inspectors throughout the inspection.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the inclusion manager, newly qualified and trainee teachers, the chair of the governing body and other governors. The lead inspector spoke by telephone to the improvement partner from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally in class, and around the school at break- and lunchtimes, to seek their views about the school.
- Inspectors met with several groups of pupils more formally to discuss many aspects of school life.
- Pupils in Year 4 read to inspectors. Inspectors talked to pupils about their reading habits and looked at their reading records.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website and a range of school documents including: assessment information; minutes from governing body meetings; the school's own evaluation; improvement plans; and records about behaviour, safeguarding children, and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the 86 texts from parents, and 86 responses made by parents to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire. They also spoke to some parents before and after school, and considered a letter and a phone call received from parents during the inspection. Additionally, inspectors took account of the 50 views expressed by members of staff and the 27 responses from pupils to Ofsted's online surveys.

## Inspection team

Fiona Webb, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Janet Tomkins	Ofsted Inspector
Susannah Connell	Ofsted Inspector
Sandra Jones	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Jones	Ofsted Inspector

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