

# The Rise Free School

Browells Lane, Feltham, Middlesex TW13 7EF

## Inspection dates

6–7 June 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher has taken the school from strength to strength. She is well supported by trustees and other senior leaders. The school continues to evolve and grow, as have the team of dedicated and talented staff.
- The school's main aim, to ensure that pupils are well prepared and able to thrive in their next stage of education and in society, is pivotal to its work.
- Pupils flourish in school because their personal development, including their mental well-being, is nurtured. This enables them to develop and sustain positive relationships and to successfully access their learning. Pupils are usually well behaved and keen to do their best.
- Careful checks on teaching, which inform professional development and training for all staff, have strengthened the quality of teaching.
- Teaching is effective, because lessons are interesting. This enables pupils to engage well in their learning. However, tasks are not always suitably matched to individual abilities, particularly the most able, including the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils quickly make up for lost ground when they join the school, academically and personally. As a result, better rates of progress are now being made by all current pupils. Leaders can demonstrate that all pupils achieve well. However, there are insufficient opportunities for younger pupils to apply their writing and mathematics skills in other subjects.
- Leaders do not track what progress the most able pupils make, including the most able disadvantaged, or check separately pupils' progress in reading and writing. This means that trustees are not able to drill down and challenge leaders even more in these areas.
- Pupils' personal safety and welfare needs are top priorities for staff and trustees. Pupils are kept safe and secure.
- Leaders are adept at spotting talent and nurturing this to build up teaching and leadership capacity. Middle leaders' roles are developing, but they are not fully responsible for the quality of teaching and pupil progress for their remits.

## Full report

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

- Secure rapid rates of progress for all pupils, including the most able, by:
  - giving pupils work that makes them think hard about their learning as soon as they are capable
  - making sure that pupils, particularly younger pupils, have more time to apply their writing and mathematical skills in other subjects, especially in science
  - enabling pupils to work on their own with the appropriate equipment to support their learning.
- Strengthen leadership and management, by ensuring that:
  - middle leaders are held responsible for raising the quality of teaching and achievement for their specific areas
  - progress in reading, writing and the progress of the most able, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, is tracked separately and compared with current national expectations.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher inherited an underperforming school. She provides strong and decisive leadership, with a clear vision that both pupils and staff will achieve their full potential.
- As a consequence, there is a rising trend of rapid improvements in all key aspects of the school. Pupil achievement is now good as a result of better teaching. Pupils behave well because there is a concerted effort by all staff to promote and nurture their personal development. As a result, the core purpose of this school is being realised, in preparing pupils well for their next stage in their lives.
- The headteacher has created a positive culture of teamwork, where staff morale is high. Their well-being is a high priority, including weekly well-being activities. Staff questionnaires are unanimously positive about all aspects of the school.
- The capacity of senior leaders has been bolstered further with the appointment of a deputy headteacher. She provides an exceptionally strong steer in improving the quality of teaching and learning. Senior leaders are undeniably skilled practitioners, who team teach and share their expertise to great effect, so that the quality of teaching continues to improve rapidly.
- Regular monitoring means that senior leaders have accurate information about the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. They use this information to secure the right level of support for teachers. Stronger teachers are encouraged to share their expertise with other colleagues. This, together with performance management, is securing better teaching across all key stages.
- Over the last year, assessment arrangements have been revised and modified, enabling leaders and staff to track the progress that pupils make in English and mathematics. However, they have yet to identify separately the progress that pupils make in reading and writing or the progress that the most able, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make. Equally, by using historical national expectations to compare pupil progress, leaders cannot be totally confident that progress is as rapid as it should be.
- A wide range of information is gathered and used to prioritise and plan for the right areas for improvement to move the school forward. Middle leaders are playing an increasingly important role in securing major developments in their areas of responsibility. They support colleagues well, including in their planning, to secure progression and continuity of key skills. Some middle leaders provide effective training, including phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) for all staff. They undertake some monitoring activities, but are not held to account for the progress that pupils make and the quality of teaching for their subject areas.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced, creative and flexible to meet the individual needs of all pupils. It is organised into eight areas, covering personal development, English, mathematics, topic/science, information technology (IT), arts, mind and body, and vocational studies. There are many extra-curricular activities to enrich pupils' learning, as the last hour of each school day is dedicated to a variety of clubs. All pupils

experience outdoor learning, including the Forest School, and older pupils undertake the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

- Leaders, including directors, use all funding shrewdly, including the pupil premium, sports funding and special educational needs funding. Individual support and interventions are personalised to meet the specific needs of pupils. These include bespoke emotional and mental health strategies, one-to-one support in specific subjects and extra-curricular activities, including music and sport. As a consequence, pupils, including those eligible for the pupil premium, achieve well academically and thrive personally.
- Pupils learn about different faiths and to be tolerant and respectful of differences. Indeed, pupils display great insight, telling inspectors that they know and appreciate that pupils with autistic spectrum disorder 'behave differently'. They demonstrate respectful attitudes and consider how they can learn from those who have different opinions. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is promoted through the school's core values and through the curriculum. Every opportunity is taken to develop pupils' ability to help and care for others. Older pupils help younger pupils at breaktime and listen to younger pupils read.

### **Governance of the school**

- Trustees are equally as ambitious for the pupils as school leaders. They have made sure that the school has begun to flourish following a shaky start, by appointing only the very best leaders, including the key appointments of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. They have secured a 'state-of-the-art' school building, which is well resourced, providing an excellent learning environment for pupils.
- Trustees are skilled and experienced in supporting and challenging leaders. They are well informed and know in-depth the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The rapid improvement group provides a high level of scrutiny to make sure that all pupils achieve well and that the quality of teaching continues to improve at a pace. However, although progress information confirms that all pupils make good progress, the data does not distinguish between progress that pupils make in reading, writing and the most able, including the most able disadvantaged pupils. This limits trustees' ability to ask even more searching questions to hold leaders fully to account.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Adults are fully aware of pupils' vulnerability. They play a vital role in safeguarding pupils, including teaching them to identify and manage possible risks from a range of potential dangers, including when using the internet.
- The designated safeguarding lead ensures that staff are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding so that they are able to identify and report any concerns. Safeguarding is given a high priority in staff meetings. There is regular and updated training so that staff are fully aware of issues such as those regarding radicalisation, child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation.

- The school works effectively with a range of external agencies, including the current seven different local authorities and health professionals. This strong partnership working ensures that pupils are kept safe. Relationships with parents are good and they too are helped to protect their children and to identify potential dangers. The designated safeguarding trustee monitors all safeguarding practices rigorously and ensures that this aspect of their statutory duties is met in full.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Many pupils need to make up for lost learning time, as a result of poor or non-attendance at previous schools. Negative past experiences create exceptionally low self-esteem, with subsequent challenging behavioural difficulties for some pupils. The school's efforts to address these issues are successful. Pupils begin to feel secure and confident, where gaps in learning close quickly.
- The profile of teaching continues to evolve as the school grows, with more specialist subject teachers in key stages 3 and 4. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They plan work in small steps, linking previous learning to what pupils will learn about next. This helps pupils to understand more, without overwhelming their ability to absorb information effectively. However, tasks are not always set at the right level of difficulty. The most able pupils complete the same work as other pupils before moving on to harder work. This slows their progress down.
- Teachers question pupils effectively, which makes them focus and think about their learning. Opportunities to develop pupils' language skills are threaded through lessons, through talking to other pupils about their learning, and clear instructions and explanations by teachers. Pictures sequence learning activities, which help pupils to know what they will be learning next, reducing their anxiety and allowing them to focus more on their work.
- Teachers are systematic in their review of what they have taught and what pupils have learned over a short period of time. They identify any gaps and then revisit and assess pupils' understanding again. Teaching and learning are targeted precisely on what pupils need to learn next. This is beginning to speed progress up still further.
- Teaching assistants guide pupils well in their learning. They provide a calm and consistent approach in managing pupils' behaviour. However, there are times when they could allow pupils to work on their own, if the right equipment is provided to support pupils' learning. This is especially so in mathematics.
- Teachers identify links across some subjects so that pupils apply their skills in different situations. For example, older pupils learn about fractions by counting out the right number of construction blocks to denote quavers and crotchets in music.
- Teachers use an array of activities designed to tap into how pupils learn best, as well as their preferred method of communication. Many activities are multi-sensory; for example, younger pupils jump in rhythm to a times table, supplemented by pictures and discussion.
- Younger pupils learn through a thematic approach, which develops key skills in relevant and interesting contexts. Phonics is taught systematically and is speeding up pupils' progress in reading and writing. However, there are too few opportunities for younger

pupils to practise their writing and mathematical skills in other subjects and particularly in science.

- Older pupils are taught by subject specialists, in school and through external providers. Those pupils who are academically and socially able study science at the co-located secondary school. As a consequence, pupils follow a curriculum pathway to secure a range of qualifications at the end of key stage 4, including in English, mathematics and science. Pupils study vocational subjects in school and in alternative provisions, including catering, horticulture and construction skills. The school has plans to broaden curriculum pathways next year, as the school continues to expand, and as more specialist teachers are appointed.
- Older pupils learn about potential careers in their personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons. Work experience is in school, with plans to extend this in the next academic year.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. This is the result of strong leadership, and because the school places this aspect at the heart of its work.
- Pupils' personal skills are assessed when they enter the school, giving staff an incisive assessment of pupils' social, communication and behavioural skills. This informs them of what actions are needed to support pupils as outlined in their individual support plans and targets.
- The school's information shows compelling evidence of rapid improvements in pupils' ability to interact appropriately. This academic year, there has been a significant reduction in severe behavioural incidents. As a consequence, most pupils are able to access their learning effectively.
- Leaders have invested a lot of time and resources to make sure that staff are trained to de-escalate and manage some of the most difficult types of behaviour. Adults are attuned to pupils' emotional and social needs. They know when to use motivating feedback through verbal praise and other rewards. This encourages pupils to learn even more and to concentrate for sustained periods of time.
- Early intervention work to promote pupils' mental health and emotional well-being are highly effective in enabling pupils to acquire greater self-control, self-awareness, and to communicate more effectively. For example, three members of staff are trained mental health first aiders, providing timely preventative support. Some pupils are trying out an electronic device which helps them identify coping strategies that they could use in stressful situations. There are regular daily sessions designed to enable pupils to become more focused, through yoga and meditation. This approach is shared with parents, who are also guided on how best to support their children's mental well-being at home. Effective liaison work with health and educational specialists supplements this work.

- Inspection evidence confirms that pupils enjoy being kind to each other and adults, and showing their gratitude. Every opportunity is used to celebrate this in assemblies, which is recognised on the class 'kindness trees'. Pupils try very hard to adhere to the school's values of 'Be proud, be resilient, and be kind.'
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They learn in PSHE lessons and in assemblies how to keep safe, including when online and the potential dangers associated with social media. They have great trust and confidence in adults to keep them safe from danger. Older pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships and are prepared well to stay safe from abuse and exploitation.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Staff are skilled in making sure that the school's routines and rules are consistently applied, resulting in calm and productive lessons. Relationships are warm and supportive between adults and pupils. As a consequence, pupils feel confident, secure and relaxed.
- Pupils' behaviour is carefully tracked, with all incidents recorded and analysed. Individual strategies are put in place to reduce inappropriate behaviour. Both parents and pupils told inspectors that behaviour has improved and that dangerous behaviour is rare. However, pupils say that the school would be even better if all pupils stopped swearing.
- Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour and to appreciate the impact their behaviour has on others through timely positive management and rewards, and if required, sanctions. They are able to opt out of lessons to learn in quiet spaces if they feel overwhelmed. However, pupils are not always encouraged to work independently in lessons.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and around the school. They are very proud of their school and try their best to meet adults' high expectations. As a result, attendance is above that of similar schools nationally, because pupils enjoy school.
- Pupils are highly confident that adults deal with the rare bullying incidents promptly and thoroughly when these occur.
- This, together with the effective promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is equipping them to be thoughtful, caring and active citizens in school and in wider society.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- From varying starting points, with many well below that typical for their age, pupils make good progress towards their challenging personal targets.
- The school's progress information confirms that progress has sped up throughout this academic year, for both younger and older pupils, as a result of much stronger teaching. Pupils make good progress in their reading, writing, communication and mathematics. With further opportunities for primary-aged pupils to apply their English and mathematical skills in other subjects, progress would accelerate still further.

- There has been a concerted effort to improve the reading skills of pupils. In addition to the teaching of phonics, pupils have numerous and regular opportunities to develop their comprehension, fluency and confidence in reading. Pupils who read to inspectors displayed competent reading skills and clearly enjoy reading.
- The emphasis on developing pupils' communication skills and creativity through art, music, drama and dance means that pupils make good and sometimes rapid progress in their personal development and communication skills. Learning experiences are meaningful, enjoyable and immensely satisfying, boosting pupils' physical and mental well-being.
- Disadvantaged pupils supported by additional funding make at least the same progress as other pupils and sometimes even more progress. Each pupil's progress is tracked rigorously. This means that any pupil at risk of underachieving is identified with interventions, both academic and therapeutic, put in place to boost their progress.
- The most able pupils make similar progress to all other pupils. However, too often, these pupils are not given tasks that challenge their thinking well enough, including the most able disadvantaged pupils.



## School details

Unique reference number	140360
Local authority	Hounslow
Inspection number	10031694

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	All-through Special
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	61
Appropriate authority	The governing body/academy trust
Chair	Neil Goulden
Headteacher	Sarah Roscoe
Telephone number	0208 099 0640
Website	<a href="http://www.theriseschool.com">www.theriseschool.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@theriseschool.com">info@theriseschool.com</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The Rise School opened in September 2014 under the government's free school programme. The school is part of a multi-academy trust, Ambitious About Autism Schools Trust. This is the school's first full inspection.
- The school is registered for pupils aged four to 19 who have autistic spectrum disorder. There are currently 59 pupils on roll aged from four to 16, all of whom have a statement of educational need or an education, health and care plan. Almost all pupils are boys. A small minority of pupils are dual registered.
- Around half of the pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds, with roughly one in five speaking English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for additional pupil premium funding is above average.

- The school uses alternative placements for some pupils, including Springwest Academy, with which it is co-located, Reach Academy, Capel Manor College and West Thames College.
- The school meets the requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2015, following a short period prior to this as part-time interim headteacher. The deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2016.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons in all year groups and observed a variety of activities. Leaders accompanied inspectors on almost all of the visits to lessons.
- Pupils' behaviour during lessons, at playtimes and around the school was observed. Inspectors also scrutinised the school's records of behavioural incidents, including bullying logs.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils about their learning in lessons and with a group of pupils. Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders to evaluate the impact of their work to improve pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and pupils' personal development, behaviour and safety.
- Meetings were held with the trustees, including the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors reviewed work in pupils' books to evaluate the quality of learning in different areas of learning over time. They also scrutinised the school's current assessment information on how well pupils achieve.
- A range of documentation related to safeguarding was scrutinised. This included the single central record of pre-employment checks and records relating to the school's work to safeguard pupils at risk of harm.
- Inspectors spoke to a group of parents, took account of the school's staff and questionnaires, as well as 15 parental responses to Ofsted's online survey.

## Inspection team

Mary Hinds, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Penny Barratt

Ofsted Inspector

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