

Inspection of Ranikhet Academy

Spey Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire RG30 4ED

Inspection dates: 12–13 May 2021

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	Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Ranikhet Academy is a friendly, nurturing school where pupils are kind to each other. Leaders and staff know every pupil's needs and interests very well. This helps to keep pupils safe, happy and learning.

Leaders want pupils to learn to read well from an early age and to gain 'powerful knowledge' in a wide range of subjects. Pupils are encouraged to understand that everyone is different and to 'be your best version' in order to succeed. One pupil told inspectors that their teacher 'had brought respect back into our school'.

Pupils are polite and well behaved. Bullying is rare and pupils have every confidence that adults will sort out any incidents. Attendance is better because pupils like learning. Pupils focus well on their work in lessons. If anyone gets distracted, teachers quickly help them focus. The needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are increasingly well catered for.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development. Pupils appreciate learning about how to stay safe in the local community and how to look after their mental health. Pupils typically take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. They especially like the morning sports clubs and well-being visits to Ufton Court.

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

The head of school, supported strongly by the executive headteacher, governors and REAch2 Academy Trust, has overseen the transformation of Ranikhet Academy so that it is now good. Leaders' strategic and reflective approach to improving every aspect of the school has provided a strong foundation for any future advances.

Children make a good start to learning in the early years. Adults make sure children play and work together safely in a welcoming environment. The curriculum is carefully tailored to children's needs and links clearly to what children will need to know as they move into Year 1. Adults focus strongly on developing children's speaking skills, widening their vocabulary and getting children ready to learn to read. This is especially important in helping children learning English as an additional language to settle into the school.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils to achieve well in reading. Learning and practising phonics skills is prioritised across the early years, key stage 1 and beyond. Adults are trained appropriately. Leaders provide extra help for those staff who are inexperienced or unsure. Pupils learning to read practise with an adult every day, using books closely matched to the sounds they are learning. Pupils who need to catch up get timely and effective extra help. Consequently, over time, most pupils become increasingly confident and fluent readers. As pupils get older, leaders make sure they are introduced to a wide range of stories and texts that help pupils to develop a love of reading.

A revised mathematics curriculum is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Consequently, pupils learn the rules and methods needed to use numbers fluently. Embedding reasoning skills and improving pupils' confidence in mathematics is leaders' current focus.

The curriculum provides a secure framework for teaching pupils the knowledge and skills that will enable them to succeed in life. It sets out step by step what pupils need to know in each subject from the early years through to Year 6. The curriculum is strongest in English, mathematics and science; consequently, so is pupils' learning. However, as pupils learn new topics in other subjects, they are developing secure knowledge across the rest of the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 4 are able to articulate in detail their understanding of how volcanoes are formed after they had learned about this in geography.

Teachers know that pupils have gaps in their learning. Older pupils have more gaps as a result of the previous poor curriculum. Additionally, some pupils' learning during the pandemic was understandably uneven. Teachers are now typically adept at identifying and filling these gaps, so that pupils' learning is much stronger than it has been in the past. Pupils appreciate the structured approach teachers use when introducing new knowledge.

Provision for vulnerable pupils, including those with SEND, is increasingly well tailored to their needs. Staff identify the needs of pupils with SEND early on. The special educational needs coordinator has a thorough knowledge of pupils' academic, behaviour and welfare needs. Extra help, including from outside experts, is provided for pupils who need it. Staff receive useful training in how to support each pupil to access the curriculum. This is especially effective in helping pupils to learn in English and mathematics, and it is developing quickly across all other subjects.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are extremely well trained and knowledgeable about safeguarding. They know their pupils and the community they live in exceptionally well and use this information to ensure that pupils are safe. Staff understand and recognise the indicators that might mean a pupil is at risk or needs extra help. They report concerns, however minor, to the safeguarding leaders.

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are effective. Safer recruitment procedures are followed. Leaders make sure the right support is put in place for pupils. They follow up any concerns rapidly with outside agencies, such as social services and the police.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have strengthened the curriculum for reading and there is now a consistent approach across the early years and key stage 1. However, some staff continue to need training and support to make sure that they are always accurate when delivering phonics sessions and when helping pupils to practise reading.
- Curriculum development since the previous inspection has been a strength of the school. Plans are clear, well sequenced and adjusted appropriately over time. The wider curriculum, although improving rapidly, is not yet at the same standard as in English, mathematics and science. Leaders should continue to fully embed plans for other subjects, ensuring that the whole curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of pupils with SEND effectively. Leaders' actions show clearly that they are in the process of bringing this about. For this reason, the transition arrangement has been applied in this case.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for published performance information about the school [here](#).

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	142072
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	10184666
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	213
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trustees	Jeremy King
Headteacher	Salima Ducker (Executive headteacher)/ Louisa Sanghera (Head of School)
Website	www.ranikhetacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–4 February 2021 under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The executive headteacher oversees two local primary schools within the REAch2 Academy Trust. The day-to-day leadership of Ranikhet Academy is provided by the head of school.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

- 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.

- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, head of school and other leaders. The lead inspector also met with the regional director of education from the multi-academy trust and spoke online with two members of the governing body.
- Inspectors took a deep look at reading, mathematics, science and geography as part of the inspection. Inspectors also considered art and physical education. To do this, inspectors looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons and talked to teachers and leaders.
- Inspectors observed pupils reading, looked at pupils' work and talked to pupils about their learning. Inspectors observed pupils as they moved around the school and at play times.
- The team inspector spoke to several parents at the start of the school day. The views of 14 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered.
- Inspectors considered the views of 22 staff who completed the confidential staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors spoke to several groups of pupils about what it is like to attend this school and a group of staff about what it is like to work at the school.

Inspection team

Catherine Old, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Julie Sackett

Her Majesty's Inspector

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