

Inspection of Roman Way Academy

Burns Road, Royston, Hertfordshire SG8 5EQ

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 September 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

The headteacher of this school is Sital Shah. This school is part of The Diamond Learning Partnership Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Susannah Connell, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Alan Ball.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Roman Way are kind and caring towards each other. They are motivated to learn and keen to share what they have learned. Pupils know who to talk to if they have concerns or worries. They have positive relationships with staff and, as a result, feel safe in school. Staff foster a positive and respectful school culture. Pupils know staff expectations and behave well. They follow the school rules of 'ready, respectful and safe'. Most pupils have a solid understanding of what this looks like and why the rules are important.

From the early years, pupils learn a well-organised and progressive curriculum. Staff set high expectations for pupils to succeed in their learning. Pupils achieve well. They benefit from well-structured lessons and activities that help them to recall what they have learned before.

Pupils attend a range of trips, workshops and after-school activities, including woodland club, storytelling club and cooking club. These help them to try new things. Pupils enjoy being pupil leaders called 'buddies' and 'eagles'. They are proud to contribute positively to their school community.

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

Trust leaders have prioritised improving the quality of education provided. They have high expectations for all pupils. The school has developed a curriculum that is broad, ambitious and logically organised in most subjects.

Staff have set out what they want pupils to learn from early years to Year 4. They teach most subjects confidently and show strong subject knowledge. Where the curriculum is effective, staff use skilful questioning to check what pupils have learned. They use thoughtfully planned activities to build on what pupils already know. In most subjects, pupils are confident in sharing their learning, including using subject-specific vocabulary. In a few subjects, the school has not set out its expectations clearly enough. Therefore, some teachers do not always teach the curriculum as expected, as they lack the subject knowledge to do so. This means that some pupils do not acquire all of the knowledge that subject leaders intend, as much as they could.

Staff work closely with parents and other professionals to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the support they need. Staff make suitable adaptations to ensure that all pupils with SEND learn independently. Pupils with SEND experience success in learning. They are well supported to access the same curriculum as their peers.

Staff develop warm, caring relationships with pupils to ensure that targeted support focuses on pupils' readiness to learn. Staff are highly skilled at identifying pupils' needs and putting in place the support they need to achieve well.

Staff prioritise the teaching of phonics and reading. They ensure that pupils know the sounds that letters make and develop the skills to read with understanding. Staff quickly pick up on pupils who have not pronounced a sound correctly. They use consistent strategies to provide pupils with opportunities to rehearse the sounds that they find tricky. Pupils who are not keeping up with reading get timely support to catch up and keep up with their peers. Most pupils enjoy reading. They have books that match their reading stage. This helps them to practise the sounds they know. Pupils in the older year groups have fewer opportunities to apply their reading knowledge to become confident fluent readers.

From early years, pupils are confident to be themselves and show high levels of curiosity, engagement and resilience. Pupils' behaviour is calm and orderly. They know routines and follow staff's high expectations. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They want to try their best and are proud of their achievements. Pupils feel safe in school and trust adults to help them. They know what to do if they have worries or concerns.

Pupils are positive about their school. They enjoy coming to school. Pupils value the experiences that staff provide for them, such as the skateboard workshop, that allow them to try new things. Pupils learn about British values, like democracy, and how these affect their daily lives. They learn about other religions and reflect on the importance of being tolerant and respectful of others.

The school works well with trust leaders to prioritise the quality of education and staff well-being. Staff appreciate the support provided by the trust to develop their expertise. Trust leaders know the school well and provide appropriate challenge and support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders have not set out clearly the knowledge and content that they want pupils to learn. Some subjects are not being taught in line with leaders' intentions, as staff do not have the subject knowledge needed to teach it effectively. This means that some pupils' work is not always well matched to what they know, so they do not learn the curriculum as the school intends. The school needs to ensure that the curriculum sets out clearly what pupils should learn in each subject and that it is being taught how leaders intend. Staff need to have the subject knowledge to teach it effectively.
- In some year groups, pupils do not have many opportunities to apply their reading knowledge and develop their reading fluency. The school needs to ensure

that pupils in all year groups receive sufficient opportunities to apply their reading knowledge so they become confident fluent readers.

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	147008
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10288571
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	188
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alan Ball
CEO of the trust	Susannah Connell
Headteacher	Sital Shah
Website	www.romanway.herts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Diamond Learning Partnership Trust.
- The school has recently appointed a new headteacher.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- Roman Way Academy converted to become an academy in April 2019. When its predecessor school, Roman Way First School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.

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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, subject leaders and the special educational needs coordinator/special educational needs and disabilities coordinator. The inspector also met with eight governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The lead inspector met with a representative from the local authority to gather information about school support and development.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about 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 and pupils' work, including for geography, computing, religious education, science and relationships, sex and health education.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 took account of the 51 responses and free-text comments submitted to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors took account of the 23 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 63 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. The lead inspector also spoke to pupils during playtimes and lunchtimes and during lessons to seek pupils' views. She spoke with a group of staff to gather their views.

Inspection team

Nerrissa Bear, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Michael Scott

Ofsted Inspector

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