

Ramsden Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	122627
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	380502
Inspection dates	31 January–1 February 2012
Lead inspector	Lynne Blakelock

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	172
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Redfearn
Headteacher	Anita Ashley
Date of previous school inspection	23 March 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Lynne Blakelock

Additional inspector

Simon Mosley

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 16 lessons taught by eight teachers, over approximately seven hours. They held meetings with groups of pupils, with senior and middle leaders and with members of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at its data about the achievement of all groups of pupils, school improvement planning and samples of pupils' work. They analysed the responses to questionnaires returned by 34 parents and carers.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average school compared to others of its type. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. An above-average proportion of pupils are disabled or have special educational needs. Most of these needs relate to moderate learning difficulties.

The school meets the current floor standard set by the government, which determines the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. Recently, the school has achieved National Healthy School status, the Quality Mark for Achievement for All and the Eco Schools Green Flag award.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Pupils reach average standards by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics. They make satisfactory progress throughout the school.
- The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher demonstrates a secure understanding of the school’s needs and what it should do next. Considerable instability of staffing, including in senior leadership, has resulted in a recent decline in the school’s performance, which is being tackled appropriately. New leadership roles are being established as a priority.
- Systems to monitor the school’s performance, including pupils’ progress, the roles and responsibilities of leaders in monitoring and evaluating their areas and then addressing their findings, are not carefully enough thought out to ensure a full, detailed and accurate picture of the school’s effectiveness. A central record of the school’s performance, overseen by the governing body and reviewed regularly with post-holders, is not yet fully in place.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some that is good. Pupils understand the purpose of the work they are set in lessons and an increasing proportion of tasks promote their independent learning well. When pupils are given tasks that match accurately the levels at which they work, their progress accelerates. This is not consistent, however, and some pupils find their work too hard or too easy. Pupils do not always know what they need to do to improve their work. These factors restrict pupils’ progress to satisfactory. Pupils’ targets are shared with parents and carers, but are not used in lessons to help pupils to take more responsibility for their progress.
- Pupils’ behaviour is good from the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards. They feel safe in school, understand potential dangers and know how to avoid them. Their attendance is average and improving.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and accelerate progress in reading, writing and mathematics through the school by ensuring that:
 - teaching is consistently good and provides tasks that are always an accurate match to the levels at which pupils work, including for those capable of reaching higher levels
 - marking informs pupils clearly how to improve their work
 - pupils' targets, which they know and understand, are a major focus in lessons.

- Strengthen the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels in driving school improvement by ensuring that:
 - the leadership team builds up and sustains a full and accurate picture of pupils' performance, and of teachers' practice and outcomes in their areas, through clearly defined and accountable roles and responsibilities
 - the headteacher sustains a central record of pupils' progress and of all other aspects of the school's work, overseen by the governing body and reviewed regularly with middle leaders
 - monitoring and evaluation of the progress of all groups of pupils is very regular and results in prompt strategies to address any gaps in learning.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Most children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of knowledge and skills that are typical for their age and a little below them in language and communication. They are making satisfactory and quickening progress, including in extending their vocabulary, forming accurate letters, counting, and working both cooperatively and independently. Through Key Stages 1 and 2, all groups of pupils continue to make satisfactory progress from their individual starting points. There are no significant differences in the pace of progress of boys and girls or any other groups, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds or those known to be eligible for free school meals. Most parents and carers feel that their children are making good progress. While it is good in some lessons, longer-term progress is satisfactory.

Pupils reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Many pupils can read simple texts and show a good understanding of the purpose of a story. Some pupils struggle with words. Most of them work out the sounds represented in the word, while a very small minority guess. Regular intervention is filling in pupils' gaps in learning, including in writing, where standards have fallen. This has helped them make satisfactory progress in sentence construction and spelling skills, and in addition and subtraction operations. A lower percentage of pupils than found nationally reach the higher levels at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Work is not regularly challenging enough to promote their critical thinking or to extend their learning, such as applying what they know to

unfamiliar situations.

Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to other groups of pupils, and focused intervention is starting to accelerate this. Disabled pupils and those who may be vulnerable because of their individual circumstances are fully integrated into learning activities, promoting specific subject skills, their personal skills and their confidence.

Quality of teaching

Although there is some good teaching, most is satisfactory. Most of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire felt that teaching is good, but inconsistencies in practice mean that is satisfactory overall.

Teachers know their subjects and provide a clear purpose to learning. In good lessons, there is a brisk pace and a variety of activities from the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards. In the Reception year, the teaching of letters and sounds is imaginatively planned. The children concentrated fully on identifying nonsense words and real words and placing them in a rubbish bin or treasure chest. In Year 1, pupils enthusiastically wrote poems containing sound words. The stimulus of a poem that they could identify with and the discussion held with the teacher enabled them to move forward in considering and writing the sounds they could hear in a variety of daily situations.

Pupils' progress is not better than satisfactory because teachers' planning does not always result in work that matches closely pupils' needs. This is particularly the case for pupils capable of reaching higher levels. Although their work sometimes lacks enough challenge, it can on other occasions also be too difficult for the skills that the pupils have.

Teachers are increasingly focusing on helping pupils to apply their skills through problem-solving situations that engage their interest. Questioning is sometimes very specific and is helpful in extending pupils' thinking. This was the case in a literacy lesson, when a question by a teaching assistant helped to direct a pupil towards the correct style of writing for the purpose.

While all pupils have targets for literacy and numeracy, they are not used effectively in lessons, and many pupils are vague about the levels at which they are working. Marking gives pupils clear information about their achievements. It less frequently informs them of the next steps to take so that they can improve their work. Teachers check regularly the progress of pupils who find learning difficult by involving them in discussions and requesting their responses.

Teaching promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in a range of ways. Children in the Reception year were delighted by their discovery of the changes they could make to dough. Pupils in Year 1 showed their joy in sharing the simple sentences that they had created for themselves.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is consistently good in lessons and around the school. The school's records indicate that this has been the case for a considerable time. The parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agree that most pupils behave well. Pupils enjoy being in school and participate enthusiastically in a range of activities. Attendance, which has been average for some time, is increasing, aided by the school's strategies. In the Reception year, attendance is high.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. Parents and carers unanimously agree. The youngest children know potential dangers and how to avoid them. Their knowledge and awareness builds up as they move through the school, through topics, assemblies and daily routines. They talk with conviction of how the school helps to keep them safe and of the systems in place, such as fire drills. The school's records show that there is very little bullying and pupils and their parents and carers confirm this. The curriculum incorporates learning about different types of bullying, with information about cyber-bullying planned for pupils and their parents and carers. From the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards, the school focuses strongly on the importance of treating others kindly and fairly, cooperating with each other in lessons and taking on the responsibilities that they are given. Pupils selected to be 'Tuesday's helpers' were proud to take responsibility and pupils in Year 6 regularly guide the youngest children.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and governing body are responding to the changes in personnel by re-visiting responsibilities to ensure more staff take on leadership roles, develop wider accountability and show faster impact on pupils' achievement. School development planning is well focused on raising standards. There has been some inconsistency, however, in the detail and regularity of monitoring by leaders. This means it has been difficult to identify when pupils' progress needs speeding up, or come to a view about the quality of teaching. The staff, all of whom work well as a team, are taking on responsibilities and quickly building up their skills and expertise. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, regular and accurate assessment of children's learning is driving improvement at a faster pace. Similarly, intervention strategies are providing regular and focused opportunities for pupils to secure their learning. An analysis of gaps in pupils' knowledge has led to a focus on 'investigation' work in mathematics, adding to pupils' enjoyment and ensuring they are mastering the skills needed to raise the levels at which they are working. The headteacher has an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching, and training is strengthening teaching practices. These changes show the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

The school demonstrates satisfactory equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination in both the satisfactory progress of all groups of pupils and the opportunities for them all to develop personal qualities and skills that they will need in the future. The staff ensure that all pupils have opportunities to be involved in school activities, outside of lessons, in this happy and welcoming school. The governing body regularly evaluates and updates health and safety policies and procedures. This results in safeguarding arrangements that meet the statutory requirements and contribute to good daily care. The governors monitor several aspects of the school's work thoroughly. They know that their oversight of the

school's performance is not comprehensive enough to give them the full picture.

The satisfactory and developing curriculum is resulting in more interesting learning for pupils, through regular topics. Literacy and numeracy continue to be taught separately and are being increasingly incorporated into other learning, although specific writing and mathematical skills are not regularly built in to teachers' planning. The beautiful wooded area in the grounds is used well to provide a myriad of learning opportunities. Enrichment is comprehensive and includes a range of after-school activities, such as sport, drama, electronics and a recorder club. Pupils' satisfactory and improving spiritual, moral and cultural development is promoted in the well-planned and imaginatively presented assemblies and in the growing opportunities in lessons for pupils to discover for themselves. Their social development is good.

Links between home and school continue to strengthen. Most parents and carers feel that the school responds to their concerns and helps them to support their child's learning. Partnerships with health and social agencies add good value to the support provided by the school, including for those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



2 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ramsden Primary School, Carlton-in-Lindrick, S81 9DY

On behalf of the inspection team, thank you for welcoming us into your school. We enjoyed talking with you, watching you learning, and discussing your work with you. It was helpful to listen to your views about your school and they have been taken into account in our judgements.

Your school is satisfactory. This means that you make satisfactory progress and reach average standards by the end of Year 6. Teaching is satisfactory overall and some is good.

You enjoy school, feel safe and behave well from the Reception year onwards. We were pleased to see that you all get on well and help each other. Your attendance is average and improving. It is high in the Reception year. You are attentive in lessons and enjoy learning, especially when you are given problems to solve and investigations to carry out. You enjoy the range of activities and the after-school clubs.

Your headteacher and the staff, who care for you well, are going to make some important improvements. While some teaching is good, the work that you are given does not regularly match carefully enough the levels at which you are working. Not enough of those of you who are capable of reaching higher levels, do so. We have also asked the headteacher to make sure that marking always tells you how to improve your work and that teachers ensure that you use your targets to help you make further progress. The headteacher is going to help your school to improve quickly by making sure that a new leadership team monitors your progress very carefully.

I hope that you will support the staff in making these improvements by working hard and trying hard to reach the targets that you will be given.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Blakelock
Lead inspector

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