

Ravensthorpe Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110761
Local Authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	356809
Inspection dates	5–6 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Michael Sheridan HMI

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	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mairwen Peasnell
Headteacher	Elizabeth Walmsley
Date of previous school inspection	19 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 22 lessons taught by 7 teachers. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and a group of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school improvement planning, curriculum documents, local authority reports, tracking data, minutes of governing body meetings and documentation relating to safeguarding. Inspectors also considered the views expressed by pupils, staff and 28 parents and carers through analysis of returned questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness in tackling underachievement for groups of pupils
- the accuracy of leaders' understanding of the school's effectiveness and their impact in driving school improvement
- the effectiveness of support for pupils who arrive at the school midway through the year
- improvements to the curriculum since the last inspection.

Information about the school

This primary school is smaller than the average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average and growing. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also well above average and increasing. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, as is the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The number of pupils who join and leave the school during the school year is much higher than average, with many arriving from overseas. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a Reception Class. The school shares a site with a children's centre and a private day nursery. Both these are managed separately and subject to separate Ofsted inspections. The school has gained Healthy Schools status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing and governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Standards of attainment fell in 2009. Data for 2010 and current levels of attainment show that significant numbers of pupils continue to underachieve and attainment remains low. The quality of teaching and additional support have improved as a result of local authority intervention but are not good enough to enable pupils in Key Stage 2 to catch up sufficiently. Around half the current Year 6 are a long way from meeting adequately challenging targets. Pupils are not being sufficiently helped to capitalise on the good start they make in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. Marking is of poor quality. There is no whole-school approach to providing pupils with the guidance they need to improve their work and they are given limited opportunities to make improvements.

The curriculum is inadequate. Not enough time is spent developing core skills in an interesting way. Too many activities are mundane and fail to capture the interests of all learners. Pupils do not get sufficient opportunity to complete activities that require them to ask and answer open-ended questions and, as a result, higher-ability pupils are not challenged. The school has not acted on recommendations from the last inspection report. Leadership of the curriculum as a whole is inadequate with no one person holding a clear overview and vision for the curriculum. Cross-curricular links are sporadic and do not help pupils develop basic skills. Pupils do not practise information and communication technology (ICT) skills enough in different subjects. Insufficient opportunities exist for pupils to read for a purpose and, as a result, attainment in reading is particularly low.

The key weaknesses in this school are mainly attributable to the lack of direction and vision from the top. Middle leaders express frustration at not being able to fulfil their roles. They are appreciative of the recent coaching from local authority consultants and the pastoral support of the deputy headteacher. They recognise that things have deteriorated in recent years and are anxious to drive improvements. The headteacher acknowledges that things need to improve. However the school's self-evaluation demonstrates an inaccurate view of the school's effectiveness, despite frank feedback from the local authority over several months. Consequently the school's capacity for sustained improvement is inadequate.

The school continues to have success in several important areas. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Behaviour is good throughout the school. Pupils are polite and eager to please in lessons, even when tasks are not particularly engaging.

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Pupils have a clear respect for their teachers and for each other. This leads to a very harmonious environment where pupils feel safe and willing to take risks. Pupils are well cared for. Pupils, including those who join the school midway through the school year, say that they are all very happy. Induction arrangements for pupils arriving at the school speaking little English are effective so that they settle very quickly. However, resources to support their learning in English are underdeveloped, despite this weakness being highlighted at the last inspection. The Early Years Foundation Stage has improved and now gives pupils a good start to their time at school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards of attainment so that the proportion of pupils reaching the level expected for their age at the end of Year 6 is consistently in line with the national average by:
 - ensuring pupils who fall behind are identified quickly and given additional support so they make rapid progress in their learning
 - ensuring all teaching is matched to the full range of learners' needs and abilities
 - ensuring marking and feedback enable pupils to improve their work
 - providing regular opportunities to read and analyse texts for a variety of purposes.
- Improve the curriculum so it meets the needs and interests of all pupils by:
 - developing and sharing a curriculum overview that shows how pupils will develop core skills across different subjects
 - ensuring that pupils have regular opportunities to learn through interesting experiences
 - ensuring that dual-language resources are available to support early reading in English for pupils who speak English as an additional language
 - providing opportunities for pupils to develop their information and communication technology skills in different subjects
 - providing challenging opportunities for pupils to solve problems, develop arguments and consider open-ended questions.
- Improve leadership at all levels so leaders, managers and governors effectively drive school improvement based on accurate self-evaluation by:
 - developing the skills of the governing body so that it provides appropriate challenge and is fully aware of its statutory duties
 - increasing capacity at the most senior level so the school's self-evaluation is based on accurate analysis of evidence and leads to clear school improvement planning
 - developing a clear vision so that middle leaders understand what is expected of them and receive appropriate guidance and support in fulfilling their roles.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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Pupils make a good start in school. From below-average starting points, pupils reach standards of attainment that are broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils do not maintain this progress in Key Stage 2. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is low and this represents inadequate achievement overall.

Pupils enjoy their lessons and have very positive relationships with their teachers. They try hard to answer their teachers' questions and complete the tasks they are given, even when these appear to be uninspiring. Learning in the lessons seen during inspection was generally satisfactory. However, this is not good enough to enable pupils to make up for previous underachievement. Pupils' personal development is good. They have high self esteem and, when opportunities arise, they approach difficult concepts with increasing confidence as they move through the school. Opportunities to think deeply and creatively are few and far between. Consequently, pupils have limited opportunity to develop thinking skills and become independent learners.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They trust their teachers a great deal and say that they always know that adults in school will help them if they have a difficulty. Pupils know about healthy choices and these are reinforced regularly by staff, for example, at lunch time. Pupils say they enjoy the regular opportunities for taking part in extra-curricular sports and keep fit sessions. They know about dangers in the world, including those associated with using technology. Pupils take on responsibilities within school. Children in Reception learn to take care of their environment and understand how to use equipment sensibly and tidy away together. Pupils in Year 6 take on additional responsibilities such as 'play pals'. Pupils throughout the school are involved in decision-making through the school council.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The curriculum has not been sufficiently developed since the last inspection. As a consequence it no longer meets the needs of all pupils. Too much time is spent on closed tasks and this means that more-able pupils do not get sufficient time to ask and answer open-ended questions and develop their thinking. There is no one strategy for considering how the curriculum works. Links between subjects are under-developed. Opportunities for pupils to practise and refine skills such as ICT, reading and problem-solving in other subjects are missed. Pupils who speak English as an additional language do not have sufficient access to the resources they need to support their early English language development. For example, despite being recommended to do so at the last inspection, the school does not provide dual-language books to support reading in English.

Teaching has improved, supported by successful intervention from local authority advisers. Teaching is now consistently satisfactory with some that is good. Pupils' better progress up to the age of seven is largely due to more engaging activities along with quick and effective intervention to support pupils who are in danger of falling behind. The leader responsible for special needs and/or disabilities is based in Key Stage 1 and has had more impact there. Recently she has been given more time to develop similar provision in Key Stage 2 but this has happened too late for many pupils whose underachievement is considerable.

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Pastoral care is effective. There are high expectations of behaviour and warm, affirming relationships between teachers and pupils. The school works well with a range of agencies to ensure that potentially vulnerable pupils are well cared for. Pupils who start school at different times of the year say that they feel part of the school very quickly.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	4
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership at the highest level has failed to provide the drive and vision for necessary improvement. Self-evaluation is inaccurate and demonstrates a lack of understanding of the issues the school faces. Communication is poor. Middle leaders have recently benefited from the support of local authority consultants. These improvements are not yet sufficient as their impact is limited by a lack of cohesion within the leadership team.

Members of the governing body have not been successful in challenging the school to tackle weaknesses. They are aware of the problems the school faces but do not know how to overcome them. The governing body has no system for ensuring all statutory duties are met and minutes of meetings do not accurately record discussions related to some essential work, for example, around meeting equalities legislation. The school does not promote equality of opportunity sufficiently well, with most groups of pupils underachieving, and inadequate analysis of the progress they make.

The school is developing meaningful links with the on-site children's centre and nursery. These relationships are at an early stage of development. The Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator has a clear vision to develop these links further. Links with agencies to support potentially vulnerable pupils are effective. The recent early improvements seen in the schools' provision and middle leadership are attributable to the school's effective links with the local authority.

Safeguarding is good with appropriate risk assessments, policy documents and staff training in place. The governing body fulfils its duties related to safeguarding effectively. Leaders have an accurate view of the school community. Pupils new to the school quickly settle and learn to appreciate similarities and differences between the range of cultures represented. The school is yet to consider how pupils are to recognise and appreciate wider diversity within the United Kingdom.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage has improved since the last inspection and now gives pupils a good start to their schooling. Personal development is strong. Effective teaching helps children understand how to behave in a variety of situations. Routines are developed effectively. Pupils make good progress in Reception so, from below-average starting points, they reach expected levels for their age. Pupils who speak English as an additional language perform as well as their peers. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early and given the additional support they need to enable them to make good progress. Provision outdoors has particularly improved. Children enjoy the exciting range of opportunities available to them and benefit from the good balance of independent play and adult-led activity. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well. Adults know the children very well. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader plans activities carefully so they are based around individual children and their needs. This means that weaknesses in childrens' speaking and listening skills and their personal development are effectively targeted. Children, including those who are learning English as an additional language, are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation	2

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Stage

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about the school. A few stated that the school did not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors observed only good behaviour during inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ravensthorpe Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 28 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 190 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	79	4	14	2	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	89	3	11	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	20	71	7	25	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	61	10	36	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	21	75	6	21	0	0	1	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	64	9	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	50	12	43	2	7	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	17	61	10	36	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	61	10	36	1	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	43	13	46	3	11	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	50	13	46	1	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	18	64	9	32	1	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	75	5	18	2	7	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



7 October 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Ravensthorpe Primary School, Peterborough, PE3 7NB

You may remember that I, along with two other inspectors, recently came to inspect your school and to find out your views. We found that your school is good at helping you become polite, well behaved young people but it is less successful at helping you do as well as you can in English and mathematics. We found that your school needs some extra help to make the improvements that are needed. We call this 'special measures'. Your teachers will get support in making the improvements needed and an inspector will come back to your school to let you and your parents know how well things are progressing.

We have asked your teachers to make sure your curriculum is interesting and gives you opportunities to think for yourself and develop skills like reading, writing, number work and using technology. We found that some of your lessons could have been a lot more exciting and we have asked your teachers to find ways to give you more chances to learn skills through interesting experiences. We saw some exciting lessons like this, such as the class who spent time digging the allotment and talking about different vegetables. You all could help by talking to your school councillors about the kind of opportunities you would like to see in your year group. We have also asked your teachers to make sure the comments they write in your books are helpful and give you an opportunity to improve your work. We found that some of you fall behind in your learning, usually in Key Stage 2, and we have asked the staff to help you catch up quickly.

It is important that the leaders in your school have a good understanding of what works well and what needs to be improved. We have asked them to get better at seeing what needs to be improved so they can make changes for themselves. This will help your school continue to improve.

You have my best wishes for the future

Yours sincerely

Michael Sheridan

Her Majesty's Inspector

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