

# Ramridge Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	134155
<b>Local authority</b>	Luton
<b>Inspection number</b>	381622
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Stephen Lake

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	391
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Janet Waller
<b>Headteacher</b>	Carolyn Doherty
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 September 2008
<b>School address</b>	Turners Road North Luton LU2 9AH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01582 729970
<b>Fax number</b>	01582 729972
<b>Email address</b>	Ramridge.primary.admin@luton.gov.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	22–23 March 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	381622



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Stephen Lake	Additional inspector
Ken Parry	Additional inspector
Susan Hughes	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 29 lessons or parts of lessons and some observations were conducted jointly with senior staff. They observed 15 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. 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 the school's strategic plan for raising achievement and evaluated samples of pupils' work. Other documents looked at included those for curriculum planning, documents relating to safeguarding and child protection, pupil performance information and records relating to the monitoring of teaching. Some parents and carers were spoken to at the start of the school day. Inspection questionnaires received from pupils, staff and 95 parents and carers were analysed.

## Information about the school

This is a larger than average-sized primary school. Although it is intended to serve mainly the local community, pupils from other areas of Luton attend the school if they are unable to secure a place in a school near to where they live. As a result, more pupils than average leave or join the school other than at the usual times. The majority of pupils are White British although a small proportion come from a range of minority ethnic groups. More pupils than average speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free schools meals is well-above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is broadly average. Most of these pupils have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties; a few have moderate learning difficulties while a small number have an autistic spectrum disorder. The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. Many staff, including the headteacher, joined the school over the last eighteen months, some very recently. The school operates a breakfast club as part of extended school provision.

A children's centre, managed by an independent provider and situated on the school site, is subject to a separate inspection.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key 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 significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils’ achievement in English and mathematics.

- The school is not satisfactory because pupils, especially those who are more able, have not made enough progress to reach the standards they should by the end of Year 6.
- The quality of education is improving. Teaching is predominantly satisfactory but there is insufficient good or better practice to drive improvements in pupils’ learning quickly enough. Teaching observed during the inspection however shows sustained improvement because of the good quality of staff recruited to the school and through effective professional development.
- Pupils’ behaviour is satisfactory and improving quickly. A small amount of inadequate behaviour, evident in previous years, has been addressed effectively so that pupils feel very safe in school.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher’s strong leadership is accelerating the pace of improvement and the school is no longer dependent upon support from the local authority. School self-evaluation is accurate and the information gained is used in the well-directed plan for raising achievement. The headteacher’s effective management of staffs’ performance is based on thorough and robust systems for checking on the quality of teaching and learning. Middle managers provide increasing support for the monitoring and evaluation of the school’s work although further development is necessary to fully expand and improve their contribution. The quality of pupil assessment information is not sufficiently robust to provide easily accessible information to identify trends in performance or to make comparisons with other schools

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nationally.

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

- By April 2013, improve the proportion of good or better teaching in order raise attainment in English and mathematics by:
  - ensuring that information on pupils' progress is used more consistently to plan and adapt learning so that all pupils are challenged to achieve their very best
  - ensuring that learning in all lessons proceeds at a brisk pace
  - providing more opportunities, especially for the more able, to develop independent learning skills.
- By September 2012, develop the roles of the middle managers so that:
  - they are fully engaged in robust monitoring and evaluation
  - the impact of their work can be seen in improved provision and outcomes.
- By July 2012, improve the way that data on pupils' attainment and progress is analysed in order to give a clear picture of school performance compared to schools nationally and so that senior leaders can accurately target priorities for improvement.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Inspection evidence shows that although pupils' progress has been inadequate, it is improving rapidly so that the majority of pupils are making satisfactory progress. Attainment however remains below average at Key Stages 1 and 2 and higher attaining pupils are not making the progress that matches their potential. The large majority of parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire consider that pupils are making at least satisfactory progress. Most pupils say that they are learning well.

Children start in the Nursery with knowledge and skills that are well below that expected for their age, especially in their communication skills and personal, social and emotional development. Children make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but attainment is below average when they start in Year 1. Children experience a wide range of activities that help them develop their skills. A focus on teaching letters and sounds is beginning to improve their communication skills. This good practice is not consistently extended to promote language development across all areas of learning however and is why progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is no better than satisfactory.

The majority of pupils from all ethnic heritages are on track to make satisfactory progress. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are identified

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early and targeted support enables them to make the same satisfactory progress as most other pupils. For those with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, the strengthened links with parents and carers, through the family-support programme, are providing good opportunities to promote pupils' learning skills such as concentration and collaboration. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make satisfactory progress due to the good support they receive.

Attainment in reading has improved greatly over the last fifteen months reversing the decline that followed the previous inspection. The teaching of reading is benefitting from an increased focus on teaching letters and sounds in all classes across the school. Attainment in reading is on track to be broadly average in Year 2 and Year 6. At Key Stage 2, pupils are beginning to make up lost ground through lessons that focus on developing their speaking and listening skills to support improvements in reading and writing. For example, in one Year 3 lesson, pupils made good progress understanding dialogue when they worked in small groups to change the text they were given into direct speech which they then acted out. This type of stimulating and motivating activity is not evident in all classes. In some lessons, the text provided for pupils is not matched closely to their reading abilities and the linking of letters and sounds is not explained well enough to those pupils who have weak reading skills. Leaders have recently introduced further initiatives to improve the way reading is taught in these classes but this work is at a relatively early stage. Improvements in reading are also benefitting from the greater involvement of parents and carers in supporting their children in reading with them at home.

Teachers generally make effective use of strategies such as 'talk partners', to enable pupils to develop suitable vocabulary. This practice is proving particularly effective in helping all pupils contribute to in-class discussions and to develop vocabulary that supports them in their writing. Teachers are also using a similar approach in mathematics that is helping pupils to develop a better understanding of how to solve problems. Teachers have identified that attainment in mathematics has been held down by pupils' weak knowledge of number bonds. Improvement in mathematics is now being supported by a strong focus on developing pupils' basic numbers skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

The large number of pupils who join the school other than at the usual times receive good support on arrival and most are making satisfactory progress. Nevertheless some of these pupils, because their learning has been disrupted through frequent changes of school, attain at levels below that of the majority of other pupils.

### **Quality of teaching**

Inspection evidence shows that teaching is mostly satisfactory but is improving rapidly as a result of the robust actions taken by the school's leadership over the last year. In a small number of lessons seen during the inspection teaching was not effective because the pace of learning was too slow and pupils were not challenged enough. Targeted support for these teachers is proving to be effective in promoting

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better practice. Well-judged recruitment has strengthened the quality of teaching further. The impact of the improved teaching is apparent in the satisfactory progress pupils are currently making. The large majority of parents, carers and pupils who responded to the inspection questionnaire consider that the teaching is good although this is not borne out by inspection evidence.

In most lessons, the sharing of objectives with pupils is well focused and sets a secure context for learning. This practice is not fully embedded throughout the school however and so the pace of learning is, occasionally, not brisk enough. Pupils appreciate the way teachers talk to them about their work and how to make it better. Marking is beginning to reinforce oral guidance well through teachers' written comments on how pupils can improve their work.

The curriculum has been revised to provide a more creative approach to learning that enables pupils to develop their basic communication and mathematics skills across all subjects. This better coordination is increasing opportunities to link learning across subjects and supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Teachers are working successfully to encourage an ethos of challenge and high expectation. This is building pupils' confidence, self-esteem and respect for each other.

In most cases teachers are responding well to the revised curriculum by planning creative and stimulating activities that combine learning in English and mathematics in a motivating way. For example, in a Year 6 lesson pupils made good progress in developing their writing skills through a stimulating activity which gave the telling of traditional tales a new twist. Pupils produced their written work in the form of books based upon *'The Jolly Postman'*. In this lesson, tasks were accurately planned to meet the assessed needs of different pupils. Teachers' planning however does not consistently recognise pupils' varying needs. In a minority of lessons observed, all pupils were expected to complete the same tasks so that some low ability pupils found the work too hard but, more often, more-able pupils found it too easy and lacking in challenge. In most cases, while teachers' questioning enables pupils to demonstrate what they already know not all pupils are given regular opportunities to respond. Where this occurs, it limits the teacher's understanding of the progress that all pupils are making.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Inspection evidence shows that behaviour and safety are satisfactory. Robust, consistent and effective management have brought about a clear improvement in pupils' behaviour. The conduct of those pupils who exhibit behavioural difficulties is managed well and disruption to learning is rare. The majority of parents and carers who responded agree that children are safe in the school and that behaviour is good. Most pupils agree with these views. Some parents and carers believe that behaviour is not always good although these concerns tend to reflect the challenging behaviour demonstrated by a small number of pupils in previous years.

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Pupils say they feel very safe in school and that incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils are well aware of its different types – including, physical, verbal and emotional bullying. They have a good understanding of cyber bullying and how to avoid it. Pupils are confident that any bullying that might occur will be dealt with effectively. They say that bullying is not tolerated and clear procedures are in place to enable them to share concerns with adults. Pupils say that disruption to lessons is unusual. Inspectors found pupils respond well to teachers' directions showing good cooperation in lessons. Attendance has improved and is average. The breakfast club is helping to improve punctuality and provides a calm start to the day for some of those pupils who exhibit challenging behaviour.

**Leadership and management**

The new headteacher has brought the staff together into a cohesive team that shares her ambitious view of how the school can improve further. The supportive governing body is active in evaluating the work of the school and has a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for development. With strong and sustained support from the local authority, governors have helped drive school improvement and close the gap between attainment in this school and schools nationally. The headteacher's leadership skills have enabled external support to be minimised without loss of impetus. Under her strong leadership, senior, and increasingly middle managers, now feel empowered to lead priorities directly. The impact of their work can be seen in the better teaching and improving rates of pupil progress and behaviour. These improvements over the last fifteen months indicate the school's secure leadership capacity. The role of middle leaders, while improving, requires further development to enable them to play a full part in leading initiatives in their respective areas of responsibility.

The curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced and provides a creative context from which teachers can plan learning. It contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, often through the celebration of the different cultures represented in the school. Procedures for safeguarding, especially those for child protection, are robust. Policies are of good quality and training for staff and governors is up-to-date. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

The school takes great care to ensure equality of opportunity and prevent discrimination. The progress of all pupils, especially those whose circumstances have made them vulnerable, is monitored regularly. The information gained is increasingly used effectively to address any underachievement. Senior leaders have identified that the quality of performance data and its analysis are not detailed enough to allow ready comparison with all schools nationally or to identify trends in pupils' performance. A new electronic performance data system is to be installed before the end of the spring term 2012 which offers the potential to provide more detailed and evaluative analysis of pupils' progress.



## 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](http://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.**

26 March 2012

Dear Pupils



### **Inspection of Ramridge Primary School, Luton, LU2 9AH**

Thank you for making us welcome when we came to visit your school. We enjoyed talking with you about all the things that you think have improved. While there are many positive things about your school in the report, you do not attain as highly as you should. We have therefore given your school a notice to improve. We have asked the governors, senior leaders and the staff to make some important changes so that your school can improve rapidly. Inspectors will visit to check on how well this is happening. Here a few of the things that we liked about your school.

- We agree with you that your school has improved recently after a period when you were not learning as well as you could.
- Your headteacher has a very accurate view of what is working well and where improvements are needed. In partnership with all the teachers and the governing body, she is using this information effectively to help improve the school.
- You feel very safe in school and adults care for you well.
- We agree with you that behaviour has improved a lot in the last year.

To help you learn even more effectively and improve your achievement we have asked your school to:

- make sure that teachers share the purpose of lessons with you so that you know what you should learn by the end of the lesson
- provide more opportunities for those of you who find learning easy to have more challenging tasks
- make sure that you have regular opportunities to develop your independent learning skills
- ensure that teaching is good or better and that lessons proceed at a brisk pace
- make sure subject leaders check closely on teaching and learning so that they help to continue the improvements taking place
- improve the way school leaders analyse the information about your attainment so that the performance of the school can be compared more easily with other schools. This will help the school's leaders to be clear about where improvements need to be made.

You can help to improve your school further by always trying your very best.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Lake  
Lead Inspector

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