

Ringmer Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	114415
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	378857
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2012
Lead inspector	Eileen Chadwick

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	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Katie Tearle
Headteacher	Jackie Warren
Date of previous school inspection	15 October 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Eileen Chadwick

Additional inspector

Desmond Dunne

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 17 lessons taught by eight teachers. They spent over eight hours observing teaching and learning, and also listened to pupils read in Years 1, 2, and 6 and discussed different aspects of their work with pupils. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, groups of pupils and members of staff holding leadership responsibilities at the school. The inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work and plans for improvement, a range of pupils' work and records of their learning and progress, curriculum plans, safeguarding arrangements, governing body minutes and records of the school leaders' lesson monitoring. In addition, inspectors considered questionnaires returned by 106 parents and carers, together with those from pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Ringmer Primary school is similar in size to most primary schools. Almost all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The percentage of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. Most of these pupils have speech, language, literacy or behavioural difficulties. The Early Years Foundation Stage children are taught in one single-age Reception class and one mixed-age class containing Reception and Year 1 pupils. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

The school is a little larger than when previously inspected and there have been changes to teaching staff, including longer-term absences of several staff resulting in temporary appointments. The school has several awards including an Eco-award. There is a separately managed pre-school on site which was not included in this inspection. This report may be found on the Ofsted website.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is improving because the headteacher and her staff are strengthening pupils' achievement. However, the school is not good as teaching is not consistently good. Also, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers do not always provide challenging tasks for children, especially for learning independently in the outdoor area. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit before their next section 5 inspection.
- Pupils' achievement over time is satisfactory. Pupils' attainment is rising and above average for the current Year 6. Progress in lessons is satisfactory but, in Key Stage 1, lower-attaining pupils do not always apply phonics skills (knowledge of letters and their sounds) well when reading and writing or read regularly enough at home or in school. Progress for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good in Key Stage 2 which is closing gaps and helping to raise achievement.
- Teachers provide interesting work for pupils and make good links between subjects in themed topics, while developing their basic skills. The proportion of good teaching is improving but sometimes work is not sufficiently well matched to pupils' needs and the pace of learning then slows, including during guided reading.
- Most pupils enjoy school and this is shown in their above-average attendance. Their behaviour around the school is good. Pupils respond well to engaging teaching but their concentration wanes when expectations are not high enough.
- The headteacher provides committed leadership which has united staff during an unsettled period of staff changes. School leaders have acted resolutely to stem falling achievement over recent years. This downward trend has been reversed and attainment is rising, helped by their satisfactory management of teaching and performance. However, school leaders' monitoring of lessons does

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not always focus enough on the learning of particular groups to quickly eradicate any weaknesses.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to be at least good by:
 - using assessment information more effectively to plan and teach activities for pupils of different abilities, including in phonics lessons
 - strengthening target setting in mathematics and provide clear feedback through marking which tells pupils what they need to do to improve
 - monitoring teaching with greater rigour to help teachers to eliminate areas of weakness in their practice.

- Raise pupils' achievement in reading and writing to be at least consistently good by:
 - improving lower-attaining pupils' ability to apply phonics to reading and writing in Key Stage 1 and ensure they are heard to read every day
 - ensuring guided reading sessions focus more clearly on developing reading for all pupils.

- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - providing children with consistently challenging opportunities, including when learning independently through outdoor play
 - ensuring staff intervene more effectively to extend children's learning during child-led learning.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Most children start in Reception with skills and knowledge that are broadly as expected for their age, although a small minority are below expectations in aspects of communication, language and literacy. They make satisfactory progress and their attainment is average in reading, writing and mathematics on entry to Year 1.

Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress so that attainment remains average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. However, in Key Stage 1, lower-attaining pupils do not systematically apply phonics when reading and writing. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is usually average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's data show that the current Year 6 are on track to be above average in all three areas and this was confirmed by inspection evidence. Targeted, specific support and intervention and much good teaching and progress in Year 6 are raising pupils' attainment by the time they leave the school. In Key Stage 2, there are numerous examples of pupils' successful writing where they have written for different purposes and audiences across the curriculum. A very large majority of the current Year 6 write fluently using imaginative vocabulary with accurate spelling

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and punctuation. For example, when they considered the impact of an ancient Egyptian curse, they wrote persuasively about the advantages and disadvantages of some archaeological discoveries in Ancient Egypt.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and vulnerable pupils, make satisfactory progress overall. Their progress is good in Key Stage 2 and, by Year 6, most are attaining the nationally expected standards in English and mathematics. Throughout the school, intervention in small groups speeds up the development of pupils' speaking, phonics and other reading skills as well as in mathematics. However, this is more rapid in Key Stage 2 than in Reception and Key Stage 1 where tasks are sometimes too hard for all lower attainers during class lesson introductions, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. This was seen in mixed-ability phonics lessons in both Reception and Year 1. Outdoor play and free-choice activities in Reception do not consistently provide good opportunities for children to develop their skills, including in literacy and mathematical development.

The quality of learning in lessons is variable but generally satisfactory. Initiatives to raise attainment in mathematics by ensuring pupils develop and apply their calculation skills are having a good impact in Key Stage 2. In a Year 5 lesson, learning was good when pupils of all abilities successfully applied calculation skills in solving problems because activities were well matched to their needs. However, occasionally in mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2, the pace of learning slows for higher attainers when there is too much reinforcement of their earlier learning.

Quality of teaching

While most parents and carers feel that their children are taught well and making good progress, a few expressed reservations about teaching quality and their children's progress. Inspectors find teaching is satisfactory overall.

In Reception, there is an appropriate balance between adult-led learning and activities which children choose for themselves. However, in teacher-led activities, when the whole class are gathered together, work is not always matched to children's needs. In an adult-led lesson, good teaching promoted successful learning in physical development because of the good level of challenge and use of attractive high-quality resources. However, opportunities for children to learn through play are inconsistently challenging and adults do not always extend their learning through timely interventions. Some resources, for example for physical development, are more suitable for younger children.

In the most effective lessons, planning makes good use of assessment information ensuring that learning activities are well matched to pupils' needs. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, the context of fair trade enthused the pupils, activities were challenging and the teacher's good planning and guidance enabled pupils to apply skills previously acquired in literacy lessons, such as more advanced punctuation. However, this quality of planning is not consistent in all lessons.

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Guided reading and phonics sessions are regular but of a variable quality. The pupils working directly with the teacher have positive learning experiences which develop their reading skills. However, activities for the rest of the class are not always sharply focused on improving reading. Lower-attaining pupils are not always provided with enough support for applying their phonics skills. Phonics teaching for pupils in Reception and Key Stage 1 promotes sound learning for average-attaining pupils, but during whole-class introductions, activities are sometimes too complex for the lower attainers or too easy for the higher attainers. Teaching assistants often make a good contribution to the learning of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs through well-focused individual and small group support but their contribution during whole-class introductions is variable. Reading records and discussion with pupils show that lower-attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 do not always have opportunities to read at home or at school on a daily basis.

Target setting is well developed in English but less so in mathematics. Marking does not always explain what pupils need to do to improve. Teachers plan activities to develop pupils' basic skills of communication, literacy and mathematics across different subjects, including science, and this extends pupils' literacy and numeracy experiences. Literacy is particularly well developed through the broader curriculum in Key Stage 2.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

While most parents and carers are pleased with behaviour at the school, a few disagree. Inspectors found that pupils are friendly, polite and feel safe. Pupils of all backgrounds work and play together in harmony. Behaviour is often good in lessons and around the school but on a few occasions, especially in some younger classes, pupils lose concentration when work is not fully matched to their needs. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are responsive and often behave sensibly but sometimes wander from task to task in the outdoor area when activities lack challenge. Scrutiny of behavioural records and discussions show that behaviour is satisfactory over time too.

Attendance is above average, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school. Most parents and carers say their children are well cared for and kept safe, and pupils agree. Most say that instances of bullying of any kind are dealt with to their satisfaction, although a few expressed concern that a few pupils occasionally interrupt the learning of others. Pupils have a well-developed awareness of different types of bullying such as cyber-bullying and name-calling and the school is effective in dealing with any incidents. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are supported sensitively and improve their social skills so that disruption to learning is unusual and increasingly rare as pupils learn to adjust to school.

Leadership and management

The headteacher sets a clear direction which is shared by senior leaders and staff. Senior leaders hold teachers to account and teachers make detailed analyses of

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pupils' progress. Senior leaders have introduced an effective system for recording data and checking pupils' progress. This system has been used well to set challenging targets. It is satisfactorily contributing to raising attainment, although some unevenness in progress by groups and between year groups remains to be addressed. A wide variety of monitoring and support activities is leading to better teaching and improved achievement in Key Stage 2, including in writing. This shows the school has a capacity for continuing improvement. This was an area for development at the previous inspection. Staff changes have delayed the role of some middle leaders in supporting the quality of teaching across the whole school, though this is now being addressed. However, lesson monitoring does not always rigorously focus on the learning of particular groups and this limits the impact of initiatives for improving achievement. Professional development and performance management have been effective in improving teaching and learning in writing and mathematics but with less impact on provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The governing body has become more focused on achievement and is providing greater challenge.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern. The school promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination. A small minority of parents and carers expressed concern about the school's communication with them and in addressing their concerns. Inspectors investigated these concerns and found that the school had followed the correct procedures to resolve issues raised and that communication is at least satisfactory.

The curriculum is broad and balanced, and successfully furthers pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is promoted well through theme days such as Eco Day, for example when pupils learned the importance of a local wind turbine to generate energy for a nearby business.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ringmer Primary School, Lewes BN8 5LL

I am writing to tell you how much we enjoyed our visit to your school. Your school is giving you a satisfactory education. This means that it does some things well but some things still need to be improved.

Here are some of the good things about your school:

- You are making good progress in Year 6 and we saw how well you are able to write about your topic work.
- Those of you who need extra help are doing well in Key Stage 2.
- You said in your discussions and in the questionnaire that you enjoy school and we could see that you are happy.
- All adults in school are caring and give you suitable help if you have worries.

The school leaders are doing the right things to make the school better and are clear about what is not good enough.

We have asked the school to:

- help those of you in Reception to learn more quickly by giving you better choices when learning through play
- help some of you to improve your reading and understanding of how to use sounds and letters to read and write new words
- make sure all teachers provide work that is at the right level so you can make the best possible progress
- ensure all the ideas that have been introduced are working equally well across the school.

All of you can help too by working as hard as you can.

Yours sincerely

Eileen Chadwick
Lead inspector

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