

Raunds Park Infant School

Park Street, Raunds, Wellingborough, NN9 6NB

Inspection dates 09 – 10 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- From starting points that are typically below the levels expected for four-year-olds, pupils achieve well and make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is most often good. Teachers make learning exciting for pupils. They explain new activities clearly and give pupils plenty of opportunities to practise and develop new skills
- The school's 'Family Values' curriculum has a strong impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are keen to learn and clearly know how to keep safe.
- The effectiveness of the governing body has improved considerably since the last inspection.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, keep a close check on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers' feedback to pupils during lessons, and when marking their books, does not always help pupils to improve their work.
- Teachers miss opportunities to use questions increase the level of challenge in lessons.
- Systems for monitoring pupils' progress do not record the small steps that pupils take as they move between National Curriculum levels. This makes it difficult for leaders to identify trends in progress at an early stage.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited all classes and observed teaching and learning in eight lessons. He was accompanied by the headteacher during five of these.
- He looked at the work in pupils' books, listened to a sample of pupils reading in Years 1 and 2, and held discussions with pupils about their learning and experience of school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, some of the senior teachers, teaching assistants, and three representatives of the governing body. He spoke by telephone with a representative of the local authority.
- He looked at a wide range of documents, including the school's evaluation of its own effectiveness, the school development plan, the local authority evaluation report, safeguarding checks and data about pupils' progress.
- The inspector took account of 29 responses to the online Parent View survey, and held informal discussions with some parents during a 'Family Values' session. He also considered the views of the 25 members of staff who completed a questionnaire.

Inspection team

Mike Thompson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Although the number of roll has increased by 40% since the last inspection in 2009, Raunds Park is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups and almost all pupils speak English as their first language.
- In Key Stage 1, an extra class is created for the morning sessions, when literacy and numeracy are taught.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and children from HM forces families) is below the national average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Move teaching from good to outstanding in order to accelerate pupils' progress at an even faster rate, by ensuring that teachers:
 - give pupils consistently clear verbal feedback about how to improve their work and reach higher targets in lessons
 - make their marking of pupils' work more effective by wording their comments clearly and in language that is easy for pupils to understand, and check that pupils always act on the points for improvement that they make in pupils' books
 - routinely use questioning to increase the level of challenge in lessons and make sure that pupils think more for themselves.
- Fine-tune the way in which progress data is presented so that leaders and managers:
 - have a clearer picture of the small steps that pupils take as they move between national curriculum levels
 - use this information to target more precisely any extra help that needs to be provided for individual pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 2, standards are broadly in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school is predicting a slight fall in standards this year, reflecting the comparatively lower attainment on entry of this group of pupils. However, progress remains good.
- Children start school in the Reception classes with a much narrower range of skills and knowledge than is expected for their age across all areas of learning. The exciting range of opportunities provided for them to experiment and explore, together with consistently good teaching, enables children to make good progress.
- The school's results in the 2012 Year 1 check of pupils' skills in using phonics (the sounds made by letters) were below the national average. Leaders reacted quickly by changing the way that phonics are taught, and these improvements are having a positive impact on pupils' reading and spelling skills. Pupils say that they enjoy reading, and most read regularly both at home and at school.
- Assessments carried out in Key Stage 1 are suitably rigorous and accurately summarise pupils' achievements. These show that, while most pupils make expected or better progress, a few underachieve.
- In 2012, Year 2 boys did less well than boys nationally in writing. In order to improve matters, the school has adapted its curriculum to ensure that tasks appeal strongly to boys. For example, writing sessions about 'The land of the dinosaurs' captured and held the imaginations of all pupils. As a result, pupils wrote at length, and thought carefully about the adjectives they used to make their stories interesting. For instance, one pupil wrote about a 'scorching hot day' and described walking through piles of 'crunchy leaves'.
- In writing and mathematics in 2012, the school was extremely successful in raising the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and as a result they did better than other pupils. However, in reading the gap between these and other pupils remained in line with the national picture. The school has analysed its performance carefully and knows that this was because the extra help funded by the pupil premium grant was not targeted precisely enough on these pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because their learning needs are carefully assessed and they are well supported in lessons.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching in the Reception classes is well matched to the needs of the children. Resources are well chosen and a wide range of activities effectively stimulates children's interests.
- In Years 1 and 2, teachers are skilled at pitching work at different levels so that the tasks set for pupils are both challenging and achievable for pupils of all levels of ability. When pupils were asked how challenging they found their work, they invariably replied: 'It's not too easy or too difficult and it makes us think'.
- Relationships between teachers and their pupils are consistently good. Teachers ensure that

pupils are effectively managed and organised. In all classes there are clear routines, such as the way in which pupils are expected to respond when teachers call them to attention. These help ensure that time is not wasted.

- Teachers are careful to reinforce their clear teaching of new concepts by ensuring that pupils have ample opportunity to apply what they have learned. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 understood the teaching about ellipsis (using dots to tail off, rather than end a sentence) and tried this out to add dramatic effect to their adventure stories.
- Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and provide both praise and points for improvement in their comments. However, these comments sometimes contain language that is too difficult for some pupils to read and understand independently. In some instances they do not ensure that pupils act on the comments that they make and as a result, their marking does too little to help accelerate pupils' progress.
- In their dialogue with pupils, teachers miss opportunities to give high quality feedback on pupils' achievements and set targets for further improvement. This occurs particularly when teachers do not allow enough time to review learning thoroughly at the end of lessons. Teachers use questioning well to check on pupils' understanding, but rarely build on the answers given by pupils to set higher-level challenges to make pupils think harder.
- Teachers often plan exciting and imaginative activities. As a result, pupils enjoy their work and sustain high levels of interest.
- Skilled teaching assistants often provide effective support to teachers when working with pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs. In the Reception classes, teachers do not use of the skills of their teaching assistants enough to help check on the choices of activity made by children.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The school is an extremely orderly community in which consideration and respect for others is clearly evident. Pupils are unfailingly polite and friendly and are keen to talk about their work.
 - Children in the Reception classes are keen to learn. They follow instructions well and enjoy working and playing together. Their social skills develop well.
 - Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are invariably attentive in lessons and are keen to do their best. They show high levels of curiosity, concentrate well, and greatly enjoy any humour contained in tasks set for them. For example, at the end of a science lesson, pupils excitedly reported their findings that metal objects, rather than a banana, made an electrical circuit work.
 - Important factors in helping ensuring the high standards of behaviour and consideration shown by pupils are the well established and consistently applied systems for managing their behaviour. These are securely underpinned by the strong focus placed on family values, such as care and respect, which permeates all aspects of school life.
 - Pupils get on extremely well with one another. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is never less than good and is often exemplary. Instances of unacceptable behaviour are extremely rare, and there is no evidence of bullying of any type.
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- Procedures for ensuring the safety and well being of pupils are rigorous. All of the parents who completed the inspection survey agree and say that their children are happy at school, feel safe, and are well looked after.
- Attendance rates have improved over the past few years and, for the very large majority of pupils, are in line with the national average for primary schools. Punctuality is generally good. Following the loss of local authority support for attendance, and despite the best efforts of the school to improve matters, rates are just below the nation average for primary schools. The reason for this is that the below average attendance of a few pupils has a disproportionate impact on rates overall because of the small number on roll.

The leadership and management are good

- Parents and carers greatly value the quality of education that the school provides for their children. The overwhelming majority of those who completed the online survey feel that the school is well led and managed and say that they would recommend this school to another parent.
 - The headteacher continues to lead the school well. She has ensured that the issues for improvement identified by the last inspection have been tackled effectively. Members of staff work well as a team and have a shared understanding of what the school is trying to achieve. The school improvement plan identifies the right areas for development, although some of its targets lack precision.
 - There is a strong focus on literacy and numeracy. The creation of an extra class for morning sessions enables the school to group pupils according to ability rather than age and reduces the number of pupils in each teaching group.
 - Senior leaders and managers make a positive contribution to school improvement. The subject leader for English, for example, has produced a clear analysis of the subject's strengths and weaknesses and knows clearly what needs to be improved and why.
 - In the Reception classes, good leadership ensures that children benefit from a well-balanced curriculum and achieve well. In activities directed by adults, children's learning is very carefully evaluated and provision adjusted as required. However, in activities initiated by the children, systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of their choices lack similar sharpness.
 - The monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is thorough and provides a clear picture of strengths and areas for further development. The monitoring of pupils' progress is effective and takes a variety of forms, including pupil progress interviews and sampling of pupils' work.
 - Assessment records of pupils' progress provide a clear picture of progress over time, but do not register the smaller gains in pupils' progress that occur during the course of each term. This means that leaders are not able to adjust provision with the precision needed to help accelerate pupils' progress at an even faster rate than at present.
 - The curriculum is broad and balanced and is enriched through a range of well-attended extra-curricular activities. Topics, such as those about India and Africa, provide pupils with exciting first-hand experiences such as a performance by African drummers. These topics also broaden
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pupils' horizons and help them appreciate other cultural traditions.

- Regular fund-raising provides opportunities for the pupils to put into practice values strongly promoted by the school, such as caring for those who are less fortunate. For example, the school's recent response to a 'Send a cow to Africa' appeal raised more than £1000. Members of the school council proudly explained how they help in organising some fundraising activities.
- Regular 'Family Values' sessions are also provided for parents and carers, and are an important element in the school's effective partnership with parents. A session observed during the inspection welcomed more than 20 parents and carers to the school to work with their children in producing 'kindness boxes' intended to be used at home for family members to share their positive feelings about each other.
- The local authority provides 'light-touch' support for this effective school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Under the effective leadership of the Chair of the Governing Body, the governance of the school is good. The governing body effectively monitors the school's effectiveness and challenges the school's leaders to justify their actions. Governors understand the process for managing the performance of staff and are aware of the way in which teachers' pay is aligned through this process. Safeguarding requirements are securely in place and are rigorously maintained. Governors have a clear understanding of the way in which pupil premium funding is used and its impact on raising pupils' achievement.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	121852
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	413367

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	137
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Bishop
Headteacher	Julia Bowles
Date of previous school inspection	11 February 2009
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Email address	bursar@park-inf-raunds.northants-ecl.gov.uk

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