

# Rawmarsh Thorogate Junior and Infant School

Thorogate, Rawmarsh, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, S62 7HS

**Inspection dates** 5–6 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- During their time in school, pupils, including those attending the Unit, do not always make fast enough progress from their starting points in English and mathematics.
- By the end of Year 6, attainment is broadly average, because pupils have not made consistently strong progress. This indicates that pupils' achievement requires improvement in order to be good.
- Teaching requires improvement because it has not resulted in pupils achieving well over time.
- A fast pace of learning is not maintained throughout some lessons, for example, because too long is allowed for a particular activity.
- Tasks are sometimes too hard or too easy for particular groups of pupils. During these lessons, learning slows down.
- Some approaches that are used successfully by particular teachers have not yet been adopted throughout the school.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' books show clearly that they are currently making good progress. This is because teaching is improving strongly.
- Pupils use their reading, writing and mathematical skills well to help them learn in other subjects.
- Pupils behave well and are polite and helpful. They feel safe in school. Bullying is rare here.
- The curriculum is rich and lively. Pupils particularly enjoy the varied clubs and visits.
- Leaders, managers and governors have ensured that there have been a range of improvements since the previous inspection. As a result, teaching is improving strongly and achievement is rising.
- Its leadership is keeping the school moving forward. Leaders take full advantage of opportunities to work with and learn from other schools.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 13 lessons. One observation was made jointly with the headteacher.
- Information was gathered from a range of documents but in particular the inspectors devoted time to examining samples of pupils' work, both in their books and displayed around the school.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body.
- The inspectors considered the 10 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Additionally, they looked at the outcome of the school's own recent questionnaire and spoke to a number of parents as they brought their children to school.

## Inspection team

Rosemary Eaton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jenny Firth

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is above average as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after.)
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has begun to receive support from a national leader of education and a local leader of education from the Hartsholme Academy and Ellison-Boulter Primary School respectively.
- Last year, staffing was disrupted considerably because a number of key staff were unavoidably absent for lengthy periods. Staffing is currently stable.
- The school accommodates an enhanced resource provision for pupils in Year 5 and 6 with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. This is known as the Unit. The Unit serves schools from across the local authority and the pupils remain on the roll of their mainstream school. Currently, nine pupils are attached to the Unit although most spend part of the week in their mainstream school. At the time of the inspection, most of the Unit staff including the teacher in charge were temporary. The local authority has made a decision to relocate the Unit elsewhere in January 2014.

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

- Raise achievement by further improving the quality of teaching with a particular focus on:
  - ensuring that the work done by different groups of pupils is always set at just the right level to enable them all to make fast progress
  - maintaining a fast pace of learning throughout each lesson
  - enabling all pupils to benefit from the new approaches to teaching and learning that are proving especially successful in accelerating progress in certain classes, particularly Year 6.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils' overall progress is broadly at the rate expected. This is confirmed by the school's own records of the progress each year group made in the course of last year. Some made faster progress than expected but others did no more than meet these expectations or made even slower progress than this.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is broadly average. This does not indicate that, from their varied starting points, pupils' progress through the school has been good.
- Last year showed some improvements, for example, in attainment in mathematics in Year 2 and in the proportion of Year 6 pupils making the progress expected. The work of current pupils indicates that over the two months prior to the inspection most had made good progress. However, there is insufficient evidence to show sustained improvement or that progress is consistently strong over time. That is why achievement requires improvement in order to be good.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs requires improvement because it is too variable. Currently, the deputy headteacher is providing intensive and expert support to boost the progress of pupils with specific difficulties. This has led, for example, to some Year 6 pupils making rapid strides in understanding the meaning of what they read.
- The most-able pupils also make variable progress and so their achievement requires improvement. The school works hard to provide all pupils with equal opportunities and is now involved in a local project designed to increase the number of pupils reaching higher than the nationally expected standards in the Year 6 tests.
- In 2013, the attainment of Year 6 pupils known to be eligible for free school meals was over two terms ahead of other pupils in mathematics and one term ahead in writing. In reading there was no attainment gap. Leaders consider carefully how best to spend the pupil premium funding and any gaps in achievement narrowed considerably from 2012 to 2013.
- Pupils attending the Unit tend to make slower academic progress than pupils in the mainstream of the school. This is because staff must focus predominantly on helping pupils develop the skills needed to become effective learners. Pupils become increasingly able to follow instructions, share and take turns, and complete tasks. This enables them to start making progress in English and mathematics, for example, by writing more complex sentences.
- Pupils apply their reading, writing and mathematical skills well to help them learn in other subjects. The quality of writing in history and science is equal to that in pupils' literacy books. This means that pupils appreciate that writing is a necessary skill for life, not just for English lessons.
- Younger pupils, including those at an early stage in learning to read, are keen readers, confident to use phonics (the sounds made by letters), to tackle new words. Year 6 pupils have a regular 'Reading Club' lesson that requires them to read widely in order to carry out research for homework into topics that interest them. Their fascinating reports about subjects such as earthquakes or snakes reflect the good progress pupils are currently making in reading and writing.
- Children in the Reception Year are prepared well for Year 1 through a range of interesting indoor and outdoor activities. They settle in quickly and soon make friends and start learning in all the areas of their learning.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement in order to be judged good overall. The teaching observed during the inspection was mostly good and pupils' books confirm that teaching is improving

strongly. However, teaching is not yet ensuring that pupils make consistently good progress and achieve well over time.

- In the best lessons, teachers make sure pupils learn quickly throughout. On other occasions the pace of learning dips at certain points. Pupils may be allowed too long to complete a task and so time is wasted. Sometimes, teachers do not respond quickly enough when pupils have mastered a skill and are ready to move on to a new challenge.
- Teachers are very clear about the levels at which each pupil is working. They do not always make maximum use of this information in order to match work in English and mathematics closely to what different groups need to learn next. As a result, more-able pupils may not have to try hard enough while those that are less able sometimes struggle with work that is too difficult. In both cases, pupils do not make good progress.
- In some classes, teachers use innovative methods that successfully boost pupils' progress. For example, Year 6 pupils' writing is enhanced by 'Robbery Books'. These are compilations of interesting words collected during pupils' reading, ready to be drawn on to add variety and subtlety to written work. Approaches such as these have not yet been introduced throughout the school.
- Marking has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Pupils are now allocated time in which to respond to the advice teachers have given them. It is clear from their books that writing is improving as, for example, pupils correct spelling errors or seek alternatives for mundane words.
- Teaching assistants typically make strong contributions to teaching and learning. They take care to support pupils but not to do too much for them.
- Teachers often use questions well to encourage pupils to think hard. Pupils are frequently asked to talk to each other to explain and refine their ideas. Year 2 pupils were animated as they discussed how to subtract five from 23. 'Put 20 in your head, take five and then add the three' was one good idea.
- Teachers make sure pupils know just what they are to learn during each lesson. Pupils often consider how well they have met the targets set for them to achieve and how they can improve their work. This makes them all the more keen to be successful learners.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils are polite, friendly and helpful. They show respect for each other and for adults and the school is a happy community.
- Pupils like coming to school. They enjoy physical education and sport and know that being active 'gets you fit'. The large majority of pupils attend very regularly.
- During lessons, pupils behave well, listen to each other and work productively with partners. They are usually enthusiastic learners but when the pace of lessons slows the attention of some pupils fades and they become fidgety. However, there is no evidence of lessons being interrupted by unruly behaviour.
- Behaviour at playtimes is equally good. Older pupils take responsibility for younger ones, for example, by acting as play leaders.
- In the Unit, pupils' behaviour is volatile but is handled well by staff. This means that many of the pupils have opportunities to work in mainstream schools. Occasionally, the school has to exclude individuals in order to assure the safety of other pupils in the Unit and its staff.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They say that there is no bullying and records confirm that it happens only rarely. Pupils are confident that staff would help them if they reported any concerns.
- The school teaches pupils how to help themselves stay safe. Year 4 pupils commented that whenever they use the internet they are reminded, for example, not to give their personal details to anyone they do not know.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher provides a clear direction for the school and has developed a team of strong and committed senior leaders. The work of the senior leaders and their ability to communicate their high expectations to other staff are key reasons why teaching is improving so strongly and pupils' achievement is rising.
- There are well organised arrangements to check on the quality of teaching and help teachers to improve their effectiveness. For example, teachers look together at the work of pupils from each class, to identify which approaches to marking are proving most useful. This is one reason why marking has improved so much since the previous inspection. Senior leaders set examples for other staff to follow and act as coaches to successfully improve the effectiveness of individual teachers.
- The local authority encourages its schools to support each other through 'learning communities' and also informs them, for example, of the chance to work with the leaders of outstanding schools. The headteacher makes sure that the school benefits fully from these opportunities. He seized the chance to work with the national and local leaders of education to help further develop aspects of the school's work in the drive to make it an outstanding school. Pupils' writing has improved through the school's involvement in a local project. Staff at all levels are very active in the learning community.
- The school's priorities arise from leaders' accurate knowledge of what is working well and where more improvement is needed. Plans for moving the school forward are effective and have led for example to higher attainment in mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- Last year's staff changes were managed well and the school continued to move forward. With a stable staff in place, subject leadership roles have been reorganised. The school is aware that these middle leaders are not yet all playing a full part in helping to improve the school and this is a current priority.
- Safeguarding meets the government's current requirements. All staff are made well aware of their responsibility to keep pupils safe and how to respond if they have any concerns.
- The curriculum is planned carefully so pupils have a wide range of interesting experiences. They appreciate visits, for example, relating to the Second World War. These experiences provide memories that add richness to pupils' writing and contribute well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils have good opportunities for physical education and sport, during lessons and through clubs. A variety of activities are offered, including more unusual ones such as tai chi for all Year 6 pupils. The new sports funding is enabling a specialist coach to spend more time in school developing the skills of pupils and staff.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance has improved since the previous inspection. Governors now know more about pupils' progress by looking regularly at the school's own records and comparisons with pupils in other schools. They are better equipped to ask questions, for example, about how achievement is being raised. Governors get regular reports on the difference being made by the pupil premium and contributed to the way in which the sports funding is being used. Visits to classrooms help governors to form accurate opinions about teaching and they are well aware of what is being done to improve its quality and manage staff's performance.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	106910
<b>Local authority</b>	Rotherham
<b>Inspection number</b>	425743

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	204
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Chris Hepworth
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Barnett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 January 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01709 710033
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