

# Ruskin Junior School

Ruskin Avenue, Wellingborough, NN8 3EG

**Inspection dates** 11–12 June 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Standards at the end of Year 6 were low in English and mathematics in 2013. Not all pupils made as much progress as they should have done in the last academic year.
- Pupils do not use vocabulary precisely enough when writing. Their knowledge of subtraction, multiplication and division is not always secure, particularly in the case of less-able pupils.
- Teaching requires improvement because it is not consistently good in all classes. Teachers do not always give pupils work that offers the right level of challenge. As a result, there is variation in the amount of progress they make.
- Teachers do not refer to what pupils should be learning frequently enough and do not consistently inform pupils about how to improve their work, including their spelling.
- Not all teaching assistants are effective in supporting pupils' progress.
- Staffing difficulties have limited the school's ability to share leadership responsibilities more widely. This has slowed the pace of school improvement.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' achievement is improving. From low starting points when they join the school, more pupils this year are making good progress.
- Pupils behave well and feel very safe in school. Their enjoyment of learning is reflected in their improving attendance.
- The school does a great deal to support those pupils who are at most risk of falling behind.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are providing good leadership. Their frequent checks on teachers' work have led to improvements in achievement and teaching.
- The academy sponsor is ambitious and has a clear vision for the school. It has very good systems in place to support leaders and governors in putting this vision into practice.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited 20 lessons. Nine observations were done jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Inspectors also observed two assemblies.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team and with a group of pupils. The lead inspector met with a representative from the academy sponsor.
- There were too few responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, for these to register but the inspection team looked at the parental response to a recent survey conducted by the school. The team also considered 27 completed staff questionnaires.
- The inspection team looked at the school's work and at key documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness; the school development plan; and information relating to safeguarding. Inspectors looked at records of pupils' attainment and progress; and at pupils' books.

## Inspection team

Margaret Goodchild, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Maria Rees–Johnson

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school that serves the Queensway estate which consists mainly of rented accommodation.
- The school opened as a sponsored academy on 1 November 2012. The sponsor is The Education Fellowship.
- The number of pupils on roll is rising and about a fifth of the pupils have joined during Key Stage 2. The school is due to expand in September 2015 when there will be three rather than two classes in each year group.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is well above that found in most schools. (This is additional government funding provided to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to those who are looked after.)
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. A very few pupils attend the specially resourced provision for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties at Park Junior School in Wellingborough for two days a week.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is broadly average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also average.
- The school has not been open long enough to be required to meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The first year group to take national tests after completing a full year in the school will be in 2014.
- The school provides a breakfast club, which is managed by the governing body.
- The school has experienced recruitment difficulties since its opening. Two new permanent teachers have been appointed to take up post in September 2014, which will mean that the school will then be almost fully staffed.

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

- Raise standards and increase the proportion of pupils who make rapid progress by:
  - widening pupils' vocabulary and increasing the accuracy with which they use and combine words in their writing
  - sharpening pupils' grasp of subtraction, multiplication and division and the way less-able pupils draw on this knowledge to solve mathematical problems.
- Increase the amount of good teaching by:
  - making sure that work always provides the right level of challenge for all pupils and using better support material for those who find learning difficult
  - making sure that teachers always provide advice in their marking about how pupils could improve their work, including their spellings, and checking that pupils follow this advice
  - developing the skills of teaching assistants so that their support has a consistently good impact on pupils' progress
  - making greater use of the targets and assessment checklists that are kept in the front of pupils' books to raise their awareness about their learning.
- Strengthen the capacity for improvement by developing the leadership skills of teachers who are taking on new responsibilities for leading subjects and other aspects of the school's work.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because standards at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics were low in 2013. Not all pupils made as much progress as they should have done last year and there is still some variation in the amount of progress pupils make.
- Teachers conduct a careful assessment of pupils' attainment when they join the school. This shows that pupils start at the school with low attainment. Although those who join during Key Stage 2 settle well, they often have emotional and social difficulties that affect their learning.
- The school has looked closely at what pupils find most difficult in English and mathematics. In mathematics, this has shown that some pupils struggle with subtraction, multiplication and division. Less-able pupils, in particular, have difficulty applying their knowledge of numbers in solving problems.
- In English, the limited vocabulary of less-able pupils restricts their writing. Even when presented with an effective stimulus for writing, many pupils find it difficult to express their ideas. The most-able pupils use a good range of vocabulary and punctuation, showing an awareness of the reader. However, at times, other pupils' inappropriate use of words and some weaknesses in their spelling weaken the effectiveness of their writing.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium performed as well as their classmates in reading in 2013. Their attainment was just over two terms behind the rest of the pupils in mathematics and almost two terms behind in writing. These pupils made the expected amount of progress in reading and mathematics. They made less progress than their classmates in writing.
- The school is working to fill gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in all year groups but many pupils are still in the process of catching up. Improvement is most evident in reading, where attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average for pupils currently in the school. It is below average in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress in their handwriting as they move through the school. The good standard of presentation seen in pupils' writing books is maintained in their mathematics and topic work.
- Pupils' books in English and mathematics show that more-able pupils and those of average ability have generally made good progress since September 2013. The progress of less-able pupils is more variable.
- Pupils of minority ethnic heritage and those who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to other pupils. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make at least the expected amount of progress. The good support that a very few pupils receive, both from the school itself and from specially resourced provision in another local school, ensures they learn to cope with their emotional difficulties. This makes a good contribution to their progress.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Pupils' books, assessment information and evidence from lessons show that teaching requires improvement, even though teaching is improving and an increasing amount is now good.

- At times, less-able pupils struggle to complete work that they do not fully understand or find difficult. Teachers do not always provide them with the resources they need, such as a word bank or practical mathematics equipment, to help them cope with the work they have been set.
- Teaching assistants sometimes provide good support to pupils, helping to clarify their thinking, but this is not always the case. At times, a group of pupils make less progress than they could because the support provided does not challenge them enough. Some teaching assistants who run the special support programmes in English and mathematics enable pupils to make good progress. However, where the support provided by the teaching assistant is less effective, some groups make limited progress.
- Pupils' books show that they often use teachers' marking to improve their work and complete their corrections. However, teachers sometimes miss important errors, including spelling mistakes, when marking pupils' work and they do not always make sure that pupils act on their comments.
- Pupils have targets and checklists in the front of their books that provide useful information about what they need to achieve next. Some teachers make sure that these are completed regularly. However, not all teachers mark these off when pupils have met their targets or use them sufficiently to raise pupils' awareness about their own progress.
- Lessons are usually well planned and teachers share their learning intentions with pupils so that they know what they are expected to do. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to make activities interesting and varied. This is encouraging pupils to be enthusiastic about their learning.
- Increasingly, the school provides rich and colourful experiences for pupils as part of its strategy to extend their vocabulary and fire their imaginations. In one particularly successful example that took place during the inspection, staff created a very convincing scene on the school field to suggest an alien had landed during the night. Teachers stimulated pupils' writing by leading them through an exploration of the clues they could use to decide if this had actually happened, and used good questioning to promote and extend their thinking.
- In mathematics, teachers are providing pupils with more opportunities to develop their thinking through investigations. Teachers are usually careful to check on pupils' progress and understanding during these lessons. They provide pupils with good opportunities to explain their thinking, for example, to talk about how they arrived at a particular answer.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school introduced more rigorous procedures for managing behaviour in September 2013. These have had a positive effect on pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- Staff have received training this year in managing pupils' behaviour, which has led to greater consistency of approach across the school. Senior leaders keep close checks on how well pupils are behaving and teachers' classroom control is good.
- Pupils enjoy learning and behave well in class. They pay careful attention, listening well to the teachers' instructions and to each other's ideas. They are eager to answer teachers' questions and concentrate on their work. Most pupils take a pride in keeping their books neat. Very

occasionally, there is some off-task chatter when learning lacks challenge but no evidence of disruption.

- There is a harmonious atmosphere around the school, at playtimes and in the dining room. Pupils are polite and well mannered. Older pupils take responsibility for supporting younger ones and pupils play co-operatively.
- The school has adopted 'zero tolerance' to any form of bullying or racism. Pupils understand different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and are clear about they would do if they felt threatened in any way. Pupils get on well together and the school is effective in tackling any suggestion of discrimination.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel very safe and know how to stay safe, for instance, when using the internet. The school does a great deal to support pupils who are at risk of not doing as well as other pupils. The family support worker takes the lead in developing strong links with parents, establishing positive relationships with individual families who need support and promoting their children's regular attendance. The school works in close partnership with other agencies to meet the needs of its pupils and their families.
- The school has succeeded in improving punctuality and increasing the rate of attendance so that it is broadly average. Staff adopt a rigorous approach if a pupil is not attending regularly and they are quick to contact parents if their children are absent. The school sets targets for pupils and rewards good attendance so that they are eager to attend regularly. The breakfast club provides a calm start to the day as well as providing a nutritious meal.

## **The leadership and management**

## **requires improvement**

- Leadership and management require improvement because there have not been enough teachers with appropriate skills and experience to take on leadership roles. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have, therefore, had to undertake too many responsibilities. This has slowed the rate of school improvement in the school's first year of operation.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well together and have benefited from training and support made available by the academy sponsor. Their contribution to school improvement has been strengthened and they are now providing good leadership. Two new permanent teachers have been appointed and will join the school at the beginning of next term.
- Since September 2013, senior leaders have established a climate where pupils are expected to behave well. The headteacher and deputy headteacher frequently check teachers' work and its effect on pupils' learning. Teachers receive detailed advice on how to improve and this has led to improvements in teaching and in the rate of pupils' progress.
- Leaders use data well to check on pupils' achievement and to judge the school's effectiveness. This helps them to identify what needs to be improved and which pupils need additional help. It contributes to the school's focus on giving all pupils equal opportunities.
- Leaders use a range of information about teachers' work to judge their performance. They meet with class teachers regularly to hold them to account for their pupils' progress. They make sure that only the most effective teachers are rewarded and provide support for those who need it.
- Lessons and topics planned by teachers provide pupils with varied and stimulating learning opportunities. The careful way topic work is planned ensures activities hold pupils' interest, and

this motivates pupils and provides them with good opportunities to practise their literacy skills. A variety of special events and visits promotes pupils' learning effectively and supports their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

- The school makes good use of its primary school sport funding to increase pupils' participation in sport and promote their health and well-being. The school is using its funding to provide expert coaching and to extend pupils' participation in sport through extra clubs and more tournaments against other schools.
- The academy sponsor is clear about the school's strengths and areas for development. It is ambitious in its vision for the school and has put in place very good systems to underpin the work of leaders and governors. It is taking the lead in work on school expansion so that the headteacher is able to concentrate on school improvement.
- The academy sponsor carries out detailed quarterly checks on the school's work and provides both support and challenge to school leaders. Links with businesses and universities through the academy trust and with other schools in the chain are making a significant contribution to school improvement. The academy sponsor makes sure that procedures for managing teachers' performance are robust and that any underperformance is tackled. Opportunities for extra training are being provided to develop the expertise of the staff.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The role of the governing body has been redefined and governors will shortly undertake training provided by the academy trust in order to take on more responsibility. The governing body has been closely involved in revising school policies and in working to improve parental involvement in the school's work. Governors have had training in interpreting data in order to judge the school's effectiveness. They receive key information from the headteacher and visit the school to find things out for themselves. They are aware of how pupil premium funding is spent and the impact it has on pupils' progress. Governors, together with the academy sponsor, make sure that statutory requirements are met, including those for the safeguarding of pupils.

## 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>	138886
<b>Local authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	440060

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	233
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rachel Mallows
<b>Headteacher</b>	Catherine French
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	N/A
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