

Ratby Primary School

Main Street, Ratby, Leicester, LE6 0LN

Inspection dates 23–24 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good		2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good		2
Quality of teaching	Good		2
Achievement of pupils	Good		2
Early years provision	Good		2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Since the academy opened, the headteacher, other leaders and the governing body have successfully focused on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' resulting achievement.
- Good teaching means that boys and girls of different abilities and backgrounds are all making good progress. Gaps in the achievements of different groups are closing.
- A lively and exciting range of activities, that take full account of the new National Curriculum requirements, enthuses pupils and supports their progress and their enjoyment of learning.
- The accuracy and reliability of the school's checks on pupils' progress have improved. In most lessons, teachers make good use of these checks to prepare suitably demanding work for different groups.
- Pupils are keen to learn and are very positive about school. They have very good relationships with each other and with staff, and behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils feel very safe in school because they are confident that all the adults and their friends will help to take care of them.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong and greatly supports the friendly, purposeful ethos of the school. Pupils work extremely well collaboratively.
- The school has worked effectively with a variety of other schools to share good practice. In particular, with its partners, it has made great strides in developing a new system of assessment to meet changes in national requirements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress is good rather than outstanding because there are some inconsistencies in teaching.
- Work is occasionally not demanding enough, particularly for the most-able pupils, and especially in mathematics.
- Marking is inconsistent between classes and subjects, and does not always help pupils to improve. This is a particular issue in mathematics, and for the most-able.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed substantial parts of fifteen lessons, and made briefer visits to classrooms to observe the teaching of reading and the provision in the Reception classes. Two lessons were observed alongside the headteacher.
- Examples of pupils' work from the last twelve months were examined and several pupils were heard to read.
- Formal meetings were held with a variety of staff, representatives of the governing body, groups of pupils and with the headteacher of another school that works closely with Ratby.
- Inspectors took note of the 68 replies to the online survey, Parent View, as well as the school's own survey of parental opinion from last year. They also considered the views of several individual parents who contacted the team by letter or email. Replies to a survey of staff views were considered.
- A range of documentation was examined including data about pupils' progress and attainment, the school's own records of monitoring teaching and learning, information about how teachers' performance is managed, and the school's evaluation of its own effectiveness.

Inspection team

Steven Hill, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Paula Masters	Additional Inspector
Karen Davies	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ratby Primary School converted to become an academy on 1 February 2013. When its predecessor school, also called Ratby Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. Very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs that are supported at school action is a little below average. The proportion of such pupils supported through a statement of special educational needs or at school action plus is average. Nine pupils have a statement of special educational needs. No pupils were supported by an education, health and care plan at the time of the inspection.
- The school meets the government floor standards. These are minimum expectations set for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is extra government funding to support the education of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, or who are looked after by the local authority.
- There is an independent before- and after-school club which operates at the school. This is not managed by the governing body and is inspected and reported upon separately.
- There was considerable disruption to staffing in classes for the oldest pupils during the last school year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement by making more teaching outstanding and eliminating any practice that requires improvement, in particular by ensuring that:
 - when teachers mark pupils' work, particularly in mathematics, and for the most-able, they show them clearly how they can improve, and ensure that pupils act upon the advice given
 - information about pupils' progress is always used to give them work that is suitably challenging, particularly in mathematics, and particularly for the most-able pupils.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher gives clear direction to the school. Staff have responded well to her insistence that systems are focused on how well pupils achieve and on how better teaching can contribute to this. Teachers share a commitment to their continual and successful work to refine what is taught, and how they teach it, in order to improve pupils' progress.
- The concerted work of staff has eliminated many previous inconsistencies in teaching. Those that remain have been accurately identified by leaders and are being tackled. Frequent monitoring of lessons, of planning and of the quality of pupils' work is used to check the performance of teachers. This enables support to be provided where it is needed, through advice and extra training, and good performance to be rewarded.
- The school uses its monitoring systems well to identify weaknesses in the progress of different groups and individuals. Suitable, carefully tailored help is in place to help any who are not doing as well as they should. This results in good progress by all groups. A previous shortfall in the achievement of boys compared to girls, and of disadvantaged pupils compared to their classmates, has been largely eliminated. Pupil premium funding has been used effectively to provide academic and social support to this latter group, carefully matched to individual needs. This enables them to take a full part in school life and achieve better.
- In parallel to the concentration on supporting pupils' academic progress, leaders have ensured that a culture of mutual respect and good behaviour pervades the school. The successful focus on developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development supports this. It underpins pupils' strong moral sense and positive relationships, their understanding and tolerance of the cultures and beliefs of others, and their sense of fairness. They are well-prepared for their future lives in modern Britain.
- The school's commitment to equal opportunities is exemplified by the good level of support provided to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They are helped to take a full part in school life and to make good progress.
- The school has successfully adapted its curriculum to comply with new national requirements. It has modified what it does to ensure that activities are interesting, generate pupils' enthusiasm and promote a desire to learn. A good balance is maintained between a proper emphasis on English and mathematics, and ensuring that all other subjects are covered properly.
- Working with colleagues from other schools, staff have made a good start on implementing a new system to assess and record pupils' standards and progress. This is already outlined clearly on the school website. Senior leaders in the schools are monitoring its implementation, with a view to refining and modifying the scheme as needed.
- Subject leaders make a strong contribution to the improvements made. They regularly check on the quality of provision in their areas of responsibility, plan action for improvement, and relate the changes they make to their impact on the quality of pupils' work. For example, a weakness in how well pupils record their investigative work in science was identified last year. Teachers are modifying their practice this term by ensuring sufficient time is allowed in science lessons to perform investigations and to write about them properly. The leaders for the Early Years Foundation Stage and the special educational needs coordinator also contribute well to the school's management.
- The extra funding for sport has been spent effectively on improving teachers' subject knowledge and providing a greater range of activities for pupils, both in lessons and in after-school and lunchtime clubs. The positive impact is seen in pupils' enthusiasm and increased participation, as well as in the school's extensive success last year in competitive sports.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements so that pupils are safe in school.

- Parents are positive about the school and the work it does with their children. They particularly value that their children enjoy school, are safe and looked after well.
- The school has drawn very effectively on its links with a number of other schools to support its development. Schools have worked together to ensure the accuracy of new assessment systems and to provide extra training for staff to meet their specific needs. A system of using colleagues from other schools to contribute to the school's evaluation of its own practice ensures that this self-evaluation is accurate and reliable.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses. A high level of involvement in school is complemented by good systems to check on pupils' progress. They make effective use of a range of data and have a good understanding of the quality of teaching. They ensure that teachers' targets are used to reward good performance.
 - Statutory duties are carried out well, including a good focus on safeguarding procedures. Governors are fully aware of changes to the curriculum and assessment, and have worked with staff to ensure these meet new national requirements.
 - Governors' good knowledge of the school enables them to help set the school's strategic direction and to hold leaders to account for the school's performance.
 - The governing body has supported staff well in ensuring that tolerance, respect and understanding of others help pupils to develop positive values.
 - Governors monitor the impact of spending well. For example, they keep track of the use of the pupil premium funding through checking the effect on eligible pupils' progress. They are gathering a good range of evidence on the effectiveness of the spending on sports, but have not yet brought this together to provide an overall evaluation of success.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They appreciate the school's system to reward good behaviour and deal with misdemeanours, saying that behaviour is very controlled because, 'The system really works.' Pupils are polite and friendly, work hard in class and are keen to do well. They concentrate and listen attentively to their teacher and to each other.
- Pupils get along together very well right from starting in Reception. A group in Year 6 agreed that, although there are occasional arguments, they '...can't fall out for long,' and that '...next minute you're best friends.' They say they can rely on each other for support, one saying, 'We've got each other's backs.' These good relationships strongly support their learning when they collaborate in class. They share ideas enthusiastically and this improves their speaking and listening skills.
- Pupils are similarly positive about the adults in the school, one saying 'I'd trust any adult in the school...to talk to them', another agreeing, '...like your mum and dad.' They say that they respect teachers because teachers respect them.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about learning and say that their lessons are fun and that '...pretty much everything you know is from school.' Pupils develop a strong moral sense and, in a Year 5 lesson, showed maturity and thoughtfulness, in discussing what constituted fairness. They showed a good sense of proportion, being clear that issues like the need for an education or fresh water were much more important than birthday presents or school uniform.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. They have learned about different kinds of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and are able to distinguish this from other forms of misbehaviour. While admitting that sometimes pupils misbehave, they are convinced that bullying in the school is very rare, and confident that adults would deal quickly with any issues that arose. They are proud of the school winning an anti-bullying award last year.
- Pupils take responsibilities seriously and enjoy the help they are able to give to others through, for example, their work as 'peer stars'.

- Pupils are extending their understanding of life beyond the village through, for example, their visits to a school in the city with a very different intake. Year 6 have particularly enjoyed learning about the different religions and cultures in Africa. They contribute cheerfully to raising money for different charities, and are sponsoring the education of some children in Afghanistan.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work. Pupils respond to this well so classrooms are orderly and learning goes on unhindered. Teachers are very successful in planning tasks that involve and interest pupils, so they concentrate well and are keen to succeed.
- During lessons, teachers keep a careful eye on how pupils are doing, so they quickly intervene if individuals have misunderstood or are confused. Pupils say they are confident in asking for help because they know their teachers will react positively.
- Good use is made of the skilled support staff in the school, particularly in supporting the needs of pupils who might otherwise struggle with their work. This ensures that all pupils are able to cope with the tasks they are given and are fully included in lessons.
- Teaching is good in Reception. The adults work together very effectively to ensure that children are involved and interested in a range of activities, indoors and out.
- Teachers give pupils extensive opportunities to discuss their work together, and this is very successful in developing their social skills, and their standards of speaking and listening, as well as contributing very positively to their learning in different subjects.
- Teachers generally prepare different work for pupils of different abilities that is based on their knowledge of pupils' previous learning. This means that tasks are usually challenging but manageable for everyone, so they all make good progress. This is occasionally not done accurately enough, so that some work lacks challenge. A particular issue in mathematics is that the most-able pupils sometimes have to tackle the same work as the bulk of the class before going on to harder work.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, praise them for their success and point out errors. However, marking too seldom gives pupils clear advice about how to get better, for example by suggesting extra practice for pupils who have made mistakes or asking pupils to answer questions to develop their understanding. When this is done, pupils do not always respond to teachers' advice. In mathematics, in particular, teachers very seldom challenge more-able pupils, who have got everything right, to attempt harder examples to take their learning further.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils' progress has improved over the last year. It has become more consistent for different groups because of more consistent teaching. It was good overall in reading, writing and mathematics across the school, although there were some variations between year-groups and subjects.
- Children start in Reception with attainment that varies between individuals and from year to year. The attainment of the current year group is broadly typical for their age, but that of last year's cohort was lower than that typically found. They made good progress during the year to go into Year 1 with broadly average standards.
- Attainment across the school is broadly average. It varies between year groups because of different starting points and different proportions of pupils with significant levels of special educational needs from year to year.
- In 2013, results of national assessments indicated that boys were making much less progress than girls.

The school's tracking of pupils across the last year shows that boys and girls made similar progress, with differences now being marginal.

- Similarly, results in 2013 suggested that disadvantaged pupils were not doing as well as their classmates. There were too few such pupils in Year 6 that year to report in detail on their attainment without the risk of identifying individuals. However, the school's tracking of pupils shows that, during the last school year, gaps in the progress of these pupils have greatly reduced, with disadvantaged pupils making good progress overall across the school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. The provision for them is well managed and they are given work that is carefully tailored to meet their needs. Extra adults often provide them with a good mix of support, encouragement and challenge in class that helps them cope well with tasks, and to achieve well.
- The most-able pupils make good progress overall and reach high standards. At times, however, their progress is not as strong as it might be when they are given work that is initially too easy for them.
- Pupils have good reading skills. They make a good start learning phonics (how the letters in words represent different sounds) in the younger classes, illustrated by the improved scores in the national check in Year 1. By Year 6, pupils are enthusiastic and fluent readers, who use their skills well to enhance their learning in other subjects.

The early years provision

is good

- The team of staff in Reception work well together, and have a strong sense of shared direction promoted by the Early Years Foundation Stage leader. They plan work together to maximise the use of the indoor and outdoor facilities so children have a good range of interesting experiences.
- The curriculum is firmly rooted in children's play and adults build on this to enhance children's progress in different areas of learning. Good opportunities are taken to develop children's early literacy and numeracy skills, seen, for example, when children recorded their thoughts and experiences after making and tasting porridge for the 'Three Bears'.
- A good balance is drawn between activities directed by adults and those which children choose for themselves. In both, children progress well, because adults enthuse and engage them, and are skilled in asking questions that develop children's thinking and extend their vocabulary.
- Children settle quickly into the setting and feel safe and secure there. Good systems are in place to introduce children to the school, building effectively on liaison with pre-school settings and with children's parents.
- Children behave well, follow routines conscientiously and enjoy learning. They are already developing good skills in cooperating together, sharing equipment and making decisions together, such as who should catch the 'dangerous' fish in the water tray.
- Staff continually monitor and record children's progress and modify the experiences they provide to build on children's interests and achievements.
- Over their time in the setting, children make good progress in all areas of learning.

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	139284
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	447998

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	316
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Murphy-Cawrey
Headteacher	Lisa Aitken
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
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