

# Rockingham Primary School

Rockingham Road, Corby, NN17 1AJ

**Inspection dates** 10–11 February 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b> <b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement 3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement 3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement 3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement 3
Early years provision		Requires improvement 3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Despite recent improvements, standards in reading, writing and mathematics remain lower than they should be.
- In the early years classes activities provided for children do not always develop their skills and learning as well as they could.
- In lessons, teachers do not always check carefully enough how well pupils are doing. On these occasions, pupils are not moved quickly on to work which will help them make better progress.
- Pupils achieve less well in writing than in reading and mathematics. They do not have enough opportunities to practise their literacy skills in different subjects.
- Sometimes in the playground some pupils are too boisterous and inconsiderate of others. Very occasionally this results in fighting and poor behaviour.
- Some school leaders are new to the post and have not yet developed the skills they need to drive improvements in their areas of responsibility.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has made sure that the quality of teaching is improving and there is none that is inadequate. There are examples of good teaching throughout the school.
- The headteacher and assistant headteacher responsible for assessment rigorously check how well pupils are doing. They make sure that those who had fallen behind are now catching up with their classmates.
- Pupils feel safe in school and know that any incidents of poor behaviour will be dealt with by adults in the school.
- Pupils understand how to stay safe in different situations such as when using the internet or on the roads.
- The local advisory board governors know the school well and challenge leaders to make sure improvements are rapid and effective.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 16 lessons, eight of which were seen together with the headteacher or other leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other staff, two groups of pupils, a group of parents, the local improvement leader for the David Ross Education Trust and three members of the local advisory board.
- Informal discussions were held with parents and pupils.
- The inspectors took account of the 15 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 75 paper copy responses to Parent View questions, the school's own pupil questionnaire and the 23 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and reviewed a range of documentation including: the school's checks on its performance; its analysis and tracking of pupils' progress; records of behaviour and safety; school improvement plans; records relating to classroom observations and the management of staff performance; safeguarding arrangements; and records of meetings of the governing body.
- The inspectors also looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils read and checked information on attendance.

## Inspection team

Susan Hughes, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Hilary Foster	Additional Inspector
David Wolfson	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Rockingham Primary School became an academy school sponsored by the David Ross Education Trust in August 2013.
- The school is currently governed by a Local Advisory Board (LAB) which comprises the chair and four other governors appointed by the Davis Ross Education Trust, and a parent governor. This replaced the previous governing body in March 2014.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Children in the early years start in a full-time Reception class at the beginning of the year in which they are five years old.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils (those supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority) is well above average.
- There have been considerable changes to staffing recently. The headteacher took up her leadership of the school in September 2014. The early years leader took on her leadership post in September 2014 and the special educational needs co-ordinator started her role in January 2015. Since July 2014, six teachers have left the school and been replaced by new staff.
- The headteacher has developed a new team of leaders. There are two assistant headteachers. One leads assessment and curriculum, the other behaviour and safety. The latter has recently returned to school after taking maternity leave.
- All four members of staff in the early years classes started in the Foundation Stage in September 2014.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

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

- Improve teaching to raise standards, especially in writing, by ensuring that:
  - teachers give pupils activities that are closely matched to their level of ability
  - in lessons, teachers regularly check how well pupils are doing so that they can adapt the learning to help pupils make better progress
  - pupils have more opportunity to practise and develop their literacy skills in different subjects
  - free-choice activities in the early years classes develop children's skills and understanding, taking account of what they already know.
- Improve behaviour by tackling reasons for incidents of unacceptable behaviour in the playground.
- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that new leaders quickly develop the skills they need to drive improvements in their areas of responsibility.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- Since she joined the school, the headteacher has shown strong leadership, drive and commitment which have resulted in rapid improvements throughout the school. She has ensured that the quality of teaching has improved and most pupils are currently making good progress. This means they are now working much closer to the levels they are capable of. However, these changes are still very recent and teaching and achievement are not yet consistently good in all classes.
- Some leaders are very new to their roles and have not yet developed the skills needed to drive improvements. While they have identified how to raise standards in their area of responsibility, actions have been either too recent or are not yet fully in place to have made a significant difference.
- The leaders of English and mathematics are skilled and experienced. They have already made changes to the way their subjects are taught which have improved pupils' achievement in these subjects. They use school data well to check where progress is not good enough and work alongside colleague to help develop their teaching expertise. However, standards are still lower than they should be, especially in writing.
- An appraisal system was introduced in September 2014 and this has supported improvements in the quality of teaching. Teachers are clear about the expectations and are rewarded with a pay increase only if their pupils make good progress. Regular checks by senior leaders on how well teachers are meeting their challenging targets help identify any support needed to be successful.
- The school has received good support from partner schools in the David Ross Education Trust. Sharing good practice and joining in training sessions have helped teachers develop their knowledge and techniques. Colleagues from other schools in the Trust have helped the headteacher in building a new leadership team and checking that assessments are accurate.
- Strong links with other local schools provide pupils with opportunities to participate in inter-school competitions. The primary sports funding has supported the development of these partnerships and more pupils are now competing, and developing stronger team-working skills. A specialist teacher from a local sports partnership works with teachers to improve their teaching of physical education and runs sports clubs for pupils after school. As a result, the quality of pupils' physical education lessons has improved and more pupils engage in physical activities than before.
- Prior to September 2014, support for disadvantaged pupils was not effective and these pupils were falling behind their classmates. However, they are now extremely well supported. Additional adults work closely with class teachers to provide exactly the right kind of assistance to help eligible pupils achieve well. Recent improvements mean that the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils is narrowing. In some years, they are already attaining as well as other pupils in reading.
- A new curriculum was introduced in September 2014 and is varied and interesting. Activities such as inviting pupils from Years 3 and 4 to dress as 'science detectives' to investigate the properties of soap, engage and encourage them to be curious. On another occasion, Key Stage 1 pupils arrived at school to find 'dragon footprints' on the corridor. They discussed and wrote about how they could have got there and what was going to happen next. While some teachers are starting to develop pupils' writing skills in all areas of the curriculum, this is not yet effective in all classes.
- The school's development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education supports an understanding and appreciation of British values and prepares pupils effectively for life in modern Britain. The British values themed-day helped pupils learn how elements of democracy, such as using a ballot box to ensure freedom of choice, affect everybody's lives.

- Pupils are encouraged to reflect on appropriate behaviour and they talk confidently about how some pupils do not meet the school's expectations. In lessons and assemblies pupils learn about the importance of respecting other cultures and beliefs. Pupils in the school who come from different countries, and speak English as an additional language, told inspectors that they settled in well and were made welcome when they arrived. The school is committed to equality of opportunities and makes sure that no groups of pupils achieved less well than others. It helps tackle discrimination through teaching about positive role models from different faiths, cultures and walks of life.
- Leaders have reviewed and improved the safeguarding arrangements in school. They make sure that the school is safe and secure and that policies and procedures are used consistently. Leaders ensure that the school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective and meet national requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance is effective. The local advisory board members know the school well and are acutely aware of the need to make rapid improvements. They are committed to raising standards and improving all areas of the school to ensure a good education for its pupils. They meet regularly, visit the school and ask the headteacher and other leaders challenging questions to check how well the school is doing.
  - The David Ross Education Trust supported the introduction of the current headteacher to the school in April 2014 to help make changes and appointed her to lead the school in September 2014. The Trust, through the local advisory board, have also been instrumental in ensuring changes in staffing have improved the quality of teaching. Board members know that the recently-introduced appraisal system helps teachers understand what is required of them and governors are committed to making sure that teachers will be rewarded only if they meet the agreed targets.
  - Board members use school data well to check that achievement for all groups of pupils is improving. They appreciate that disadvantaged pupils were not well supported last year and are currently tracking those pupils to make sure that the pupil premium spending is helping them catch up. They also know that the sports funding is extending pupils' sporting opportunities and helping them develop healthy lifestyles.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils

## requires improvement

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Some playground behaviour is rough and unruly, occasionally resulting in fights and scuffles. Pupils say that when this happens, it makes playtimes less enjoyable. Teachers usually sort out the problem, but incidents do sometimes recur.
- In lessons, pupils are mostly well behaved. They are keen to learn and, when the teaching is engaging, are attentive and enthusiastic. If the work in lessons is too easy or hard, however, they can lose focus and distract other pupils.
- Around school, pupils are well behaved and orderly. They politely greet visitors and readily hold open doors for adults and each other. Most pupils co-operate very well and automatically offer help and advice when needed.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel behaviour is improving and is better this year than last. They said it is because teachers are more consistent in the way they deal with issues and keep a closer eye on what is happening.
- Older pupils take roles of responsibility seriously. The 'sports crew' are pupils from Years 5 and 6 who help organise games on the playground and canvass their classmates' views on physical education lessons and sporting opportunities. Playground buddies try hard to mediate when there are conflicts on the playground and help pupils sort out minor disagreements.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school. All pupils spoken to during the inspection felt there was an adult they could go to if they had a problem. Even when behaviour on the playground gets rough, pupils know that an adult will sort it out.

- Pupils understand what constitutes bullying and they know that it can take different forms, such as name calling and cyber-bullying. They told inspectors that some bullying and name-calling do happen, but it is always dealt with by the teachers.
- The worry boxes in school are valued by pupils. While most feel they could go to a teacher with a problem, they accept that sometimes it is helpful to let the teacher know you are worried through a note in the box. Teachers pick up these concerns and deal with them quickly and sensitively.
- The school provides pupils with skills for dealing with risky situations outside school. For example, they understand the need to take precautions when using the internet and know why these are necessary. Visits by the police and fire officers teach pupils about safety on the road and in case of fire.

## The quality of teaching

## requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because, despite recent changes to staffing which have improved the quality of teaching, it is not yet good enough in some classes. In lessons, teachers do not check carefully enough how pupils are progressing. This means that pupils may have work that is too easy or too difficult for them, which limits the progress they make.
- The teaching of writing is improving. Since September 2014, the school has changed the way it teaches phonics (the sound letters represent in words), including in the early years classes. Pupils are making good progress and using these skills in their writing. Teachers encourage accurate use of grammar and punctuation. Most teachers give clear guidance to pupils as to how they can improve their work.
- Similarly high expectations, however, are not evident when pupils are writing in other subjects. Guidance from teachers is not so helpful, presentation is poor and there are fewer opportunities to write at length to practise the skills learnt in English lessons.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving. The subject leader has ensured that all teachers check regularly for any gaps in pupils' mathematical skills and understanding. These checks inform the planning for the next week so that pupils can fill their gaps in knowledge and develop a firm base on which to build. As a result, standards in mathematics are improving at a rapid rate. For example, in a mathematics lesson, Year 6 pupils were finding the mean, median and mode of groups of numbers. As the teacher accurately assessed how well they were doing, pupils moved on to different challenges at different times, according to their development of skills and confidence.
- The teaching of reading is now good. Building on the improved teaching of phonics, pupils are developing good strategies for reading unfamiliar words. For example, a more able pupil in Year 2 successfully sounded out and read 'oesophagus' and 'epidermis'. Pupils who find reading more difficult use their phonics knowledge well to sound out less-complex words.
- Disadvantaged pupils are well supported. Teachers and additional adults in the classroom work well together to make sure the pupils receive any extra help they need to catch up with their classmates. When needed, pupils receive additional support outside the classroom or in after-school clubs.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress. They quickly acquire the vocabulary they need as teachers make sure they understand and are clear about tasks when these are being explained to the class.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar, variable progress to other pupils. When the teaching is weaker they, like their peers, make less progress and their achievement requires improvement. Since January 2015, their learning needs have been more accurately assessed and additional support provided is starting to make a difference to some of the previously slower progress made in some classes.
- The most able pupils make similar progress to other pupils. However, improvements in teaching mean that more pupils who are currently in Years 5 and 6 are working at higher levels than in the previous year.

**The achievement of pupils** requires improvement

- Children start in the early years classes with skills weaker than those typical for their age, especially in communication, language and understanding the world. In recent years they made little progress in the Reception classes and started in Year 1 with skills well below average. This is reflected in the results of the most recent screening check on how well they understand phonics, which was well below average.
- Pupils make steady progress in Key Stage 1 but by the end of the key stage in 2014, standards remained below average in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014, Year 6 pupils left with below average standards, especially in mathematics. Standards of pupils currently in the school are improving, especially in mathematics, and more are working a level closer to, or just above average.
- In 2014, the progress that Year 6 pupils had made since leaving Key Stage 1 was inadequate. School data, however, show that they had made better progress in their final year, narrowing a very large gap between their actual attainment and that expected for their age. Pupils currently in the school are making good progress in some classes, and progress that requires improvement in others. Those who speak English as an additional language make good progress once they have acquired sufficient vocabulary to understand teachers' instructions.
- Disadvantaged pupils leaving Key Stage 2 in 2014 were two and a half terms behind their classmates in mathematics, a term and a half behind in reading and a term behind in writing. In relation to other pupils nationally, they were five terms behind in mathematics, three terms behind in reading and two terms behind in writing. Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are making much better progress. Since September 2014, when they were still working at levels well below their peers, they have narrowed the gaps in attainment and closed them in some areas, especially in reading.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils. This varies according to how well teachers adapt the work to suit the specific learning needs of the pupils. All pupils are well supported by additional adults but the tasks set in some classes help them make better progress than that in others.
- The achievement of the most able pupils similarly varies from class to class. Where teachers regularly check how well pupils are doing, they make sure that more able pupils have work which challenges them and helps them achieve well. In other classes, the work is too easy and pupils' progress requires improvement.

**The early years provision** requires improvement

- Provision for children in the early years has improved considerably from September 2014. The adults in the Reception classes create a safe, welcoming environment for children to play and learn. Staff are caring and nurturing and make sure that children feel safe and happy.
- The recently-introduced changes to the way phonics is taught has improved children's reading and writing skills. Small group activities with a teacher or other adult are effectively planned to help children develop their skills well. However, some activities which are not led by adults do not always build on what children already know and so do not move their skills and knowledge forward as quickly as they could.
- The well-resourced outdoor and covered areas provide opportunities for children to learn both inside and outdoors. Occasionally, however, because the activities are not as focused as they could be, children rush around outside rather than being purposefully engaged in learning. Their behaviour at these times requires improvement.
- Under the new leadership of early years, children's progress is tracked and carefully recorded. The leader is very new to the role, however, and has not yet fully developed the skills she needs to check and drive improvements at a faster rate.

- In 2014 children were ill-prepared for their move to Key Stage 1 and a below average proportion of children achieved a good level of development. Children currently in the Reception classes are developing at a much better rate and most are on track to achieve a level of development which will prepare them well for Year 1 work.



## 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>	139805
<b>Local authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	449842

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>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	270
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The David Ross Education Trust
<b>Chair</b>	Adrian Pritchard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rebecca Steed
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01536 203806
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