

Ramnoth Junior School

Ramnoth Road, Wisbech, PE13 2JB

Inspection dates 17–18 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Outstanding leadership and management have vastly improved the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and behaviour since the academy opened. The academy is continuing to improve rapidly.
- The governing body, the academy trust and senior leaders have combined to establish a team of staff who concentrate successfully on improving the quality of education for all pupils.
- Teaching is good throughout the academy. Teachers know pupils' needs well and give them work that is suitably challenging. They explain things clearly to pupils and show them just what they need to do to succeed.
- All pupils, whatever their ability or background, have greatly improved their achievement, particularly in the last year. All now make good progress and standards are rising fast as a result.
- Staff ensure that pupils who are new to speaking English make particularly rapid progress, so they can play a full part in the life of the academy.
- Support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. This has greatly improved the attitudes to learning and behaviour of the overwhelming majority of pupils.
- The academy keeps pupils extremely safe. They rightly feel safe and secure there.
- Pupils behave well and have good relationships with each other and with staff.
- The academy's systems to check on pupils' progress are very thorough and accurate. This means that it quickly identifies and addresses any weaknesses in progress. Staff are prompt in providing extra help to pupils who need it, so that they do not fall behind.
- Attendance has risen from very low levels to be above average.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some pupils struggle to get their ideas into writing fluently and confidently. Some teachers do not insist that older pupils use consistently joined handwriting.
- A few pupils do not sustain their usual high levels of engagement and interest in all lessons because teachers do not always make the work as interesting.
- The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and is not always clear enough to help pupils to improve. Not all teachers ensure that pupils have acted on the advice they have been given.
- Occasionally, adults do not check on pupils' progress systematically in lessons, so they do not identify or address misunderstandings quickly enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed substantial parts of lessons in every class, and made several of these visits jointly with members of the senior leadership team. The inspection team made other visits to observe teaching and learning across a whole year group when classes in Years 5 and 6 split into several groups for English and mathematics lessons.
- Inspectors analysed examples of pupils' work in their books and in displays.
- The inspection team held formal meetings with staff, pupils, representatives of the governing body and two representatives of the academy trust. They also talked informally with pupils and staff around the academy.
- Inspectors checked a variety of documents, including those related to keeping pupils safe, as well as information about their progress.
- The inspection team observed pupils' behaviour around the academy, in assemblies and at break times.
- There were not enough responses to the online survey, Parent View, for these to be available to inspectors. Inspectors took note of the view of 98 parents who replied to the academy's own recent survey of parental opinion. They spoke informally with several parents at the start of the day, as well as with a parent who asked to speak to an inspector on the telephone.

Inspection team

Steven Hill, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lorraine Cullen

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ramnoth Junior School is average in size for a primary school.
- Ramnoth became an academy on 1 October 2013. It is sponsored by the Elliot Foundation Academy Trust. The academy is part of a federation with Nene Infant School, which became an academy on the same day.
- The Executive Principal and other members of the senior leadership team lead colleagues across both academies. This includes the early years provision which is on the same site as the Nene. The Nene School and the early years provision (Little Owls Daycare) are inspected and reported upon separately.
- The academy trust has devolved most of the functions of governance for both academies to a single governing body. Officers of the trust maintain an overview of governance and work closely with governors.
- About half of the academy's pupils are White British. The other half come from different minority ethnic backgrounds, which is an above average proportion. Most of these come from Other White heritages, mainly from Eastern Europe. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average, with the most common home language after English being Lithuanian. Many of these pupils start in the academy after the usual entry point in Year 3, and often speak little English when they arrive.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for support from the pupil premium is above 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.
- In 2014, the academy did not meet the current government floor standards, which are the minimum expectations set for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There have been considerable changes to teaching staff since the academy opened, with many new staff relatively new to teaching.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement to be outstanding by improving teaching, particularly by ensuring all teachers:
 - help pupils to get their ideas onto paper more fluently, and insist that they consistently use joined handwriting
 - engage and interest pupils throughout lessons in every subject
 - build on the best practice in the academy so that teachers' marking shows pupils how to improve, and that pupils always follow their teachers' advice
 - consistently and systematically check pupils' progress in lessons so that they quickly identify and address any errors and misunderstandings.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The Executive Principal has provided excellent leadership to the academy. With strong support from governors, the trust and senior leaders, she has transformed the academy so that teaching, achievement, behaviour and attendance have improved considerably in a short space of time. The ethos pervading the academy strongly values pupils' academic and personal development. All staff work successfully to promote good teaching and behaviour across the academy.
- The academy manages the quality of teaching extremely well. Despite substantial changes in staffing, and the relative inexperience of some new staff, leaders have successfully supported colleagues in improving their practice and in boosting pupils' progress. Leaders hold teachers fully to account for the performance of their pupils. They provide high-quality training that enables teachers to help pupils make good progress throughout the academy.
- Leaders with responsibility for different subjects provide increasingly effective help and support for colleagues and make systematic checks on how well things are going in their areas of responsibility. Leaders who manage the provision for different groups, such as those who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, do so extremely well. This is why all groups in the academy have made major improvements in their achievement.
- Teachers new to the profession praise the strong support they receive from colleagues, both from within the academy itself and from the trust. Because all leaders work across both academies, they are able to share good practice very well, and make good use of the high levels of expertise within the federation to improve teaching and learning. The excellent teamwork evident throughout the academy is a strong factor in the improvements that it has made and continues to make.
- Academy staff make excellent use of information about pupils' progress to address any shortcomings in achievement and to give pupils work that is challenging but manageable. The rigorous system, developed by the trust, to assess and record pupils' progress against new national requirements has been central to this success. Staff quickly identify specific shortcomings in pupils' skills and provide effective help to fill these gaps in their achievement. The academy has rightly identified the need to continue this process to address remaining shortfalls in pupils' understanding.
- The academy has made highly effective use of the pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils academically, socially and emotionally. Leaders ensure that they carefully tailor this additional help to meet the specific needs of individuals and groups. This has enabled these pupils to make good progress and to rapidly close gaps between their achievement and that of other pupils nationally. This typifies the way the academy uses its excellent understanding of pupils' particular needs to ensure that all have equal opportunities to succeed.
- The academy has successfully placed a high emphasis on keeping pupils safe. Procedures are effective and fully meet national requirements. The academy keeps a close eye on its pupils and responds immediately and decisively if staff express any concerns about pupils' welfare. It works very effectively with external agencies and with parents. The academy's strong emphasis on the importance of good attendance and its close working with parents and pupils, have resulted in a dramatic drop in absence since the academy opened. Links with parents have been greatly strengthened; parents' attendance at academy events has vastly improved and they show a greater willingness to be involved in their children's education. Parents are very positive about the academy and what it provides.
- The academy has used the primary school physical education and sports funding very effectively to extend pupils' experiences and to provide training for teachers. As a result, they have gained in confidence and expertise in their own teaching. Pupils' participation in exercise has increased. They are positive about the opportunities they are offered to take part in different sports.
- The academy provides a wide-ranging curriculum that, while giving suitable emphasis to mathematics and English, develops pupils' skills and understanding effectively in other subjects. There is excellent support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This has transformed pupils' behaviour and

attitudes to learning since the academy opened. The academy's successful emphasis on promoting British values has resulted in very positive relationships between pupils from different backgrounds. They appreciate each others' cultures and backgrounds, and new arrivals from abroad report that they are welcomed into the academy and make friends easily and quickly. Adults continually emphasise the importance of key values that underpin our way of life, such as respect, tolerance and good behaviour and manners. In this way, the academy prepares pupils well for life in British society. Pupils greatly appreciate the systems that reward good effort, behaviour and attitudes as well as academic success. They know that the academy will not tolerate discrimination in any form.

- The work of the trust has made a huge impact in helping the academy to improve. Officers of the trust provided intensive levels of support when the academy opened, to help staff and governors address the many weaknesses in achievement, teaching and behaviour that senior leaders identified at that time. Since then, the trust has scaled down its level of support to reflect the reducing level of need as the academy has made rapid improvements. The trust still provides strong support in specific areas, for example in extra training for the newly-qualified teachers on the staff.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is extremely effective. The governing body and the trust have worked together very effectively, making use of the governors' knowledge of the local community as well as the specific expertise of trust officers. The governors have a very good understanding of the data the academy holds on pupils' progress, and know how their performance relates to other schools. They also have a good understanding of the quality of teaching, based on their knowledge of performance management as well. Together with their regular visits to see the academy in action, this enables them to challenge leaders, holding the academy to account for its performance, and providing excellent support to staff. Leaders and governors work well together to make sure that the academy addresses any issues rigorously, rewards good performance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This is a major improvement from when the academy opened, when the governors, trust and staff identified major problems with pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Pupils in Year 6 themselves confirm that behaviour has improved a lot since the academy opened. They say that any misbehaviour is now quickly 'sorted out' by staff so that their learning is not adversely affected. Although they feel there is still some 'silly' behaviour occasionally, this is no longer tolerated and is soon dealt with. Now, they 'learn more'.
- Pupils now follow routines well and their behaviour is good in class and around the academy. They know and appreciate the academy's system of rewards and sanctions, take a pride in getting positive feedback, and are keen to avoid getting into trouble. In conversation, pupils are polite, friendly and cheerful and are positive about the academy and their learning.
- Pupils get on well together and work effectively together when given the opportunity. One told an inspector, 'People share lots of ideas and listen to each other.' This was observed clearly when pupils in Year 6 debated whether mobile phones should be allowed in school. They took the roles of parents, teachers or children who were for or against the proposition, and argued their case enthusiastically. Some were particularly impressive in the way they listened carefully to contrary arguments, and put forward their own thoughtful rebuttals of these.
- Pupils listen attentively in class and follow teachers' instructions well. They are keen to learn, particularly when they find the lesson exciting. This was very evident in one lesson in Year 6 when pupils experimented with making fizzy drinks 'explosive' by adding sweets to them. At other times, however, although they get on with their work conscientiously, teachers are not always as effective in engaging their interest, so their learning is not as rapid.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes in the academy's breakfast club are good. Pupils both enjoy and benefit from the healthy start to the day and the lively social environment this facility provides.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The academy is extremely active in checking that pupils are safe and secure. It is particularly stringent in following up any concerns that arise, liaising well with other agencies and with parents to ensure that it does this effectively. Pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable are monitored particularly carefully.
- Training for staff in safeguarding and child protection has been thorough. The academy is rigorous in ensuring that staff are suitably qualified, and visitors are checked for their suitability to work with young people. The governing body and the trust oversee procedures very carefully and regularly audit them to update them and to ensure they are followed.
- A major improvement in the academy has been to pupils' attendance. The academy has placed a strong and successful emphasis on ensuring pupils and parents understand the importance of good attendance and its impact on their well-being and achievement. This has reduced rates of absence significantly.
- Pupils feel very safe in the academy. The vast improvements that staff have made to pupils' behaviour contribute strongly to this. Pupils have learned how to keep themselves safe in different situations and know about the different aspects of e-safety. They fully understand about different kinds of bullying, and how bullying differs from other kinds of misbehaviour. They say there was often bullying in the past but that this is no longer the case. They report that any incidents now are dealt with well, including when things happen after school. They say that the academy is '... a lot calmer this year.'

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers consistently use assessment to give different groups of pupils' work that is at the right level of difficulty for them. This means that tasks are challenging but manageable, so all groups make good progress. Good teaching throughout the academy has almost completely closed previous gaps between achievement at Ramnoth and that of other pupils nationally.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. They organise classes well, establishing routines clearly and insisting that pupils follow them. In addition, pupils have good relationships with teachers and are keen to please them, as well as to gain rewards from the incentive system in operation. All this means that most pupils concentrate and behave well and work hard. Lessons are orderly experiences where very little time is wasted.
- There is good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants to maximise the help and challenge provided to pupils. In many lessons, adults check frequently on how pupils are getting on. This means that they quickly identify any misunderstandings and give pupils extra help so they make good progress. Often, adults also challenge pupils to refine and improve their work, which enhances progress. Occasionally, staff do not check systematically enough on how pupils are doing, so that pupils who are confused are not noticed soon enough, and their progress slows.
- The teaching of writing is generally good. Teachers give strong emphasis to extending pupils' understanding of grammar as well as reinforcing their understanding of spelling patterns and punctuation. They encourage pupils to tackle complex topics in their writing and to employ different types and styles of writing. The effectiveness of this is shown by the increasing quality and sophistication of the writing in their books. However, pupils' are not consistently encouraged to use joined handwriting. This slows them down in getting their ideas on to paper, and the regular switching from joined writing to print detracts from the presentation of their work.
- Mathematics teaching is good. Teachers develop pupils' understanding well by giving them practical apparatus to illustrate concepts, and by explaining new ideas clearly. Pupils deepen their understanding of ideas when teachers get them to apply their knowledge to problems in other subjects, for example when pupils used coordinates to plot the positions of elements of a theme-park they were planning.
- Good teaching of reading is raising standards and increasing pupils' interest and enthusiasm for books. By

Year 6, pupils read regularly and often and have clear preferences for what they enjoy. Teachers make good use of pupils' reading skills to extend their learning in other subjects.

- The effectiveness of teachers' marking is variable. Marking is often better in English books than in mathematics or topic books. In some classes, there is exemplary practice, where pupils are shown clearly what has gone well, told what they need to do to improve, and are given extra tasks to take their learning forward. In the best examples, pupils undertake these tasks conscientiously and the improvements in their understanding are clear. In other examples, pupils are not told specifically how to make their work better, and sometimes when such advice is given, teachers do not always ensure that it is followed.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The achievement in the academy has improved remarkably since the academy opened, particularly during the current school year. When the academy opened, data showed clearly that most pupils' progress had been inadequate since they left Key Stage 1 and standards were too low. Standards have since shot up from very low levels but results of national assessments for Year 6 in 2014 still just fell short of the government's floor standards. Nonetheless, these results represented rapid progress in the eight months from the academy's opening. Data provided by the academy on the attainment of the current Year 6 suggests that they are on track to comfortably meet floor standards. Results in reading, writing and mathematics are similarly set to close to national averages this year, because pupils' progress has accelerated over the last year.
- All groups of pupils are now making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because of better teaching, clearer assessments of progress, better behaviour and attitudes by pupils, and much higher attendance. There are no significant differences between the progress of girls and boys, or between that of pupils from different ethnic heritages.
- Disadvantaged pupils now make good progress across the academy. This is a major improvement over the situation a year ago. Current data shows that they are closing the gap between their attainment and that of their classmates, particularly in mathematics, because they are making the same good progress as the other pupils. They have made huge strides in closing the gap between their attainment and that of all pupils nationally. In 2015, the gap between the standards of disadvantaged pupils and that of their classmates was five terms in mathematics, two terms in reading and a term and a half in writing. In comparison to all pupils national, disadvantaged pupils lagged behind by eight terms in mathematics, five terms in reading, and four terms in writing.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the same good progress as others. Teachers match work well to these pupils' needs and abilities and these pupils often get extra support and challenge from skilled extra adults.
- The large proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress, and often make better progress than their classmates. Their rapidly improving grasp of English quickly enables them to overcome the gaps in their attainment that are evident when they first arrive in the academy. Staff ensure these pupils get frequent and carefully judged help from adults in small groups, that enables them to cope well with the work they are set in class, and to make rapid progress in learning English.
- The most-able pupils make good progress because they are given harder work than their classmates and are challenged to reach higher standards. The success of this is shown in provisional assessments for the current Year 6, where a greatly increased proportion are on track to reach the higher Level 5 in national assessments, with some in line to reach the very high Level 6.

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	140173
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	450114

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keith Wainwright
Principal	Karen Crawley (Executive Principal)
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
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