

Ravenscroft Community Primary School

Ebony Way, Tower Hill, Kirkby, Liverpool, Merseyside L33 1XT

Inspection dates

19–20 April 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have stalled in their efforts to improve the school because the actions they have taken have not been planned well enough.
- Assessment information does not give an accurate picture of pupils' performance. Teachers are not using assessments well enough in mathematics to plan pupils' next steps in learning.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are not consistently challenged to achieve the highest standards in their mathematics work.
- Checks on the quality of teaching do not provide staff with the information they need to improve. There is too much variation in the quality of teaching in the school.
- Outcomes in 2016 dipped because the school was not prepared for the rigour of the new curriculum assessment arrangements.
- Leaders and governors have not evaluated the effectiveness of the use of the considerable funding the school receives for disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, these pupils do not make as much progress as they otherwise could in their writing and mathematics work.
- Support provided by teaching assistants is not fully effective. There are missed opportunities to support pupils' learning.
- In the early years, some children, particularly boys, are not provided with enough opportunities to sustain their concentration when writing.
- Phonics teaching is not fully effective because teachers do not respond to the needs of pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have created a culture of respect where pupils are valued. Parents recognise and appreciate this. Pupils are happy and feel safe in this caring and supportive school.
- Leaders and governors are passionate and knowledgeable about their school. They are starting to take effective action to remedy some of the weaknesses identified.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers skilfully question pupils to deepen their understanding.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures that they have a good appreciation of others' views and opinions.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is very good.

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Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching across the school, including in the early years, by ensuring that:
 - teachers use more accurate assessment to inform their planning so that tasks build upon pupils' prior learning, especially in mathematics
 - teachers make better use of other adults in lessons so that pupils make greater gains in their learning
 - adults in the early years promote children's engagement in their own learning, particularly boys' writing, so that they develop an inquisitive approach to learning
 - teachers share best practice so that they can learn from each other's strengths.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders are clear about what they want to achieve by setting clear targets for improvement and accurately evaluating how successful they have been
 - checks on the quality of teaching and learning are rigorous and provide clear and accurate feedback on how they can improve their practice
 - senior and middle leaders are clear about their responsibilities for driving school improvement.
- Improve the effectiveness of governance by:
 - holding the headteacher to account more rigorously for the rate of improvement within the school
 - ensuring that leaders implement the recommendations from the review of pupil premium spending and ask more searching questions about how it is used to support pupils' progress.
- Improve pupils' standards and progress in their work by ensuring that:
 - teachers set clear tasks that challenge pupils to achieve the highest standards.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership can be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The quality of education in the school has declined since the last inspection. Leaders have identified many areas for improvement themselves but have been hesitant in their approach to address these issues. Improvement plans lack the detail and focus required to build upon the strengths of the school. Leaders are unsure as to whether their efforts have been effective because they have not checked to see if their actions have made a difference. This is feeding into a lack of consistency in the quality of teaching and learning across the school and has left leaders with an overly optimistic view of the school.
- Leaders have been slow to grasp the rigour of the new curriculum and its testing arrangements, which led to a dip in progress and standards at the end of key stage 2 in 2016.
- Checks on the quality of teaching and learning do not provide clear feedback for teachers on how to improve the quality of their teaching. These checks do not focus on ironing out the variations in quality between classes. This also means that leaders are not capitalising on some good practice within the school or on the commitment of its hard-working and dedicated staff.
- There is confusion about the roles of senior and middle leaders when monitoring subjects. This means that leaders are not asking enough questions about the accuracy of the information they receive on pupils' progress. Inspectors found that this information does not accurately reflect the attainment and progress of pupils in writing and mathematics. In some classes, this results in work that is too hard, or too easy, for different groups of pupils because teachers cannot pinpoint their next steps in learning.
- Since the dip in standards in 2016, leaders have provided staff with opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills. Middle leaders ensure that best practice is shared at staff meetings. Leaders are focusing on improving their monitoring to address the variations in the quality of teaching and learning between different subjects.
- Despite receiving large amounts of funding for disadvantaged pupils, the school has not reviewed the effectiveness of the strategies it has put in place to support these pupils. There has been no thought given to how to challenge the most able disadvantaged pupils to achieve the highest standards. Leaders are aware of this and have commissioned a review of the funding through the local authority.
- Leaders' identification of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities shows a disproportionately high number of pupils have been identified. The support for these pupils, however, has been effectively implemented. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and who receive additional funding to support their needs receive high-quality, specialised support to cater effectively for their needs.
- Children who are looked after receive effective support according to their needs. The school's coordinator is passionate about outcomes for these pupils and ensures that other agencies are involved to provide the services for them and their families. Any additional funding for these pupils is used to match their specific needs, which are detailed on comprehensive plans.

- The use of the primary school sport and physical education funding is effective. Governors are aware of how the money is being spent and how it impacts on pupils, most notably on the engagement of pupils who were previously reluctant to participate in sport.
- Pupils receive a broad and varied curriculum. Recent staff training on how to 'hook' pupils' interests for lessons has resulted in interesting, engaging tasks, such as 'top secret missions' in Year 6 science investigations. Pupils have opportunities to practise their writing skills across the curriculum in a range of different contexts.
- Pupils speak knowledgeably and enthusiastically about the range of opportunities they have to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. They have a mature and understanding approach to equalities issues.
- Parents rightly value the school's openness and willingness to help. They are supportive of the school's aims and appreciate the frequent information that they receive on pupils' progress.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not asked searching questions about how additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has been used. They have been too quick to accept the information provided and have not had the opportunity to question a breakdown of the funding.
- The headteacher has been instrumental in restructuring the governing body and in recruiting knowledgeable and experienced governors. The result is that senior leaders are now being asked challenging questions and the school is becoming more inwardly critical. However, because these developments have only recently been brought together there has been little impact on outcomes for pupils.
- Governors display a good overview of the use of the sports funding. This has been informed through discussions with pupils and frequent visits to school.
- Governors have a good awareness of the procedures for managing the performance of staff. They ensure that the process is robust and based on secure evidence of staff meeting their targets. Governors make good use of external support when setting objectives for the headteacher.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The excellent relationships at the school foster a culture of openness where pupils feel safe and are happy to approach members of staff with their concerns. This is because the leadership of safeguarding in the school is very strong.
- Staff have been trained in a range of child protection issues and they are well informed of the most recent legislation, ensuring that they are vigilant. They receive regular updates and training on safeguarding and are aware of the school's processes for dealing with safeguarding issues. Staff know pupils well and have a good awareness of their needs.
- Parents say that their children are safe in school. They clearly appreciate the work that

the school does to support them and their children.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school requires improvement because there is too much variation in the quality of teaching in English and in mathematics. Assessment is not accurate.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are not challenged consistently well across the school. These pupils are not challenged to make as much progress as they could in mathematics and in their written work. This has been identified by senior leaders as an area for improvement.
- The work in pupils' books shows that, although they make progress, assessments are too optimistic. These assessments are not providing teachers with the information they need to be able to plan pupils' next steps. This is evident in pupils' written work, where common errors persist over time. Teachers are not using these errors as teaching points to deepen pupils' understanding. Although pupils have opportunities to practise their writing skills through work such as designing posters and writing diary entries and fact files, the expectations of their written work are not as high as in their English lessons.
- In pupils' mathematics books, work for the most able pupils is sometimes too easy for them as it does not match well to their abilities. Progress is patchy and in many year groups the most able pupils do the same work as other ability groups. In lessons, pupils say that challenge varies, which corresponds with the inspection findings. Pupils have limited opportunities to practise their mathematics skills in other subjects.
- Phonics teaching does not fully take account of the needs of pupils, particularly those that need more support. Lessons move quickly without teachers checking whether pupils have understood. Other tasks are not challenging enough for the most able pupils and so they do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Where teaching assistants are used effectively, they have a positive impact on pupils' progress within lessons. However, because they are not directed to work with groups of pupils during the introduction to lessons, they sit redundantly until called upon. Consequently, their impact on pupils' progress could be greater.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have individualised targets for their learning. They receive regular support to help them to catch up when any gaps in their learning are identified.
- Teaching is most effective in year groups where challenging and probing questions are set for pupils, such as in Year 5 studies on Mesopotamia, where pupils were engaged because of the teachers' subject knowledge. Leaders have not capitalised on using the strengths in the school to share these skills with other teachers.
- Pupils' learning behaviour is exceptional. This is because they have total trust in the adults leading their education. They feel comfortable to contribute to paired work and to class discussions. Pupils are attentive and continue to persist when they find their work difficult. They have a good attitude towards homework and see this as a way of preparing them for their secondary education. Parents appreciate the opportunities that the school provides for pupils to learn at home.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are self-confident. They have positive attitudes to learning and they are respectful of others' views and opinions. They are proud of their school and embody the school's values.
- Pupils know and understand British values. However, there are lost opportunities to apply these values throughout their work. Pupils readily point to their school council elections as an example of how they put these values into practice but their understanding is developed through an event rather than something that is threaded throughout the curriculum.
- Pupils display respect for the staff who look after them, and report that there are no instances of the use of derogatory language. They enthuse about the relationships between pupils that exist and that this leads to a harmonious school environment.
- The school actively promotes an understanding of equalities within the school. The entrance hall has a tree displaying pupils' families and reinforces how modern families can comprise same-sex couples, grandparents and different ethnicities. This type of thoughtful and subtle promotion ensures that pupils are mature in their attitude to others. As one pupil stated, 'We accept everyone for who they are and what they want to be.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils move around the school in a purposeful and calm manner at all times. They are polite and respectful.
- In class, pupils work well together when discussing different aspects of their work or when solving problems.
- All pupils trust the school staff and they agree emphatically that bullying in school simply does not happen. Staff continually monitor pupils' behaviour and work well with pupils and families to minimise any potential behaviour issues.
- The school's most recent attendance figures show a small improvement in attendance. The attendance leader is determined to drive up overall attendance further as it is presently below the national average for primary schools. However, she is sometimes faced with apathy from a small minority of parents.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Although there were groups of pupils who narrowly missed out on making expected progress in reading and mathematics, the published progress measures for pupils in Year 6 in 2016 were much lower than the national average in reading and mathematics.

- The outcomes of progress are not being effectively measured by the school because assessment information does not accurately reflect pupils' achievements in their work. Inspectors found that there is too much variation in the current progress of pupils in different year groups and in different subjects.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. The school has identified a high proportion of pupils with a wide range of needs within the school. The positive relationships between staff and pupils provide pupils with the confidence to contribute and actively participate in class activities. This removes social barriers for these pupils, and their views and opinions are respected by their peers.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable because the school has not identified the barriers to learning for these pupils or their present needs. Their progress, as reflected in the 2016 national data at the end of key stage 2, remains low.
- No pupils achieved the highest standard in reading, writing or mathematics in key stage 1 in 2016.
- The results of the Year 1 phonics check last year declined to below the national average. However, results by the end of Year 2 show a much more positive picture. These pupils, who are now in Year 3, demonstrated good phonic skills when reading, which develops into greater fluency and expression by the time pupils reach the end of key stage 2. Pupils enjoy reading and express enthusiasm for their favourite authors.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in their reading from their starting points and they frequently read to adults in school.
- Children who are looked after are provided with individualised support to ensure that they feel happy within school. This extends to providing family support where necessary to enable them to thrive. They are settled and achieve well against the targets on their individualised plans.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- There is presently no defined leader for the early years. This provides confusion in the evaluation of strengths and weaknesses as the staff presently sharing this responsibility have differing views on the quality of teaching and learning in the early years.
- Attainment in the early years in 2016 was 10% lower than the national average. This tends to be a typical level of attainment over time.
- There is a clear plan of improvement for the early years, the production of which has been supported by a consultant. This external view of the school has led to actions being clearly defined and targets that provide clear measures against which leaders and governors can measure the success of these actions.
- The quality of teaching and learning varies across the early years. Inaccurate assessments of children's capabilities lead to the planning of activities for learning that do not relate to children's interests and, therefore, activities are not always meaningful to the children.
- The quality of support from adults also varies. While staff model appropriate

vocabulary for children, they do not take the opportunities that present themselves to develop children's independent language skills further. When children find things difficult they are sometimes provided with the answer, rather than a question to help them solve the problem for themselves. As such, children become passive in their learning and lose interest because of a lack of challenge. The results of early years assessments show that boys' writing, in particular, suffers because of this lack of engagement, a trend that continues in later year groups.

- Additional funding for disadvantaged children in the early years is being used for staff development to help children develop their language skills. Leaders are unaware of the effect of this funding because they have not evaluated the effectiveness of this training.
- Children's behaviour is good, although at times of moving to a new activity some learning time is lost because some children do not follow the instructions they have been given. Measures to ensure children's safety are excellent and all statutory requirements are in place. Safeguarding in the early years is effective.
- Regular contact with staff in early years ensures that parents are very supportive. They receive regular reports on their child's progress. The school is very effective in establishing links with other agencies to support parents where this is necessary.
- Children in early years have a range of opportunities to develop their personal, spiritual, social and cultural awareness through well-planned visits to places of interest. These visits provide children with life experiences so they have a wider understanding of the world.

School details

Unique reference number	104444
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10024316

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Wiseman
Headteacher	Jeanette Hegarty
Telephone number	0151 477 8290
Website	www.ravenscroftcp.co.uk
Email address	ravenscroft@knowsley.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–9 November 2012

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum, the school's complaints procedure, the use of the pupil premium funding, or the accessibility plan for disabled pupils on its website.
- Ravenscroft Community Primary is an average-sized primary school with a well above national average proportion of pupils who are known to be disadvantaged.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and of pupils who speak English as an additional language are below the national averages.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is lower than average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in each class. This included shorter visits made jointly with the headteacher as well as longer observations to observe the work of classes from the Nursery class to Year 6.
- A wide range of pupils' work was examined by inspectors in mathematics, writing and from across the curriculum.
- Inspectors heard pupils read, both individually and during class activities, and they spoke with pupils formally in groups and informally around school.
- Fewer than 10 parents responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. This means that inspectors could not take account of these views. However, inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the school day to gather their views on the school.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, at playtime and when pupils were moving around the school.
- Meetings were held with three governors, senior leaders and middle leaders.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and its areas for development, and reviewed the school's attendance and behaviour records.
- Safeguarding documentation was scrutinised and inspectors considered how this related to daily practice, as well as speaking with staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Steve Bentham, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mavis Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Elaine White	Ofsted Inspector

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