

Ryton Community Infant School

Main Road, Ryton, Tyne and Wear NE40 3AF

Inspection dates

1–2 November 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Under the inspirational leadership of the executive headteacher, an ethos of high expectations has been created. Leaders are doggedly determined to eradicate anything that is second best.
- The sensitive and highly effective leadership of the acting executive headteacher, ably supported by the skilful deputy headteacher and the governing body, has continued to transform learning since the school was previously inspected.
- Leaders' continuing ambition to eliminate underperformance and to provide the best experiences for all pupils is translated into action, and this means the school is continuing to improve.
- Outcomes for pupils are now good. Current pupils are making strong progress from their individual starting points. Pupils' writing skills still lag behind those found in reading and mathematics.
- Children in the early years make a solid start to their learning. They work happily and cooperatively together.
- As a result of good teaching, pupils learn quickly and are beginning to apply their skills across all subjects. Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled at supporting pupils' progress in learning.
- Leaders' planned and agreed actions to improve teaching still further are not yet consistently applied in every class.
- Leaders' effective use of the pupil premium funding has resulted in the difference between the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their peers diminishing rapidly, but a small difference still remains.
- The well-planned curriculum ensures that pupils' visits across the region fire their enthusiasm for learning. The school's tracking of pupils' progress in science, creative and foundation subjects is very new and developing and not yet embedded.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They have respect and care for each other and are polite and friendly. They display excellent manners.
- Governors share leaders' passion and ambition to improve. They play a key role in the school's ongoing success and keep a sharp eye on actions to ensure further improvements. They are very well informed, and know the school inside out.
- Despite recent improvements, rates of attendance are below the national average. Too many pupils are persistently absent.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for pupils by:
 - continuing to strengthen the writing skills of all pupils, ensuring that a larger proportion is able to write at greater depth
 - ensuring that the gap between the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their peers continues to diminish.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - embedding agreed strategies to further improve teaching, especially in writing
 - improving the strategies to improve pupils' rates of attendance and reduce the proportion that are persistently absent so that attendance at least matches that found nationally
 - embedding systems to assess and track the progress of pupils in subject-specific skills so that they match the robust assessment systems for reading, writing and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since her appointment, the executive headteacher has been unwavering in her determination to secure an excellent standard of education for pupils in this school. She has been supported extremely well by the deputy headteacher, the current acting executive headteacher, senior leaders, governors and the local authority. The whole-school team has worked tirelessly to eliminate underperformance, improve the quality of teaching and accelerate the rates of progress pupils make in their learning.
- The ambition and drive to improve all aspects of school life that have been instilled by the executive headteacher, shared by dedicated and knowledgeable governors, are being maintained. Unforeseen changes to staffing have been managed astutely, with an experienced hand. This work has been led by the acting executive headteacher and has been instrumental in maintaining the pace of change in improvements to provision.
- Staff and leaders at all levels work tirelessly to solve problems and make continuous improvements, with teamwork within the federation being the catalyst for change. When difficulties arise, they focus on implementing and sustaining improvements, working collegiately and effectively with staff from across the whole federation.
- The executive headteacher quickly identified weaknesses resulting from a decline in some aspects of provision. She has taken swift and decisive action to improve the quality of teaching and set challenging and precise targets. As a result, current pupils are now making much improved rates of progress in their learning. Further work is required to ensure that the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement in writing results in progress and attainment matching that found in reading and mathematics.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate view of what the school does well, and what it needs to do in order to be even more successful. Procedures to monitor and evaluate the quality of the school's performance through checking the quality of teaching are incisive and detailed. Leaders acknowledge that strategies to improve pupils' attendance require review as pupils' rates of attendance are below the national average.
- Leaders' plans for further improvements reflect a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, with which the inspector concurs. The comprehensive school improvement plan details how the impact of planned actions on outcomes for pupils in their learning is monitored. As a result, the tracking of these planned actions ensure that no time is wasted to drive further improvements.
- The school's curriculum is rich and balanced, and reviewed regularly to ensure that it meets pupils' needs and interests. The curriculum is designed to make sure that it provides many varied opportunities for pupils to benefit from visits out of school across the region, such as visiting Newcastle City Keep, St Mary's Lighthouse or a local farm. The curriculum is enhanced by a suitably wide range of after-school clubs such as the federation choir, outdoor adventurous learning and many sports clubs. Systems to assess and track pupils' progress in subject-specific skills are, however, in their infancy.
- Leaders are managing pupil premium spending effectively to provide targeted support for disadvantaged pupils. A number of different initiatives are regularly evaluated for

their impact on pupils' learning, and amended or changed as a result. The positive impact of these actions is now seen through the improving progress made by current disadvantaged pupils across the school, which is only just behind that of their peers.

- The effective use of the funding for special educational needs together with the strong leadership of the special educational needs coordinator has resulted in high-quality provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils are supported extremely well because their needs are identified early and effective systems are put into place to ensure that their progress remains good.
- Links with parents are good. Many parents made positive comments when responding to Ofsted's online inspection questionnaire. Parents say they know the school promotes equality of opportunity well and does not tolerate discrimination of any kind: a view shared by the inspector.
- The physical education and sports funding for schools has been used well. Pupils benefit from high-quality lessons and engage regularly in competitive sports. In addition, they are able to participate in a range of borough-wide activities such as the dance festival held at the Sage, Gateshead and multi-skills at Gateshead International Stadium. There are a number of regularly changing after-school clubs, such as judo and basketball, on offer.
- The school receives appropriate and timely challenge and support from the local authority, including working alongside the mathematics and English consultants. The work of the link adviser has effectively supported leaders in making the substantial improvements seen in the school since the current executive headteacher's appointment.

Governance of the school

- Governors bring a range of appropriate professional skills and experience to the school that enhance their effectiveness and impact. They share the passion and commitment of the executive headteacher and senior leaders and have managed changes in staffing with both sensitivity and rigour. Governors challenge and question school leaders well, holding them to account for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, as well as for pupils' outcomes.
- Governors make it their business to know about the work of the school and have an accurate and incisive view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have ensured, along with the executive headteacher and senior leaders, that the school's priorities are intrinsically embedded in the performance management of all adults. Governors participate in monitoring activities alongside senior leaders, such as analysing work in pupils' books and making short visits to classes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The long-established culture of keeping pupils safe remains very evident. Leaders ensure that a culture of safeguarding is embedded among all staff and they leave no stone unturned in their duty to keep pupils safe.
- The school has a tangible ethos that is positive and caring, putting the welfare and

well-being of each pupil at the heart of all that it does. This is clearly seen in the friendly and confident manner of the pupils in school. The curriculum supports pupils well in maintaining their own safety, including keeping themselves safe online.

- Policies, procedures and records are of high quality. Staff training is thorough and up to date, including training to ensure that pupils are kept safe from the risk of extremism and online dangers. Registers of staff training are completed diligently. Staff have access to well-written policies and guidance and, as a result, have a very secure understanding of their individual responsibilities for safeguarding.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching is much improved since the school was previously inspected. The impact of teaching on learning, including in reading, writing and mathematics, is reflected in the strong progress pupils now make in each year group.
- Lessons are usually lively and interesting, capturing pupils' imagination. For example in Year 1, pupils were captivated by the poem 'The Sound Collector' by Roger McGough. They enthusiastically worked together and listened to different sounds outside before using their ideas to create their own poem on sounds around school.
- Teachers use good subject knowledge and they structure learning effectively. Pupils in Year 2 were able to add two 2-digit numbers up to 100 using three different methods, many using practical mathematical apparatus to consolidate their understanding.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' attitude and behaviour and stick closely to the school's behaviour policy. Very occasional low-level disruption is addressed quickly and effectively. Teachers' expectations of the quality of work produced by pupils are consistently high in every class. Work is usually pitched well according to pupils' abilities, and teachers are skilled at adapting and changing plans based on ongoing daily assessments of how well pupils grasp learning.
- In mathematics, basic skills of number and mental calculation are taught daily and consolidated regularly. For example, Year 1 pupils were adding a 1-digit number to 10 using their knowledge of number bonds, practical equipment such as a bead string or a pictorial method. Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled at modelling tasks for pupils and support their learning very effectively.
- Pupils write with enthusiasm and imagination and are becoming increasingly skilled in editing and improving their work. Pupils in Year 2 used actions and drama when reciting the poem 'These are the hands' by Paul Cookson, before identifying similarities in style and rhyme. This was followed by pupils composing their own poems. The impact of historically weaker teaching in writing is being eradicated, but pupils' achievement in writing lags behind that in reading and mathematics, despite being above that found nationally.
- As a result of the rigorous and systematic teaching of phonics, children are getting off to a fast start in their reading. Adults are skilled in delivering well-structured lessons, pitched well according to pupils' reading skills.
- Teaching assistants are deployed very well, and are skilled at giving timely help and support to individuals and groups of pupils. They work well as part of the teaching

team, and play a significant and important role in pupils' learning.

- Minor inconsistencies remain in the extent to which agreed whole-school actions and initiatives relating to teaching are implemented, mainly as a result of many changes to the teaching team. These are quickly being resolved.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school works tirelessly to ensure that all pupils are safe and well cared for. Adults work closely with pupils in a supportive and sensitive manner. Pupils say that they feel very safe in school. Pupils show high levels of respect and care for each other. They value their classmates' opinions, and work happily and cooperatively in lessons.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good, and most are very keen to succeed and to always produce their very best work. They take their roles of responsibility within the school community very seriously, and are proud to be school councillors or play leaders. One pupil explained to the inspector how he fulfilled his role as a buddy by helping any other child who was upset during playtime, unless the 'problem was a little too complicated' and required the involvement of an adult.
- Bullying or racist incidents are extremely rare. Any incidents of poor behaviour are promptly challenged, recorded and tracked to ensure that underlying causes are understood and resolved. Pupils are increasingly taking responsibility for their own actions, and have full confidence in staff to resolve any issues of poor behaviour.
- Pupils thrive in the positive, well-ordered and caring school environment. Displays are bright and attractive and support learning well. Pupils' physical and emotional well-being are valued and promoted very effectively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The strong relationships that are nurtured in school ensure that pupils usually conduct themselves well in lessons and around school. Pupils are polite and have good manners. Playtimes are harmonious occasions where pupils play happily together with a wide range of equipment, and no one is left out.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and mostly work conscientiously. Incidents of low-level disruption are rare. Behaviour systems encourage positive attitudes to learning and the few incidents of misbehaviour are swiftly and deftly addressed. Pupils enthusiastically participate in the new behaviour policy 'Great to be Green'.
- The school has worked hard to eradicate a recent decline in rates of attendance, a very large proportion of which results from unauthorised holidays taken in term time. A wide range of rewards are used for good attendance, but a large proportion of pupils are persistently absent, especially disadvantaged pupils. Rates of attendance for this year

to date are much improved on the same time period last year but remain below those found nationally overall.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- As a result of consistently high expectations, good teaching, pupils' positive learning behaviour and an unwavering determination to succeed, outcomes for pupils are now good. Progress and attainment have improved since the school was previously inspected, and are on track to improve further this year.
- Pupils are making consistently strong progress across Years 1 and 2. Provisional data shows that the proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard in reading and mathematics in the 2017 Year 2 national testing was well above the national average figure. The proportion reaching the expected standard in writing was also above the national average figure. The proportion of pupils working at greater depth is just above that found nationally in reading and mathematics but below in writing.
- Pupils' early reading skills in Reception and Year 1 are developed very well. Most pupils achieved very well in the 2017 national phonics screening check. The proportion who met the standard was above that found nationally.
- Based on accurate and reliable school assessment and tracking data, which matches closely to work scrutinised in pupils' books during the inspection, current pupils are making strong progress in their learning from their individual starting points in most year groups. A very large proportion is on track to reach standards expected for their age both at the end of key stage 1, and also in Year 1.
- The progress of the current most able and most able disadvantaged pupils largely matches that of their classmates and has accelerated since the start of the school year. The proportion of pupils who are working at a greater depth now matches that found nationally.
- As a result of the effective and strategic use of the pupil premium funding, disadvantaged pupils make good progress in English and mathematics. Although the number of disadvantaged pupils is too small in every year group to make any reliable statistical comparison, this small number of pupils achieve very well.
- The school is quick to identify any pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Staff make effective provision for these pupils through activities which are well matched to their individual needs and abilities. This includes pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, the progress made by these pupils is largely good from their individual starting points.

Early years provision

Good

- The vast majority of children start in the early years with skills and knowledge which are broadly typical for their age. As a result of good teaching and provision, careful observation and good questioning, children make strong progress with a very large majority reaching a good level of development, which is above that found nationally. Children are very well prepared to start Year 1, both academically and socially.

- Children are eager to explore and learn. They enjoy opportunities provided to investigate and learn happily together. Their behaviour is consistently good. Children are encouraged to take turns and to consider others, illustrated clearly when two boys carefully fastened each other's apron at the back. Children are confident, independent and friendly.
- Adults observe children carefully and build upon their interests. Activities and resources are chosen carefully to capture children's interest and enthusiasm. Children obviously enjoyed making pumpkin soup alongside an adult as part of their work about Halloween, carefully reading and following the instructions.
- Opportunities for children to develop their basic skills and abilities in reading, writing and mathematics are well supported by effective and precise teaching. Skills in phonics are taught systematically, and care is taken to ensure that children hear and say sounds correctly.
- The very newly appointed early years leader clearly understands the learning needs of young children and leads an effective team of adults who share the same passion and drive to see young children thrive. She has a clear understanding of the strengths in the early years and has identified key areas for improvement, such as improving and enhancing the quality of both the indoor and outdoor learning environments.
- All adults are adept at talking with and questioning children, which develops children's understanding and their confidence in speaking and listening. Adults observe children carefully and build on their interests. They carefully support children's learning through prompts and they work alongside children during imaginative and creative play sessions. Teachers have developed a highly stimulating and exceptionally well-resourced woodland area a short distance from school where children are inquisitive and curious and show excellent levels of concentration.
- All teachers carefully monitor children's progress and record this accurately. Learning journals across Nursery and Reception show that children make typical progress from their starting points. Teachers have an accurate picture of children's abilities and learning needs and adapt teaching and learning opportunities skilfully to further their development.
- Safeguarding practices in the early years are highly effective. Children are taught how to manage risks from an early age, including in the woodland area, and the robust safeguarding culture that permeates the school is equally apparent in the early years. There are no material breaches of statutory welfare requirements; children are safe and well supported.

School details

Unique reference number	108352
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	10036543

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	118
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs A Leech
Executive headteacher	Mrs M Tellyn
Telephone number	0191 413 2776
Website	www.rytonfederation.org
Email address	RytonCommunityInfantSchool@gateshead.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 October 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is part of a federation arrangement with Ryton Junior School.
- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support from the pupil premium and the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well below the national average.
- There have been significant changes to the teaching staff since the start of the previous academic year.

- The executive headteacher was appointed in September 2016 but was absent during this inspection. An acting executive headteacher has been in post since September 2017.
- The school's part-time nursery operates in the morning and afternoon. Reception children attend on a full-time basis.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in lessons, including lessons observed jointly with the acting executive headteacher and deputy headteacher. In addition, he reviewed a sample of pupils' work alongside the acting executive headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- The inspector held meetings with governors, the acting executive headteacher and deputy headteacher and members of the teaching staff. He also met a group of governors and held a meeting with a group of pupils from the school.
- A range of documents were viewed, including information relating to pupils' achievements over time, the school's data on recent and current progress of pupils and the school's view on how well it is doing. The inspector also reviewed the school improvement plan, documents relating to safeguarding and records of behaviour and attendance.
- Account was taken of the 41 parental responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Letters from parents received during the inspection and the responses to the online questionnaire for staff were also considered. The school's website was scrutinised.

Inspection team

Phil Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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