

# Ruskin Infant School

Ruskin Avenue, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire NN8 3EG

## Inspection dates

2–3 November 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 and middle leaders do not evaluate robustly pupils' assessment information to ensure that actions taken by leaders are improving standards.
- Leaders do not use or evaluate pupil premium funding rigorously enough to ensure that it is improving the achievement of all disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders do not use performance management robustly to hold teachers to account. Targets do not have clear outcomes for success.
- Leaders have not checked the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics closely enough. Pupils do not make fast enough progress in this subject.
- Not all teachers' expectations of pupils' presentation are high enough. Pupils' letter formation is inconsistent.
- Teachers do not tailor learning tasks to meet the needs of the most able pupils and the most able disadvantaged pupils in mathematics activities. This means that these groups of pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable in this subject.
- Across the school, the teaching of phonics is inconsistent. Often, teaching does not build on pupils' knowledge and skills well enough, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils do not attend school regularly enough. Overall attendance is below average and too many pupils are persistently absent.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has created a positive and caring environment. Pupils are valued and well cared for. They participate fully in their learning.
- The teaching of writing is a strength of the school.
- Pupils enjoy the range of extra-curricular activities on offer, such as multi-skills and country dancing.
- Teaching assistants support pupils well, in particular those pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Pupils feel safe at school and know that they can talk to an adult if they have any worries or concerns.
- Children in the nursery classes make good progress because adults tailor learning effectively to meet children's needs.

## Full report

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

- Increase the impact of leaders' work to improve pupils' attainment and progress by:
  - ensuring that leaders and middle leaders evaluate robustly school assessment information so that they are able to prioritise school development priorities and raise pupils' achievement
  - leaders using and evaluating pupil premium funding effectively to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils
  - leaders and governors using performance management robustly to hold teachers to account for the progress that pupils make
  - monitoring closely the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in mathematics so that a greater proportion of pupils make faster progress.
- Improving the quality of teaching and learning by:
  - teachers using and applying their mathematics subject knowledge to plan and deliver activities that build on pupils' knowledge and skills for the most able and most able disadvantaged pupils so that a greater proportion of these pupils make faster progress
  - ensuring that teachers insist on high standards of presentation and consistent letter formation
  - teachers developing pupils' phonics knowledge and skills so that more pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, reach the expected standard at the end of Year 1.
- Improving pupils' attendance by working more extensively with parents to improve their understanding of the importance of their children attending school regularly.
- Improving the quality of provision in the early years by:
  - ensuring that teachers develop children's knowledge and understanding of mathematics
  - teachers raising their expectations of what children can achieve in phonics, particularly disadvantaged children, so that a greater proportion reach the expected standard at the end of Year 1.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.
- An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders and the governing body have not checked rigorously enough the school's work to improve standards. The recently appointed headteacher has managed frequent changes in staffing which have not yet secured consistently good teaching.
- Leaders do not always evaluate pupils' assessment information incisively enough to improve pupils' achievements. This means that they are not always clear about how well different groups of pupils are performing. They do not always use this information effectively to plan next steps to raise standards.
- Leaders and governors do not evaluate well enough the information regarding the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. They do not use this to plan effective actions to address any underachievement, nor give the most able disadvantaged pupils support so that they will attain highly. Actions are not linked consistently well to disadvantaged pupils' specific needs. Leaders do not ensure that funding is ensuring the necessary improvements to raise achievement for all disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders and the governing body do not focus sharply enough on improving pupils' progress when managing the performance of teachers and leaders. Targets do not always relate explicitly to the school's priorities for improvement or to specific outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders have not monitored the effectiveness of teaching and learning in mathematics closely enough. Some teachers' mathematical knowledge is under-developed. This means that pupils' progress in mathematics is not as fast as it could be.
- The leader of the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities communicates regularly with parents to keep them fully informed. She provides training for staff to ensure that they are confident in their roles. Additional funding for these pupils is used appropriately. She monitors and evaluates additional learning groups carefully to ensure that they are improving pupils' progress.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It provides a range of interesting opportunities for pupils. For example, in a geography lesson, pupils were fascinated about the world-wide links that their classmates have. Teachers complement the curriculum with a range of trips such as visits to Warwick Castle and the dinosaur park. There are a broad range of extra-curricular activities on offer, such as multi-skills and country dancing.
- The additional funding for the primary physical education (PE) and sport funding is used effectively. Pupils enjoy high-quality PE lessons because teachers are well trained by sports coaches. Teachers receive coaching from highly trained sports coaches so that PE teaching is of a consistently high quality.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is catered for very well. This means that the school promotes equalities and British values effectively. Pupils demonstrate well-balanced and thoughtful views on a range of issues. For example, through pupils' experiences at forest school, they understand their role in respecting the environment.

## Governance of the school

- Recently, new governors have joined the governing body. This has already created greater capacity. More time is needed to develop the skills of the governing body so that they are able to challenge leaders on their evaluations of school development priorities, in particular leaders' evaluations of school assessment information.
- The governing body is not clear about the spending of the pupil premium funding. Governors are unclear about the how the funding has improved achievement for this group of pupils.
- Governors undertake regular visits to the school to audit the school's safeguarding arrangements. They have received training on safeguarding children, the safe recruitment of staff and ways of raising awareness of radicalisation and extremism. The governor responsible for safeguarding regularly checks the single central record. Governors are knowledgeable about, and are effective in, their roles and responsibilities for keeping pupils and adults safe.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher ensures that all staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding, including ways of raising awareness of radicalisation and extremism. Staff know their roles and responsibilities well. They know the different forms of abuse well.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are rigorous in their approach to the management of child protection. They keep well organised, detailed and accurate records of those pupils who are a concern. Leaders record actions taken by outside agencies and staff effectively on pupils' records. Leaders respond promptly to any concerns raised by staff to ensure that the needs of the pupil are being met.
- Senior leaders complete early help assessments and tailor the support they provide appropriately to meet the needs of the pupils. Regular discussions take place between the school and parents to ensure that support is adapted to meet the needs of pupils. The work of parent support workers helps to provide effective support for vulnerable families.
- All the checks to help keep children safe are carried out meticulously. For example, the recruitment checks on staff's suitability to work with children are thorough.
- The school's single central record of vetting checks is kept in order. Leaders make sure that staff safeguarding training is up to date. Staff also receive regular updates. All staff have a clear understanding of what to do in the event of any concerns they may have about a pupil's welfare. They know who to report their concerns to. Records show that this is done effectively.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Not all teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve in mathematics. Often, the most able pupils and the most able disadvantaged pupils are completing work that is too easy for them. This means that these groups of pupils do

not make the progress of which they are capable.

- Often, teachers do not insist on high standards of presentation. Pupils' workbooks show that they do not consistently use accurate letter formation. Teachers do not always correct weak letter formation or remind pupils of how to present their work.
- The teaching of phonics is inconsistent. Teachers do not build on pupils' knowledge and skills well enough. The pace of learning is slow because teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can do. This means that not enough pupils reach the expected standard at the end of Year 1, in particular disadvantaged pupils. Too few disadvantaged pupils meet the expected standard at the end of Year 1.
- Pupils' workbooks show that there is a lack of challenge for the most able pupils in mathematics. Teachers do not give them enough work in mathematics that provides sufficient challenge.
- Teaching assistants are clear about their roles in lessons, and inspectors saw many instances where they provided effective support for individuals or groups of pupils, or supported teaching with the whole class. They are particularly effective when supporting pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- The teaching of writing is a strength of the school. The literacy leader has provided useful training for teachers. For example, training focused on boys' writing and using a range of strategies to develop ideas for story writing. Writing tasks meet the needs of all pupils well, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities so that they make good progress. Pupils' workbooks show that they are given opportunities to practise their writing skills across the curriculum.
- Where teaching is stronger, staff use questioning skilfully to check children's understanding and take their learning forward. Where this is the case, pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. For example in a Year 2 English lesson, pupils were encouraged to swap their story plans with their partner. One pupil was very pleased that her partner was able to re-tell the story using the plan. The level of engagement and enthusiasm for learning in English lessons is very positive.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders work well with vulnerable pupils and their families. The leader for the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities works alongside parent support advisers to ensure that they provide bespoke support to families. For example, parent support advisers are on hand to assist families with understanding school information that they may receive.
- Leaders have ensured that they respond to the needs of specific pupils. For example, the school has employed a teaching assistant who is trained specifically in speech and language therapy. She works with pupils to provide bespoke support to improve pupils' speech and language in a range of ways.
- The leader for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities monitors closely the progress of

these pupils. For those pupils who need to catch up on their learning, the leader works alongside teachers to provide appropriate support. Pupils who attend additional learning groups are monitored closely to ensure that they make faster progress.

- Pupils who spoke to inspectors said they know how to keep safe online. One pupil said 'I know there's bad people on the internet but we know how to keep safe.' Pupils know that they must not share personal information on the internet.
- The friendly and inclusive ethos of the school supports pupils to make positive choices. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said bullying and name-calling are rare. They feel confident that adults are there to help them with any worries and concerns they may have. Pupils' confidence shines through as they know the importance of helping each other through the school's work on collaboration, building self-esteem and confidence when learning.
- Pupils receive regular visits from a range of organisations that help them to keep safe in school and in the community. For example, pupils learn about safety in the community from visits from the local police.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils show good conduct around the school. They are polite and courteous.
- Attendance is below the national average. Leaders acknowledge that this is an area they must urgently address for all pupil groups. Leaders have put a range of actions in place to improve pupils' rates of attendance. Over the past two years, there has been a slight improvement in pupils' attendance but it has not yet reached the national average. Leaders monitor pupils' attendance closely, and when parents fail to bring their children to school, they are referred to the local authority.
- Leaders meet regularly with parents when their child's attendance falls below the national average. The school responds quickly to pupil absence on the first day. The parent support advisers meet regularly with families who struggle to bring their children to school.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- In 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has fallen compared to the previous year. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standard has also fallen. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in phonics have been below the national average for the past two years.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils passing the phonics screening check by the end of Year 2 met the national average. However, school information shows that a smaller proportion of pupils reached the expected standard in Year 2 in 2017. Not all pupils can consistently use and apply their phonic skills appropriately when reading.
- The most able disadvantaged pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable in mathematics.

- Provisional school information shows that there has been an improvement in pupils' overall performance at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in reading is now slightly below the current national average. The proportion who attained a greater depth of understanding in reading is slightly above the national average.
- In 2016, school information for mathematics showed that no pupil achieved a greater depth of understanding. Around one in 10 pupils achieved this last year, though this proportion remains below the national average.
- Pupils make good progress in writing. The proportions of pupils achieving and exceeding the expected standard in this subject are steadily increasing over time and, last year, were above the national average.

### Early years provision

### Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching in the early years is inconsistent. The early years leader has a clear view of the strengths and further areas for improvement in the early years. She acknowledges that further work needs to be done to improve the teaching of phonics and mathematics so that children make faster progress.
- Provisional school information shows that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of the early years in 2017 has slightly improved compared to the previous year. However, this proportion remains below the national average. Not enough children are prepared appropriately for the start of Year 1.
- Where teaching is less effective in the early years, teachers do not develop consistently children's understanding of mathematics well enough. For example, children are not given sufficient opportunities to develop their understanding of number and are moved on from practical learning too quickly. This means that children do not make the progress of which they are capable because they have gaps in their understanding.
- The teaching of phonics is inconsistent. Adults in the early years do not have high enough expectations of what children can learn, particularly disadvantaged children. The pace of learning is slow and this means that children do not acquire the range of phonics knowledge that they need.
- The proportion of disadvantaged children reaching a good level of development by the end of the early years increased in 2017. The funding in the early years to support disadvantaged pupils is used to provide outdoor learning opportunities and for small group work for mathematics. Children's personal, social and emotional skills are developed well. However, the funding is not being used effectively enough to target key priorities such as raising levels of achievement in phonics for disadvantaged pupils.
- The safety and well-being of children is well managed. As a result, children quickly settle in when they arrive, and feel safe when they are learning. Staff have received appropriate safeguarding and first-aid training.
- Children in the nursery classes make a strong start to their school career. They are well supported by adults, who provide a range of interesting activities.  
For example, children enjoyed going on a 'sound walk', listening to the different sounds they could make by tapping different objects using their sound sticks.

- Relationships between teachers and children are very positive. Children follow instructions well. For example, children regularly sing along to songs to reinforce positive language about friendships. Children are encouraged to help each other.
- Children play well together in a safe, well-resourced outdoor environment. Children have opportunities to practise their writing skills on the chalkboards and play on the climbing equipment.
- Adults in the early years support learning well by asking questions that make the children think hard and so deepen their learning. For example, a teaching assistant was working with a small group of children while they were using blocks to build a 'monster'. She asked the children questions to make them think carefully about the different parts of the monster's body and what other body parts were needed.



## School details

Unique reference number	121889
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10037605

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	315
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geoff Dean
Headteacher	Catherine Starnes
Telephone number	01933 675430
Website	<a href="http://www.ruskininfant.org.uk">www.ruskininfant.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@ruskin-inf.northants-ecl.gov.uk">head@ruskin-inf.northants-ecl.gov.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	5–6 December 2012

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The headteacher was appointed in November 2016.
- This school is an above-average-sized infant school.
- The proportion of pupils who start at the school speaking English as an additional language is average.
- The proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic groups is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The early years has two nursery classes, one for two-year-olds and one for three- to four-year-olds. The majority of these children go on to attend the school's Reception

classes.

- A daily before-school breakfast club is managed by the governing body.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 24 lessons. These covered all classes in the school. One of the observations took place accompanied by the headteacher. The inspectors also scrutinised many examples of pupils' work.
- The inspection team held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, middle leaders, parents, governors and pupils.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's development plan and self-evaluation, policies and records related to safeguarding, records of pupils' behaviour, the school's information about pupils' outcomes and attendance, and records of meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors were unable to consider the views of parents using the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, as there were not enough responses. Inspectors considered the six responses to the free-text service for parents. They considered the 19 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupils' questionnaire.

## Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Martin Fitzwilliam

Ofsted Inspector

Janis Warren

Ofsted Inspector

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