

Ruskin Junior School

Wordsworth Drive, Upper Stratton, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 7NG

Inspection dates

21–22 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Despite improvements over time, the quality of teaching remains variable and is not yet consistently good. Some weaknesses in teaching, learning and assessment are barriers to pupils making the best possible progress.
- Teachers do not consistently plan precise enough next steps to build swiftly on pupils' prior learning. This slows some pupils' progress, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils who are not in the resource base.
- Teachers' expectations are not consistently high across the curriculum. At times, this leads to pupils producing lower quality work in different subjects.
- Some teachers do not routinely ensure that pupils' misconceptions or errors are addressed speedily.
- Teaching does not ensure that the most able pupils are challenged most effectively. As a result, some do not reach the highest standards of which they are capable.
- A few minor weaknesses exist in leaders' implementation of the pupil premium and most-able strategies. These sometimes limit the progress pupils make.
- The school's curriculum provides an appropriate range of subjects. However, a lack of clarity for planned skills progression reduces its overall effectiveness.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have been effective in improving both the quality of care and education for pupils.
- Since the previous inspection of the predecessor school, which was inadequate, leaders' high expectations and ambition are continuing to improve teaching and learning. As a result, pupils' achievement is improving.
- Leaders, including governors and trustees, are not complacent. They have had discernible impact, such as eliminating inadequate teaching.
- Staff model the school's values well and interact positively with pupils. Consequently, pupils feel valued and their behaviour around the school and in lessons is good.
- Those responsible for the SEND resource base ensure that the pupils benefit from well-considered and tailored provision. This meets the full range of their needs.
- Morale is high. The overwhelming majority of pupils, staff and parents and carers are proud of the school and its achievements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, by:
 - planning precise next steps based on pupils' prior skills, knowledge and understanding to accelerate pupils' progress, particularly for those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can do and achieve consistently across the curriculum
 - adapting teaching to address pupils' misconceptions or errors speedily
 - providing high-quality challenge to stretch pupils, particularly the most able.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of all leaders further, including governors, by checking more closely:
 - the school's strategies for targeted pupils, including the most able and disadvantaged pupils
 - clarifying the expectations and progression of skills for pupils in different subjects across the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the previous inspection of the predecessor school, which was inadequate, leaders have been relentless in their pursuit of improvement. This is continuing to have a discernible impact on the quality of care and education for the pupils.
- Leaders have high expectations and are ambitious for pupils. This has led to a strong culture that enables pupils to be successful. Consequently, pupils' behaviour is now good, and their achievement is rising.
- Leaders, including governors and trustees, are not complacent. They have robust systems to hold teachers firmly to account. For example, leaders check pupils' progress and conduct pupil progress meetings to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. Leaders' effective monitoring has eliminated inadequate teaching. Leaders are currently developing a stronger profile for teaching in the school, although this remains a work in progress.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is accurate. This leads to effective improvement planning that identifies the right priorities. For example, recent monitoring and staff development have correctly targeted improving pupils' inference and deduction skills to raise standards in reading.
- Leaders and those responsible for the resource base provision ensure that pupils' social, emotional and academic needs are well met. Pupils who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan benefit from well-planned and targeted actions that help pupils to succeed.
- Morale in the school is high. Pupils, staff and parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school's journey of improvement and are proud. A typical comment from parents, seen through the inspection survey, includes, 'The headteacher is passionate about driving the school forward and has a strong team around him'.
- Other senior and middle leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), assistant headteacher and subject leaders, play a pivotal role in developing the school. They operate cohesively in teams to provide mutual support and challenge to each other. This ensures that information is used widely and productively to tackle weaknesses.
- Leaders use the additional funding for pupils with SEND and the pupil premium to target support for individuals appropriately. Funding is used to ensure that a range of activities and tailored provision, including clubs, visits and workshops, is provided for pupils. However, weaknesses in the precision of planning for some pupils in mainstream classes prevent them from making more consistently strong progress in lessons to catch up.
- Similarly, leaders have not yet established a strong enough strategy to make the greatest difference for the most able pupils. This reduces the quality of teaching and learning for some of the brightest and most able to reach the highest standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave the school.
- The school has implemented and evaluated its curriculum. 'The big idea' approach has

been introduced and refined and is effective in meeting pupils' needs. The curriculum ensures a breadth to pupils' learning and provides further high-quality enrichment opportunities to develop pupils' social, emotional, physical and academic development, for example, through plays and 'holiday camps'. However, fine detail of the progression of key skills, for example in history and geography, is not yet established. This reduces the wider impact of the curriculum in some subjects for pupils.

- Leaders are effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. For example, visits to the Houses of Parliament raise awareness of British values, such as democracy. Leaders develop pupils' spiritual awareness by providing opportunities for reflection and discussing the school's values, including kindness.

Governance of the school

- Trustees and governors work effectively together. There are well-understood lines of accountability and responsibilities that ensure that school leaders are held firmly to account. This has led to significant improvement in key areas of the school's work, such as eliminating inadequate teaching.
- Those on the local governing body (LGB) and the trust board know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and so have raised pupils' achievement well in consecutive years since the time of the predecessor school. Senior trust officers and the chief executive officer (CEO) have taken the right actions to support and challenge the LGB. As a result, governors are well trained and supported to undertake their duties effectively.
- Governors are not complacent and work interchangeably with school leaders, for example through link governor visits and with the trust board. The inclusion of a board member on the LGB has added valuable rigour and expertise to strengthen governance and bring about improvements to governance.
- Governors monitor and check the school's progress through strong links in the school development plan. They ask suitable questions of leaders and seek evidence, including through face-to-face discussions with leaders, to validate information.
- However, at times, governors do not probe deeply enough, such as in the workings and effectiveness of the pupil premium strategy or the quality of provision for the most able pupils. This slightly reduces their effectiveness in these examples for these groups of pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective, including in the SEND resource base.
- Leaders and staff are tenacious on behalf of pupils to keep them safe. Staff know the pupils and their circumstances well. As a result, staff take rapid action to look after pupils. They work effectively with a range of external agencies to safeguard pupils.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. For example, staff know what to do and how to respond in a range of safeguarding and child protection situations. Effective systems are securely in place and training is fully compliant with mandatory

requirements. These give staff the knowledge and confidence they need to respond ably to pupils' needs and any concerns.

- Pupils say that they feel safe. For example, they know how to stay safe online and speak with authority about the school's anti-bullying week. Pupils trust staff to intervene for them, as required, and have confidence in staff to look after them.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Since the inspection of the predecessor school, which found teaching to be inadequate, there has been sustained improvement. There are now notable strengths in teaching in some classes. However, some inconsistencies persist. These act as a barrier to pupils making the best possible progress.
- Teachers do not consistently plan precise next steps for pupils, based on what the pupils already know, understand and can do. This includes for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. As a result, some pupils in mainstream classes with identified needs are not making sustained or rapid gains in reading, writing and mathematics. They find some difficulties hard to overcome, which slows their progress.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils across the full range of subjects, or when pupils apply their skills in different situations. At times, this leads to pupils producing work that is not their best, or poorer in quality than that of which they are capable.
- There are occasions when teachers are not quick enough to identify, or persistent enough in addressing, errors or misconceptions made by pupils. For example, identified basic errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar, or weaknesses in some pupils' understanding of place value in number, slow the rate of learning.
- On occasion, teachers and teaching assistants do not consistently challenge pupils, particularly the most able pupils. When this happens, pupils are not able to reach the highest standards of which they are capable. Consequently, the achievement of some pupils is not as good as it can be.
- However, there are discernible strengths and notable improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. In particular, teachers engage well with pupils. There are positive relationships in lessons where pupils feel confident to try different strategies and work together to complete tasks.
- Teachers use aids, resources and prompts well, including class displays to help pupils. For example, current Year 6 pupils benefit from high-quality modelling of fractions to help them understand equivalence.
- Teachers accurately identify pupils who need additional support. Pupils are then well targeted with extra time and additional tuition to help them understand some key learning before, during or after lessons. Teachers use these 'pre- and over-learning' sessions to intervene and provide a 'boost' for pupils as needed.
- In response to last year's key stage 2 test results, teachers are focusing well on the teaching of reading. Pupils are being immersed in a variety of texts for different purposes, which is promoting their interest and providing challenge. Pupils understand that developing their skills of inference and comprehension is essential to being life-

long and enthusiastic readers.

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 typically respectful, kind and considerate towards each other. They enjoy having opportunities to look after one another and socialise well, including at breaktimes.
- Pupils show positive attitudes to learning in lessons. They often work collaboratively to support and encourage each other. Pupils show an appetite to learn and willingness to share their knowledge with others.
- Pupils often take pride in their work. This has improved significantly. Work in books is well presented and in line with leaders' revised expectations.
- There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in the school. This starts from the beginning of the school day and is seen throughout the school day, including when pupils are learning outside, for example, in physical education lessons or moving between activities, including for the 'daily mile'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They are keen to take leadership roles and responsibilities, such as being school councillors. This is preparing them well for further challenges and their secondary education.
- Pupils say that bullying is not common. Most understand the different forms that bullying takes and how damaging it can be. Pupils trust staff to intervene quickly and any rare incidents are usually dealt with swiftly.
- Pupils like coming to school. They enjoy the various activities and pursuits, including opportunities such as breakfast club. In addition, equalities are promoted with sincerity and authenticity. For example, the school can boast about its successful girls' football team.
- Pupils in the SEND resource base are well cared for emotionally and socially and are very much a part of the fabric of the school and its mission. As a result, pupils show tolerance and understanding to each other and celebrate the uniqueness and difference of others.
- Pupils' attendance is lower than the national average, including for particular groups, such as disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. Staff are working with other agencies and parents to improve pupils' attendance. As a result, attendance since September 2018 has been showing improvement. Leaders understand that this is an area for continued observation and scrutiny.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In the two years since the academy conversion, there has been a clear improvement in pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave the school.
- However, progress measures in writing and mathematics in 2018 were broadly average and reading was below average. Pupils' attainment, although improved, was also below the national average for pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, or in meeting the highest standard (greater depth). Pupils are not yet consistently meeting national benchmarks by the time they leave the school.
- The current achievement of pupils in the school is variable and not yet consistently good. While there are continued signs of improvement and the former legacy of underachievement is being overturned, the progress of some pupils remains too slow.
- The progress of some pupils with SEND, as well as disadvantaged pupils, is too variable, and they do not make good progress. Differences persist for disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics when comparing their outcomes with those of other, non-disadvantaged pupils nationally, including the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Furthermore, the proportions of pupils working at the highest standards in reading, writing and mathematics are lower than expected, including for current pupils. This is a priority for the school to address.
- Pupils in the SEND resource base who have an EHC plan make strong progress. Bespoke objectives and detailed use of assessment information support these pupils to do well, including those with emotional and behavioural difficulties as part of their diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder.
- The very few pupils who speak English as an additional language make at least typical progress, with some individuals making more rapid progress. Pupils are identified and supported through specific programmes to help them to catch up.
- Pupils are given activities to apply their skills across the curriculum. For example, in Year 6, pupils have used data to draw graphs and then write non-chronological reports about the heart in science. This helps pupils to connect knowledge and skills for a discrete purpose. However, some pupils are still held back by insecurities in core knowledge, such as comprehension in reading, spelling in writing, and fluency in number.
- Overall, pupils are now demonstrating increasing skills, knowledge and understanding that are relevant to their stage and age in readiness for secondary education. Leaders and teachers are bringing about the improvements to pupils' outcomes that are needed. However, some key challenges remain to ensure that all pupils are in a strong position academically.

School details

Unique reference number	142539
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10058293

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	317
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Paul Cooper
Headteacher	Andrew Beadnell
Telephone number	01793 332107
Website	www.ruskinjuniorschool.com
Email address	admin@ruskin-junior.swindon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Ruskin Junior School is larger than the average-sized primary school. It is part of the Blue Kite multi-academy trust. The trust was formed in April 2016.
- The school has a specialist SEND resource base for up to 10 pupils who have autism spectrum disorder and social communication and interaction difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The majority of pupils attending the school are of White British origin.
- The school runs a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities, including a daily breakfast club and holiday clubs.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first full inspection since the academy conversion in 2016.
- Inspectors observed pupils in lessons in all classes across the school, and most inspection activities were joined by senior leaders. These included learning walks to evaluate the quality of teaching and provision for disadvantaged pupils and the most able.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, SENCo and subject leaders. There was also a discussion with the leader for the SEND resource base.
- Additional discussions were held with representatives of the trust. These included the CEO, trustees and representatives of the LGB.
- The inspectors gained the views of pupils throughout the inspection, including in discussions at breaktimes.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' current work in books with other leaders to establish the standards being achieved. They also spoke with pupils about their views of learning, the curriculum and safeguarding.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in Years 3 and 6.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils and parents to seek their views of the school. The 23 surveys from Parent View were considered by inspectors.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of documents, including the school's summary self-evaluation, school improvement plan, adviser support visit notes, headteacher reports, minutes of governing body meetings, improvement plans and information relating to behaviour, safety and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tracy French	Ofsted Inspector
Matthew Cottrell	Ofsted Inspector

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