

Ramsden Infant School

Thwaite Street, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria LA14 1AN

Inspection dates

11–12 December 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
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

- Too few pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and boys, reach the standards needed in reading and writing in order to be ready for the next stage in their education.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable. Pupils sometimes lack opportunities to learn from their mistakes, or to answer questions that challenge them sufficiently.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their reading and writing skills across a wide range of subjects.
- Too few children in the early years reach a good level of development by the time they start Year 1. The activities provided do not always challenge children enough to think for themselves, especially when working with adults.
- Governors do not hold leaders sufficiently to account for the use of the pupil premium funding. This is because leaders do not provide them with precise information about the difference that the funding is making to the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors and leaders do not analyse carefully enough the information they have about pupils' attendance. Consequently they have not taken the right actions to reduce persistent absence and to ensure that more pupils, especially the disadvantaged, develop the good attendance habits they need.
- Leaders and governors have not been rigorous in monitoring the records of checks made on staff who are recruited to work at the school.

The school has the following strengths

- Improvements to learning about phonics, including in the early years, are having a positive impact on outcomes for current pupils.
- Pupils attain well in mathematics. An above-average proportion of pupils reach both the expected and higher standards. This is because leaders have made sure that teachers have good subject knowledge.
- The school provides a happy, caring and safe environment for pupils. The headteacher leads staff by example in building strong relationships with pupils and their parents and carers.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported and make strong progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - governors have precise, detailed information about plans for the use of the pupil premium funding so that they can hold leaders stringently to account for its impact
 - leaders and governors develop a clear overview of the attendance of all groups of pupils, so that the right actions can be taken to raise attendance and reduce persistent absence
 - records of the checks made on staff recruited to the school are monitored regularly and thoroughly.
- Improve outcomes in reading and writing, especially for disadvantaged pupils and boys, by:
 - providing children in the early years with more opportunities to think for themselves and to practise their language skills, including when working with adults
 - ensuring that teaching in key stage 1 routinely provides pupils with questioning that challenges them to deepen their understanding, and provides them with opportunities to learn from their mistakes
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their reading and writing skills across a wide range of subjects
 - engaging boys' interest in learning across the curriculum so that they make better progress.

An external review of the pupil premium funding 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

- School leaders have not sustained the good quality of education since the last inspection. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is now more variable. Teaching in Year 1 does not build sufficiently on the gains that children make in the early years.
- Leaders and governors have been slow to take action to diminish differences in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their peers, especially in reading and writing. Their plans for the use of the pupil premium funding are not sufficiently focused on ensuring that teaching addresses pupils' specific learning needs. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils have not made the extra progress needed in order to catch up with other pupils, and the differences in their attainment have widened.
- Leaders and governors recognise that, while girls frequently achieve similar standards to those of other pupils nationally, there are still too few boys leaving key stage 1 having reached the expected standard in either reading or writing. Leaders have taken recent steps to make the curriculum more interesting and appealing to boys. However, it is too early to see the impact of these changes on the outcomes for current pupils.
- Leaders carry out a range of activities to monitor the quality of teaching but have not acted promptly to improve pupils' learning in Year 1. They ensure that teachers have opportunities to attend meetings with colleagues from other local schools in order to share and learn from good practice. The training that leaders provided has improved teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics. As a result, pupils attain well in mathematics.
- The curriculum enables pupils to learn across a range of subjects, and to develop socially, morally, spiritually and culturally. Displays around the school and in classrooms show that pupils develop an awareness of fundamental British values, such as respect and tolerance.
- Subject leaders have a good understanding of the skills and knowledge that pupils need to learn in their subjects. Leaders, including subject leaders, have made recent changes to improve the ways in which they monitor pupils' achievement in individual subjects. This work is still at too early a stage to see the impact on pupils' learning.
- The good leadership of provision for pupils with SEND ensures that they are well supported. The school communicates effectively with parents and with a range of professionals, and this group of pupils make strong progress from their various starting points as a result.
- Leaders and governors do not analyse carefully enough the information they have about pupils' attendance. Consequently, they have not taken effective action to improve the attendance of particular groups of pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, whose absence is more frequent and more persistent than that of other pupils.
- Governors and leaders provide pupils with a warm and caring environment in which to learn. The headteacher leads by example in ensuring that parents feel welcome and supported at all times. Parents who responded to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire were unanimous in their view that their children are happy at the school.

Governance of the school

- Governors do not hold leaders sufficiently to account for the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. This is because leaders do not provide the governing body with precise, detailed information about their plans for the use of the pupil premium funding or about the impact that it has.
- The governing body has a good mix of skills and experience, and understands well the needs of the community that the school serves. Governors have received some appropriate training, for example, in safeguarding and safer recruitment.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Teachers and staff are vigilant and know how to recognise signs of abuse. They take the right action when they have a concern. Pupils say they feel safe in school.
- During the inspection, some records regarding the safe recruitment of staff were incomplete. While all necessary checks have been undertaken by leaders, there were gaps in the way that these checks are recorded. These gaps were addressed during the inspection. Leaders and governors recognise that they must continue to monitor these records regularly and rigorously.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good.
- Teaching in Year 1 does not build sufficiently on what pupils already know and can do when they leave the Reception class. Teaching does not routinely deepen pupils' understanding, for example through effective use of questioning. The support that pupils receive, although very caring, sometimes limits opportunities for pupils to think for themselves before answering, or to show what they have understood. As a result, opportunities for assessment are missed. Work in pupils' books shows that, on occasion, pupils are judged to have acquired a skill with which they are not yet secure.
- Where teaching is strongest, in Year 2 and in the Reception classes, teachers use questioning more skilfully to probe pupils' thinking. They check pupils' understanding and address misconceptions as they occur to help pupils make progress. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 2, a group of the most able pupils were challenged to think in a different way when they struggled to complete a task about the features of solid shapes. Through debate and discussion with each other, they arrived at the correct answer and made progress.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, because teachers set clear expectations. Even though they were excited about their nativity performance which took place during the inspection, pupils settled quickly to learning when they returned from church.
- Work in pupils' books across a range of subjects shows that there is variability in the extent to which tasks provide pupils with the challenge they need to help them achieve well. Some tasks are too simple or repetitive. For example, pupils have too few opportunities to solve problems or to learn from their mistakes in mathematics,

especially in Year 1. Some tasks do not offer pupils enough scope to practise their reading and writing skills across a range of subjects. As a result, progress is inconsistent.

- The school has a clear assessment policy, which sets out how teachers should provide pupils with feedback. However, this is not followed consistently.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The good relationships that the headteacher and staff have established with pupils enable them to feel happy and secure in the school. Parents who spoke to the inspector value the school's focus on their children's emotional needs, and say that their children 'learn well because they are happy'.
- Teachers take opportunities to promote the equal valuing of all and to challenge stereotypes. For example, pupils have learned how to use sign language and understand its importance as a means of communication for some of their friends. As a result, pupils learn to empathise with each other and to understand differences and similarities in appropriate ways.
- Pupils learn about which foods are good for them. Displays in the school hall remind them how to make healthy choices at lunchtime.
- Pupils enjoy learning to take responsibility through roles such as school councillors and classroom monitors. They develop care and concern for each other and for people in the wider community. For example, pupils who spoke to the inspector described how they help children in the early years to learn how to fasten their coats before going outside. Pupils in Year 2 have displayed items of food and warm clothing that they have collected for a local project that supports people who are homeless.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Leaders have not made enough progress in their efforts to improve attendance, especially for disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, too many pupils do not develop the good attendance habits they need to prepare them for the next stage in their education. The proportion of pupils who are absent persistently is almost twice the national average. These pupils miss important time in school, and this has a negative impact on their learning.
- Pupils conduct themselves very well in school. They move around quietly and in an orderly way, and are very polite to visitors. They usually settle quickly to work and respond promptly to teachers' instructions.
- Pupils who spoke to the inspector say that bullying does not happen often, and that when it does their teachers always sort it out.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils currently in key stage 1 make variable progress in writing. In Year 1, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, do not build quickly enough on what they have learned in the Reception year. Work does not routinely challenge pupils to practise their developing phonics skills, and the tasks they carry out sometimes limit what they can achieve.
- In Year 2, pupils have to work at a faster pace in order to catch up. Expectations of what pupils can do are higher in Year 2, and they have more opportunities to put into practice what they know and can do. Work in their books shows that by the end of the autumn term pupils already write much longer pieces of work, use accurate punctuation more consistently, and try out a wider vocabulary. Work seen indicates that girls make slightly stronger progress than boys.
- Pupils say that they enjoy reading. Pupils who read to the inspector did so confidently because they were able to recognise words and to draw on their phonics skills when they needed to. They could explain the meaning of the text that they had read. However, in some cases the texts that pupils read were not challenging enough to stretch them sufficiently.
- Work in mathematics books shows that there is inconsistency across year groups in the degree to which tasks challenge pupils and help them to move forward in their learning. Pupils develop competence in the use of skills such as addition and multiplication. However, in Year 1 pupils do not have enough opportunities to solve problems or to explain their thinking. Some work is repetitive, too easy and does not allow pupils to learn from their mistakes. Pupils in Year 2, including disadvantaged pupils, make stronger progress because teaching challenges them to think harder and to apply their skills in a wider range of ways. However, leaders and teachers recognise that pupils in key stage 1 do not have enough opportunities to explain their thinking or reasoning in mathematics.
- The recent changes that leaders have made to the way in which pupils learn phonics are beginning to make a positive difference, especially for younger children. However it is too early to see the impact of these actions on the outcomes for pupils currently in Year 1.
- Outcomes in the key stage 1 national reading assessments in 2018 were broadly similar to those of the previous year. The proportion reaching the expected standard was lower than the average nationally, and the proportion reaching greater depth was similar to that nationally. Girls achieved similar standards to those of other pupils nationally in reading, and more than the average nationally reached greater depth. However boys achieved less well, and only just over half reached the expected standard.
- Pupils' attainment in writing at the end of Year 2 declined overall from the previous year, with fewer than 60% of pupils reaching the expected standard. Very few pupils achieved greater depth in writing. More girls than boys reached the expected standard in writing: fewer than half of the cohort of boys started junior school having achieved the expected standard in writing.
- Attainment in mathematics was stronger at the end of Year 2 in 2018 than in reading

or writing. More pupils than the average nationally reached both the expected standard and greater depth, and more boys reached the expected standard than girls.

- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in reading and writing in the 2018 key stage 1 tests were much lower than those of their classmates and of other pupils nationally. Fewer than half reached the expected standard in reading, and just over a quarter achieved the expected standard in writing. Very few disadvantaged pupils reached greater depth in reading, and none achieved greater depth in writing.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics in the 2018 national tests was below the average nationally, although a similar proportion to that seen nationally reached greater depth.
- The proportion of pupils who reached the required standard in the 2018 Year 1 phonics screening increased. Nevertheless, phonics outcomes in recent years have remained consistently below the national average.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children enter the nursery with skills that are less developed than those typical for their age. This is particularly the case in their personal, social and emotional development; their communication and language; and their physical skills. Although many children make progress over time from these low starting points, too few make the gains they need in order to reach a good level of development by the time they start Year 1.
- Children in the Nursery have access to a good range of resources indoors and outdoors. However, the activities that adults provide do not routinely challenge children to learn more, for example by trying things out for themselves. Some teaching uses questioning less skilfully and does not allow children the time they need to share their thoughts and ideas. When this happens, children do not develop their language skills beyond simple answers.
- The recent improvements that leaders have made to the ways in which children learn phonics are beginning to have a positive impact in the early years. Children's work shows that those in the Reception class this year, including those who are disadvantaged, have made a strong start to their literacy learning as a result of phonics teaching in the Nursery last year. Consequently they are making better progress than children in Reception at the same time last year. However, it is too early to see the impact on children's good level of development.
- The relationships that adults establish with children are warm and caring. Children feel secure and safe in their surroundings, and they separate readily from their parents and carers when they arrive at school.
- Children behave well in the early years, because adults have established simple, clear rules and routines for them to follow. They know where to find the resources they need, where to put their coats, and how to tidy away after themselves. Children in the Reception class walk quietly to assembly and learn to join in with the school's prayers.
- Leaders and staff have established effective working relationships with another local nursery that shares the same location as the school. Staff share and learn from good practice and engage in training activities together. As a result, the quality and accuracy of assessment in the early years has improved.

School details

Unique reference number	112208
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10042474

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	123
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Phil Solloway
Headteacher	Mrs Nicola Brewerton
Telephone number	01229840950
Website	www.ramsden.cumbria.sch.uk
Email address	head@ramsden.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–7 November 2013

Information about this school

- This infant and nursery school is smaller in size than the average primary school.
- The school has one part-time nursery class.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is higher than the national average.
- The majority of pupils are of White British origin.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils receiving support for SEND is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in classes in each year group, including in the Nursery.
- The inspector looked at pupils' work across year groups and across a range of subjects.
- The inspector listened to some pupils reading, and observed pupils' behaviour around the school.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, governors, subject leaders and pupils. The lead inspector also spoke to the associate general adviser appointed by the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including the school's plans for improvement, attendance records, safeguarding and recruitment information, and minutes of governing body meetings.
- The inspector spoke to a few parents and took into account 26 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View.

Inspection team

Mavis Smith, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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