



Ramsey Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110686
LEA CAMBRIDGESHIRE LEA
Inspection number 278487
Inspection dates 20 March 2006 to 21 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Colin Henderson LI

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Station Road
School category	Community		PE26 1JA
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01487812500
Number on roll	283	Fax number	01487710821
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs.Candy Dodsley
Date of previous inspection	26 June 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Deborah Hannaford

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average junior school that mainly serves its local neighbourhood. Most children transfer from its feeder infant school and attainment on entry is above average. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. Five per cent of pupils speak English as a second language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average. The school has had three different headteachers in the last year due to staff absence and changes.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

The quality of education and leadership and management have been disrupted by staff absence. Standards of attainment have dropped from above average to average levels over the last two years and pupils' overall achievement is inadequate. The new headteacher has rapidly grasped what needs to be done to improve the school. She has introduced new initiatives and procedures to raise pupils' achievement, but these are at the early stages of development. Teaching is not yet good enough to raise achievement as teachers' expectations about the pace of learning, particularly for more able pupils, are not consistently high enough. Assessment is used inconsistently and does not ensure that pupils progress as rapidly as they should. The school has not improved enough since the last inspection and its overall effectiveness is inadequate. Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their behaviour, are satisfactory. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that pupils enjoy. Staff care for their pupils well, although procedures to rigorously check and record any health and safety concerns are not securely established. The headteacher and her new leadership team are demonstrating the capacity to improve the school and are benefiting from the recently increased level of support from the local authority. Parents and pupils value the strong lead being given by the headteacher. However, key staff and governors do not have a sufficiently clear picture of how well the school is doing and how it might ensure that pupils' achievement improves rapidly. In view of the pupils' inadequate achievement, the school gives unsatisfactory value for money. In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the pupils' achievement, especially the more able, and make sure that they make consistently good progress across the school by making better use of assessment.
- Improve the quality of teaching to at least a good standard in all classes by raising teachers' expectations about the pace of pupils' learning.
- Make sure that staff and governors have a more accurate view of how well the school is doing by checking pupils' progress more effectively and rigorously eliminating any weaknesses.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Achievement and standards are inadequate overall. From an above average starting point when they enter Year 3, most pupils do not make enough progress throughout the school. Teaching is not of a consistently high enough quality and learning activities are not matched closely to pupils' needs. As a result, achievement is inadequate, especially for more able pupils, who are not extended enough to attain the standards

of which they are capable. Most pupils who find learning difficult make satisfactory progress overall towards their learning targets as a result of the sound support they receive, particularly from specialist support teachers. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also benefit from effective individual language support. They make satisfactory progress overall, although class and group activities do not always match their learning needs. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 6 have dropped from above average to average levels. This is clearly reflected in the results of national tests over the last two years. The school did not achieve its challenging target in the 2005 tests, especially in the number of pupils attaining above average levels in English. Boys do not attain as well as girls, especially in writing. The school is currently working with other local schools to improve boys' writing skills, although this has yet to result in any significant improvement. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved recently to nationally expected levels as a result of teachers' increased subject confidence and better resources.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. There are good relationships between pupils and adults and most pupils enjoy school, particularly their involvement in clubs and visits. They behave well around the school and in most lessons, although teachers' management of some pupils is not always fully effective. Pupils report that there is occasional bullying, but there have been very few incidents this year. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils learn how to stay safe and gain a good understanding about healthy eating and keeping fit. They have satisfactory opportunities to make a positive contribution to improving the school. The school council has achieved some changes, for example, in improving the range of equipment in the hall. However, its meetings have been infrequent this year and this limits its effectiveness. Pupils are confident that teachers value their views. There are a small but increasing number of other responsibilities for pupils, including house captains and buddies for infant school pupils. Pupils have some opportunities to be enterprising and work in teams. In the Planning for Real project, for example, Year 6 pupils made a significant contribution to the consultation on the proposed redevelopment of Ramsey. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Assemblies are used effectively to present spiritual themes. Pupils contribute well to the lives of others through their support for several charities. Their cultural knowledge is enhanced well by good opportunities to take part in music and drama, although pupils' knowledge of other cultures remains an area for development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teaching and learning are inadequate overall. The quality of teaching seen in lessons and in pupils' work, ranged from good to inadequate. This reflects a lack of consistency

in pupils' learning and in their progress across the school. Most lessons are characterised by pleasant and positive relationships and many pupils enjoy the activities provided. However, in too many lessons, teachers' expectations are not high enough. Although there has been some recent improvements in lesson planning to take account of what pupils already know, teachers are not yet putting these into practice effectively enough to meet the range of pupils' abilities. Lower attainers and those with learning difficulties or disabilities usually achieve satisfactorily because they are given sound support from the teaching assistants. However, the more able pupils are not challenged enough to extend their skills and knowledge. The pace of many lessons is slow and pupils do not achieve as much as they should. One of the main weaknesses in teaching is the lack, until very recently, of effective assessment arrangements in any subject. The headteacher is urgently training teachers to assess and track pupils' achievements regularly and rigorously in order to increase the rate of the pupils' progress. The quality of marking, target-setting and accurate assessment of the levels pupils achieve is too variable and often poor.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and covers all the required subjects. It is being reviewed well to ensure that relevant links are made between subjects to make lessons more interesting for pupils. The subject leader and governor in charge of ICT have made great improvements in resources and these are being used increasingly across the curriculum to the benefit of the pupils. There is a satisfactory programme of personal, social and health education and citizenship. Most aspects of provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are satisfactory, although the school needs to ensure that the reviews of pupils' statements are completed on time. Pupils with particular gifts or talents are encouraged to join activities run by the local cluster of schools. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities that includes sports clubs, a choir and visits to places of interest. The school is currently working with the local authority to extend its programme of music tuition to involve more pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support, including child protection procedures, are satisfactory. Arrangements for ensuring the pupils' health and safety are satisfactory on a day-to-day basis, but some procedures are not rigorous enough, for example written records do not show how governors fulfil their role in systematically checking on pupils' safety. Teachers and other staff care for pupils well. Pupils trust the adults in school and are confident to approach them with any concerns. The school has good links with other agencies to provide additional support for vulnerable children. The pupils' attendance is monitored carefully and is satisfactory. The behaviour policy provides a satisfactory framework for rewarding good behaviour and deterring poor behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to work hard and behave well through gaining house points and certificates presented in assembly. Arrangements for guiding pupils on improving the standard of

their work, for example, through target setting, are very new. They are not yet implemented consistently by all teachers and this is impeding pupils' progress. There are good links with the secondary school to help pupils' transition. Links with the infant school have been improved this year in response to parents' concerns.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The new headteacher has very quickly gained a good understanding of what the school needs to improve. She is beginning to provide clear leadership and has encouraged staff to become more involved in working as a team to bring about improvement at a faster rate. She has improved systems to check pupils' achievement closely and to evaluate and improve teaching to a satisfactory level. However, although the school benefits from a recently increased level of support from the local authority, these new procedures are not yet sufficiently established to have made enough impact on improving pupils' achievement. The improving contribution of subject leaders is beginning to focus more effectively on raising standards, for example in ICT, although they do not yet evaluate teaching and learning. Governors are supportive and keen to develop their roles. However, they do not carry out their responsibilities rigorously enough to check how well the school is doing. The school development plan includes aspirations to improve many aspects of the school. However, it lacks clarity about which of these intended improvements are the most important, detailed costings and exactly how progress towards these goals is to be measured and evaluated. The headteacher has improved the opportunities for parents and pupils to share their views on the school and contribute to its development. This, together with the good leadership of the headteacher and the improving team approach, gives the school a sound capacity to improve.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	No
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for being so friendly and making us feel welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and watching you learn. What we liked most about your school - You get on well together and help each other. We also like the way some older pupils are friendly to the infant children who are about to join you to help them look forward to coming to your school. - You enjoy your lessons, especially when the teachers make them interesting and fun. - You and your parents like Mrs Hannaford, your new headteacher, and how she is listening to your views and ideas. What we have asked the school to do now - Help you to do better in your work, especially in literacy and numeracy. We hope that you will work hard with your teachers to do this. - Teachers to make more of your lessons interesting and challenging to help you achieve better. - Staff and governors to make sure that they know how well your school is doing, so that they can improve anything important that is needed. We hope that you continue to be happy at school and carry on working hard.