

# Ruskin Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121889
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	314135
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Arnalena Bee

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	189
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jenny Boyce
<b>Headteacher</b>	Heather Eley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 October 2003
<b>School address</b>	Ruskin Avenue Wellingborough NN8 3EG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01933 675430
<b>Fax number</b>	01933 675678

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Ruskin is slightly smaller than the average-sized school. The large majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. A number of minority ethnic groups are also represented. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Children enter the nursery with levels of attainment that are well below those expected for their ages. Language and communication skills are particularly low. There has been a high turnover of staff in the last two years. The community, which the school serves, has high levels of social and economic disadvantage.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a happy, welcoming school that provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the way the school helps their children to develop as they learn and play. As one parent wrote, 'This is a friendly school where my child feels relaxed and able to settle down and enjoy school life.' Pupils enjoy coming to school and take part enthusiastically in all that is offered to them. However, this is not truly reflected in the attendance figures. While the school does a great deal to promote attendance, it remains below average, as it was when the school was last inspected. Most of the persistent absentees are in the Reception classes and the school continues to work on this. Pupils show a satisfactory awareness of the need to eat a healthy diet and take regular exercise. They identify fruits and vegetables as healthy foods and know that exercise keeps them fit. Pupils' idea of the need to keep safe is better developed. For example, they confidently talk about the importance of road safety. One Year 2 boy said, 'We went outside, put on yellow coats, and learned how to cross the road. It was good fun.' The satisfactory curriculum is enriched with a good range of visits out and visitors invited into school, which reinforce and develop skills and knowledge taught in the classroom as well as contributing positively to pupils' personal development.

The headteacher has a good understanding of the school's strengths and the areas where improvement is necessary. Dealing with inconsistencies in teaching and learning has been a big problem because of the high turnover of staff. In addition, she has had to restructure her senior management team each year as well as support and develop newly appointed teachers within their areas of responsibility. Senior leaders and managers are not yet having an impact on raising achievement and standards in their subject areas, particularly in English and mathematics. The headteacher has done the best she could but she acknowledges that disruptions caused by frequent changes in staffing and the consequent variations in the quality of teaching have had an adverse impact on pupils' achievement and the standards they reach. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall.

Standards in Year 2 are below average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, and children achieve well in the nursery and Reception classes because the teaching in these classes is good. In Years 1 and 2 the teaching and pupils' achievement are mainly satisfactory. The monitoring of teaching is satisfactory but not rigorous enough. Areas of weakness have been identified in the past but not always eradicated. Pupils are given satisfactory academic guidance to improve their work. They are very enthusiastic about the targets they are given in literacy and mathematics. One higher-attaining pupil said, 'You get one tick if you are nearly there and three ticks mean you have reached your target.' Teachers' marking is generally supportive but does not consistently inform pupils what they need to do next to improve and achieve their individual learning targets. The care and support that pupils receive to develop personal and social skills are satisfactory.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Despite making good progress, most children do not reach the expected levels by the time they start in Year 1. Children in the Foundation Stage receive good teaching and support. Planning is good. The recently improved provision for teaching letters and sounds has got off to a good start. Children are making good progress as they learn letter sounds and identify them in words they see in reading books. Progress is tracked well in all areas of learning and targets for

improvement are identified clearly to develop learning further. In both the nursery and the Reception classes, children have good opportunities to plan activities themselves as well as working through directed tasks. At times, learning is not so rapid when children are expected to sit on the carpet and listen for too long. All adults promote children's personal and social skills well. In the nursery, for example, when children have difficulty sharing, adults sort out minor disputes sensitively. Older children in Reception are encouraged to listen carefully and to put up their hands when they wish to answer questions directed at the class. Behaviour is good. Children develop positive attitudes to learning and enjoy all that is offered to them. Reception-aged children thoroughly enjoyed answering questions as they shared a story. They not only used the pictures to help them but also had a go at sounding out simple words. The teacher expertly asked the children to think about how well they were doing, as they worked through this activity, using 'thumbs up or down'. Induction procedures into nursery are good. Parents and carers have confidence in the staff. They are pleased with how quickly and happily their children settle into school life and say that if they have a problem it is quickly sorted out. Transition procedures from Reception into Year 1 are good.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that the monitoring and analysis of teaching and learning are rigorous and are used to improve the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2.
- Improve teachers' marking so that it informs pupils consistently what they need to do to improve and reach their targets in literacy and mathematics.
- Ensure that senior leaders become more involved in the drive to raise achievement and standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Standards are below average in Year 2. The current Year 2 has been particularly affected by the high turnover of staff and occasionally weak teaching. In addition, the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in this year group is above average. Achievement is satisfactory in Key Stage 1. In a small minority of classes, progress is good because pupils are taught well. In other classes, pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to their classmates, as do the few pupils who are learning how to speak English as an additional language. This is because their individual needs are catered for effectively in all they do.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory. Pupils are well behaved in lessons and show positive attitudes to learning. The behaviour of a small minority of older pupils in Year 2 is not so good in less structured situations. Pupils are pleased that the rare instances of bullying are dealt with quickly. The school has correctly identified that pupils' understanding of different religions and cultures in Britain today is not strong. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the community. They really enjoy taking responsibility, such as when they become playground buddies, and

participating in decision making when they become school councillors. Their awareness of the wider world is developed satisfactorily during their involvement in fund-raising events. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they develop basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. These and the personal and social skills they acquire prepare them soundly for the next stage of their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory, but it varies too much. Occasionally, the teaching is good, but there are still weaknesses in too many lessons. For example, teachers do not take enough account of assessment information when planning lessons, giving pupils activities which are either not challenging enough or are too difficult. This often applies to the more able pupils and sometimes to those who have difficulty acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills. Sometimes pupils have to listen for far too long before they start their work. In good lessons, activities are well planned to meet the needs and abilities of all pupils, expectations are high and pupils work hard and learn well. In all lessons, learning support assistants are well briefed and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Adults interact effectively as they support individuals as they learn. Relationships between adults and their pupils are good. The management of behaviour in the classroom is very good. As a result, pupils behave well.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

A strength of the curriculum is the number of extra-curricular activities that are offered to pupils. These support pupils' personal and social development well and add to pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils attend these enthusiastically. The provision for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. ICT provision is satisfactory, but is not yet used effectively in all areas of the curriculum. The situation is improving as the school is addressing the issue. The curriculum makes a positive contribution in helping pupils to learn how to stay safe and healthy and the school has just received a Healthy School Award. Increasingly, the school is making good links between subjects so that learning becomes more meaningful. The curriculum does not always provide sufficient challenge for higher-attaining pupils.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Pupils play and learn in a supportive environment because adults have their best interests at heart. Procedures for vetting people who come into school and for making sure that pupils are safe when they are in school are secure. There are particularly thorough procedures for when pupils are taken out on visits. A strength in the way pupils are looked after is the valuable counselling support that the resident parent support advisor gives to some pupils and their families. Links with outside agencies to support pupils with specific needs are good. Procedures which enable pupils to develop personally and socially are satisfactory. The quality of marking is not good enough to give pupils clear insights into how they are doing and what they need to do to improve. There is too little reference to what they need to do to reach their personal learning targets.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The leadership of the headteacher is good. She knows her school well and has managed issues relating to high staff turnover effectively. She has moved staff around so that less experienced teachers are supported and has enabled weaker teachers to improve their practice. At times, she has ploughed a lonely furrow because her senior leadership team and key subject coordinators have not been well established in their roles. One of the most important things that she has done is develop a good system that tracks pupils' achievement. This system not only gives a clear picture of how well individuals are doing but also shows the quality of teaching pupils are receiving in each class. Senior leaders and subject coordinators have started to concentrate on raising achievement and standards in their areas of responsibility. They have analysed the quality of work in pupils' books and some have started to observe lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. However, inconsistencies in teaching and learning remain in Years 1 and 2 because shortcomings have not been identified, and then eradicated in the past. Nevertheless, the school has sufficient capacity to improve further because these weaknesses are now being addressed and staffing is now slightly more settled. Governance is satisfactory. Governors come into school and link with subject coordinators and their classes. However, they are inexperienced and do not provide sufficient challenge to the school. They have recognised this and are undertaking training.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ruskin Infant School, Wellingborough NN8 3EG

I am writing to let you know what we found out about your school when we came to visit you recently. Thank you for making us so welcome. We were pleased to see how much most of you enjoyed coming to school and think it is fun to learn. You work hard in lessons and the people who look after you at home will be pleased to hear that.

These are the main things we found out about your school

- You learn well in the nursery and the Reception classes because teaching is good.
- You have good opportunities to take part in out-of-school activities.
- Teachers plan exciting visits out and invite interesting visitors into school to make learning more fun.
- Most of you behave well all of the time but a few of the older pupils in Year 2 sometimes let the side down.
- You are all soundly looked after whilst you are in school.
- We were pleased to hear that you know a lot about keeping yourselves safe.
- The way the school is led and managed is satisfactory.

We have asked the school to do three things to improve the education you receive

- Make sure that teaching is always good in Years 1 and 2 so that you all make good progress.
- When marking your work, show you more clearly what you need to do to get better and reach your targets in literacy and mathematics.
- Make sure that the leaders for literacy and numeracy are more involved in making sure that you improve your skills in reading, writing and mathematics.

Keep working hard and having fun as you learn.

Best wishes

Nina Bee Lead inspector

13 February 2008



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Lead inspector