

Ramridge Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134155
Local Authority	Luton
Inspection number	328842
Inspection dates	17–18 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Stephen Walker

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	360
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Janet Waller
Headteacher	Mrs Hilary Goddard
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Turners Road North Luton Bedfordshire LU2 9AH
Telephone number	01582 729970
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Ramridge Primary School is large compared with other primary schools. It is situated in the north east part of Luton and serves pupils from the immediate Ashcroft and Ramridge estates. Over half the pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds with a significant number from Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage. A high percentage of pupils do not have English as their first language and over 21 languages are spoken in the school. Most pupils start at school with levels of knowledge and understanding that are well below those expected nationally. A considerable number of pupils enter the school with challenging behaviour and low social skills. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above the national average. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also above the national average. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is organised through the nursery and reception class. The school has been awarded the National Healthy School status, the Activemark and Artsmark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ramridge Primary School is providing a good standard of education in a challenging situation and is making a real difference for the pupils in the school. The headteacher provides energetic and forward-looking leadership, which drives the success of the school. There is a strong emphasis on inclusion, removing barriers to learning and encouraging self-esteem and confidence. Parents are generally very positive about the school. One parent wrote, 'I am very happy with the school and how it is managed. My child loves it here'.

A large number of pupils have learning difficulties, many experience high levels of social deprivation and some have complex needs. Pupils' movement into and out of the school during the year is high. Although standards are below average, attainment across the year groups demonstrates good achievement for most pupils, and there is a rigorous use of assessment information to track progress and to identify underachievement. Targeted support for pupils who require additional help and the emphasis on literacy and numeracy development are significantly raising achievement in the school. The very high standard of care, guidance and support is greatly supporting the general success of the pupils, whose personal development is good. They thoroughly enjoy their time at school and develop into positive individuals. One pupil said, 'we learn because it is fun and it is a very happy place'.

Teaching is good because the planning of lessons takes into account the different learning needs of the pupils. The positive attitudes of the pupils and the imaginative teaching strategies ensure that pupils make good progress. However, pupils are very dependent on the teachers and are not always given the opportunities to be more independent in their own learning. The curricular provision is good with an exceptional range of imaginative enrichment experiences. There are strong partnerships with the external support services and the school is gaining the confidence of the local community. Although parents and carers are supportive towards the school, they are not always fully involved in the learning of their children.

Leadership and management are good at all levels. Self-evaluation is accurate so that the headteacher and governors are well aware of the areas for development. The focus of the school improvement plan is to raise the standards across the school to ensure that they are in line with national expectations. The effective systems of pastoral care, the targeted academic intervention, the whole school focus on raising standards and the strong leadership indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve. Ramridge Primary School does not underestimate the scale of the challenge, but is gaining considerable success in supporting the progress and personal development of the pupils in its charge.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

On entry to the Nursery, the children's skills, knowledge and understanding are well below those expected for their age, especially in communication, language, literacy, personal and social skills. Children make a good start to their education because of the well-planned provision and consistently good teaching. They make good progress although overall attainment at the end of reception is still below expectations in all areas of learning. There is a high commitment of staff to children's welfare so that pupils' personal development is good. Adults in both the reception and nursery classes provide a secure, challenging and exciting environment where children learn quickly and happily. The school works very effectively with parents, carers and

outside agencies to ensure that children are cared for well. Induction and transition arrangements are excellent. A thorough and accurate observation of children ensures that teachers and support staff match teaching activities carefully to the full range of children's needs. There is a good balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities. The teachers use both the indoor and recently improved outdoor areas well to support all areas of learning. Staff in nursery and reception classes work well as a team under the dedicated and strong guidance of the Foundation Stage leader.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science across the school so that they are more in line with national expectations.
- Encourage pupils to work independently and take more responsibility for their own learning so that their progress accelerates.
- Build on the existing links with parents and carers to involve them more in the learning of their children.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Most pupils make good progress from their very low starting points. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress although standards are below average in reading, writing and mathematics. From Years 3 to 6, most pupils achieve good results in relation to their prior attainment. Although currently standards remain below average, in 2007 standards at the end of Year 6 were broadly average in English, mathematics and science. The school is very successful in supporting pupils who are learning English as an additional language. Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Eastern European pupils make the same good progress as other pupils, particularly in English lessons. Targeted support for pupils who require additional help is increasingly effective in raising levels of achievement. Evidence from pupils' work during the inspection shows that most groups make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' behave well and regularly reflect on their actions and on those of others. They make friends quickly and show respect for the different cultures within the school. Spiritual and moral development is good as the children conform to the 'golden rules' of the school. Their understanding of the importance of healthy living and staying safe is good. They are keen to take part in after school sports clubs and know the importance of a balanced diet. They take responsibility and participate in the school community through initiatives such as the school council. Year 5 pupils train to become play leaders and support younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 during break times. Pupils are active in fund raising for charities and contribute to the local community by taking part in activities such as the Luton Carnival. Most pupils really enjoy school and attendance, although still below the national average, is improving. This is because effective monitoring systems are in place and the school is winning the hearts and minds of its pupils. Pupils' basic skills and ability to work with others are developing satisfactorily. As a result, they are adequately prepared for their secondary education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Detailed planning in all lessons ensures that pupils make good progress. Teachers use assessment information well to make sure that activities match the range of pupils' needs particularly in literacy and numeracy. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they gain very effective additional help from teaching assistants and support classes. There is good provision in lessons for gifted and talented pupils through more challenging extension activities and effective support for pupils entering school with English as an additional language so that they are soon able to take a full part in lessons. Lesson intentions feature prominently at the beginning and end of all lessons so that pupils know exactly what they are learning and this supports their progress. In some lessons, there is insufficient opportunity for pupils to contribute to the lesson or to take responsibility for their own learning. Marking is regular and uses praise cleverly to raise pupils' self-confidence. However, teachers do not consistently use such comments to explain how pupils might improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school places a high emphasis on pupils' personal, social and health education. This helps them to behave well and make good progress in their personal development. Schemes of work in English and mathematics are adapted appropriately to meet pupils' different learning needs. The school is focusing on experimentation and exploration in science and this more practical approach is helping to raise standards. Teachers are using information and communication technology well in many subjects and this is increasing pupils' motivation and progress. The provision in the creative arts and sports is strong so that the school gains national awards in these areas. The extensive range of enrichment activities is outstanding and greatly enhances the pupils' enjoyment and experience of school. There are a large number of school clubs and a variety of educational visits. Frequent visitors to the school include artists, authors and theatre companies that greatly enrich the experience of the pupils. Year 5 and 6 pupils have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit to Dell Farm near Whipsnade, which contributes well to their personal and social skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is a considerable strength of the school. All staff encourage the pupils to develop their self-confidence and enjoy learning. As a result, pupils feel safe and well cared for. There is very good support for vulnerable children and those with challenging behaviour, particular through the 'Snowdrop' unit. Links with outside agencies are good and provide additional support for many pupils. Arrangements for child protection and for safeguarding pupils meet current requirements. Assessment procedures are thorough and the school uses the information well to target support for pupils who need extra help with their work. As a result, most pupils in the school achieve well. All pupils have personal targets in reading, writing and in mathematics. However, pupils are not familiar with the national curriculum levels at which they are working at, or the level to which they are aspiring.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides dynamic and collaborative leadership so that all staff work together on the continuous improvement of the school. Parents, teachers and governors respect her focused approach to promoting good standards of behaviour, enjoyment in learning and high levels of success for all pupils. The deputy headteacher and senior leadership team provides strong support for improvement across the school. The school improvement plan is a good working document with clear actions and achievable success criteria. Subject area co-ordinators are increasingly effective in their planning, supporting and monitoring roles although they are not fully focusing on whole school standards. The school is effective in recruiting staff and an imaginative programme of professional development supports teachers well in their work. Support staff are greatly valued and well integrated into the school. Governors are well informed about the school's progress and areas for development. They are increasingly involving themselves in the evaluating and monitoring process.

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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?	2
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which 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	2
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 learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

19 September 2008

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Ramridge Primary School, Luton, LU2 9AH

Thank you for making us so welcome and talking to us during the inspection. Ramridge Primary is providing a good standard of education and is giving you a good start in life. We think you look very smart in your uniforms and we like the purple signs around the school.

There are many positive things about your school:

- you try hard and make good progress in school
- you behave well and enjoy coming to school
- you show respect for the different cultures in your school
- you have a good headteacher, who leads your school well
- you are aware of the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles
- the teachers and staff provide very good support and care for you
- your teachers work hard to make lessons interesting for you
- the school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities
- the school is tidy and the classrooms are attractive.

We have asked your headteacher, the staff and the governors to do the following things to make your school even better:

- improve your standards in English, mathematics and science
- encourage you to work more independently and take more responsibility for your own learning so you make better progress
- build on the links with your parents and carers so that they can help you more with your work.

We hope that you will continue to work hard and enjoy learning. We wish you every success in your future education.

With very best wishes,

Stephen Walker

Lead inspector