

Ryton Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108355
Local Authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	337059
Inspection dates	25–26 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Gordon Potter

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jayne Lickess
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Haswell
Date of previous school inspection	24 April 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors spent 60% of inspection time looking at learning, visited 22 lessons taught by 8 teachers, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies and documentation, pupils' work, assessment data, monitoring records and strategic planning. They also scrutinised 111 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as questionnaires from staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the quality of provision for and the progress of the most able pupils
- if initiatives to improve the curriculum have helped to raise attainment
- how effectively the school helps pupils to develop an understanding of life in other countries and the multi-cultural make-up of modern British society.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average size school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools, Activemark, Arts Mark and Basic Skills awards.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Pupils behave well, are very keen to learn and make good progress because teachers make learning fun and engage them in a range of interesting activities. These are increasingly based on pupils' interests and help them see the links between subjects with a strong emphasis on developing skills in English and mathematics. The school has much useful data about pupils' skills and abilities and this information is well used in lessons, where the school's new 'Assertive Mentoring' programme is in place. For example, in English lessons in Year 6, teachers adapt work during the course of a lesson and pupils know clearly how to improve their work. However, this system is inconsistently used across the school and occasionally work for individuals lacks pace, pupils are engaged in low level activities and progress slows. Staff give very effective care and support which ensures that pupils' well-being and personal development are promoted well. As a result, pupils are happy, feel safe and know how to stay healthy. Good partnerships with outside agencies ensure extra support for pupils as required. Parents are supportive of the school and how it promotes pupils' social, moral and academic development.

Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are above average in all tested subjects, as is the percentage of pupils who achieve highly. The school recognised that some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities were making less rapid progress than their classmates and has acted positively to ensure that provision for these pupils improved. As a result, all groups of pupils make good progress from their starting points which are at least typical for their age and at times higher.

Senior leaders are very clear about what needs to be done to improve the school and leaders at all levels have the accountability and freedom to pursue innovation in teaching and the curriculum. However, the impact of such initiatives is not rigorously monitored to ensure that they are raising standards. Given the good quality of provision and good outcomes for pupils, the school's capacity to improve is good, and it provides good value for money.

Pupils say they would benefit from knowing the level at which they are working and what they need to do to attain the next level, especially in mathematics. They have a strong influence on what happens in school, a strong sense of how to help and support one another and a love of art and their local area. However, their understanding of religions, life in other countries and the multi-cultural make-up of modern British society is less well developed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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- By 2011 raise pupils' attainment, by:
 - improving the consistency of teaching to ensure that work is adapted during lessons so that there is appropriate pace and challenge for all pupils
 - ensuring that pupils know at what level they are working and how they can attain the next level, by embedding the good practice that exists in English in Year 6, in all classes, particularly in mathematics
 - ensuring that leaders at all levels rigorously monitor the impact on pupils' attainment of the initiatives intended to improve the quality of teaching and the curriculum.
- By 2011, develop pupils' understanding of faiths and cultures and the multi-cultural nature of modern British society.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

The extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their learning is good. Pupils behave well, are courteous, have good attitudes and relationships in lessons and are very keen to do well in their work. They enjoy their learning especially when they are involved in lively activities, such as using role-play to find out about Lord Armstrong or making water wheels to explore hydro-electric power.

Pupils make good progress. By Year 6 a good proportion of pupils move from the expected level to a level higher than typically expected for their age. Pupils also achieve well in sport and the arts and many are skilful writers. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are vulnerable and potentially at risk receive sensitive and effective support, make good progress and achieve well.

Pupils are very aware of the importance of a healthy diet and of taking plenty of exercise. This is reflected in their keen involvement and success in sporting activities, the high take-up of healthy school meals and the number of pupils who cycle to school. Pupils have respect for each other and for the adults in the school, and say they feel safe. They are confident that they know exactly what to do in the event of a concern.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school community, taking on a range of roles, including fruit sellers, house captains and school councillors. The latter initiated improvements to playground equipment which is enjoyed by all pupils. There are good links within the local area through a range of charities, participation in performances and activities to improve the local environment. Pupils have a good understanding of their local heritage, festivals such as Diwali and Chinese New Year and are developing an understanding of how fair trade can help to improve life in other countries. They say that they could know more about the world of work and how they can achieve high aspirations. However, their confidence in using information and communication technology, their above average attendance, good skills in working collaboratively and above average basic skills in English and mathematics, all equip them well for their future economic well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers guide pupils' learning well, using discussion, focused interventions and open questions to engage pupils and to stimulate their thinking. There is highly effective teaching of speaking, including drama, which encourages pupils to share, develop and record their ideas. This is helping to raise their confidence and their attainment in writing. In some lessons, interactive whiteboard technology is used well to engage pupils. However, while pupils have good skills in information and communication technology, teachers miss opportunities for pupils to apply these skills in writing and mathematics. Pupils' work is marked regularly and tells pupils how to improve, yet teachers miss opportunities to tell pupils at what level they are working. Teachers and teaching assistants support pupils well so that all groups make good progress.

The curriculum contributes to good achievement by offering pupils a broadening range of interesting activities which are increasingly based on pupils' interests and needs. For example, additional teaching of letter sounds for specific pupils is helping to improve their writing. The school provides many activities which enrich pupils' learning, for example, visits to St Mary's Lighthouse, making shadow puppets at Sunderland Museum and residential visits to Dukeshouse Wood. A visit to Cragside is providing the stimulus for a range of activities in drama, writing, science and design technology. There are other well-planned opportunities for pupils to write in subjects other than English, for example, a biography of Queen Victoria and leaflets about a safari park. There is a

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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strong focus on learning about Christianity and local history, and pupils visit churches and participate in local heritage festivals. All pupils learn French and participate in music workshops; they particularly enjoy physical education, singing and art and design. They participate enthusiastically and successfully in a good range of extra-curricular activities in sport and the arts, for example, cross-country running, choir and dance.

Staff know the needs of individual pupils well, so that pupils benefit from the sensitive and effective care and support they receive. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those who are vulnerable, is well managed and there are effective programmes for intervention and support so that all groups make good progress. There are strong links with a wide range of outside agencies and a range of strategies to support pupils who are, for example, dyslexic or who have visual or hearing impairments. Despite some parental concerns about the nature of mixed-age classes in the current Years 3 and 4, pupils settle well into school. There are good procedures for induction as pupils move through school and the very close relationships with the local secondary school ensure that pupils are confident moving on to the next phase of their education. The school identifies those pupils who are persistent absentees and works closely with families and through the local authority to encourage good attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear view of what needs to be done to make the school even better. Recent initiatives to improve the curriculum and use data to target work in English have helped to raise standards in writing. There is a shared ethos and commonality of purpose that allows the headteacher to offer freedom within accountability to subject leaders to develop their areas of responsibility. They are involved in decision making and contribute to the school improvement plan. However, initiatives are not rigorously monitored so there is not a clear view of how they have impacted on teaching or standards. The school is proud of its inclusive nature. It has very close and effective links with outside agencies to meet the individual needs of pupils from a range of backgrounds and their families. This shows its commitment to promoting equal opportunities, tackling stereotypes and ensuring that discrimination against any group is avoided at all times. The governing body has been instrumental in supporting the school. There are many new initiatives to offer more challenge to the school and to monitor its work more closely, but these have yet to be fully implemented.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet government requirements and satisfactorily secure pupils' safety. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. The sense of community in the school is strong and there are strong links with the local community. There is less awareness of life in other countries and a less clear understanding of Britain's diverse and multicultural society.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

A relatively high number of responses from parents and carers showed that support for the school is strong. Most parents and carers support the work of the school and the way in which it helps pupils to feel safe, be healthy and enjoy their learning. They appreciate the quality of teaching and the way the school meets their children's needs. However, a small minority of parents and carers are critical of the leadership and management of the school and the way that the school responds to their concerns. Comments indicate that this view relates largely to the arrangements for mixed-age classes in Years 3 and 4 and the late decisions that the school made about the organisation of this. Inspectors judge that the provision for the mixed-age classes is well-managed.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ryton Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 111 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 206 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	50	45	52	47	6	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	46	41	61	55	4	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	22	77	69	7	6	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	23	68	61	12	11	3	3
The teaching is good at this school	34	31	67	60	6	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	19	76	68	13	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	21	80	72	7	6	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	33	30	62	56	11	10	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	23	71	64	10	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	26	62	56	16	14	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	12	66	59	21	19	5	5
The school is led and managed effectively	20	18	61	55	20	18	5	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	25	71	64	8	7	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



1 March 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Ryton Junior School, Ryton, NE40 3AF

On behalf of the team, thank you so much for making us welcome when we inspected your school.

You go to a good school which knows what to do to be even better. The staff care for you very well. Teachers help you learn well because they try to make your lessons fun. The team was impressed by the pride you take in your work, how hard you work in lessons and by your artistic and sporting skills. You behave well, show respect for one another and look after one another admirably. You are polite and helpful and we enjoyed talking to you about your school. You told us that you look forward to coming to school because you like your teachers and appreciate the activities the school provides for you, such as visits and sports activities. Your parents and carers like the school very much.

I have asked your teachers to do the following things to help your school to improve:

- help you to attain even higher standards at the end of Year 6
- make sure that they use information about how well you are working so that the work you do is challenging and that you know the level of your work
- make sure they check that the new ideas they introduce to make your lessons better are working well.
- help you to learn more about the people from a range of cultures who live in Britain.

You can help by continuing to do your best and attending regularly. I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Potter

Lead inspector

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