

# Ramsey Manor Lower School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 109587              |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Bedfordshire        |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 337327              |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 23–24 November 2009 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Cheryl Thompson     |

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>                      | First  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community                                    |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4–9  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 272  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                           |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Adrian Markwell                              |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Heather Golding                              |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 6 March 2007                                 |
| <b>School address</b>                      | Manor Road<br>Barton-le-Clay<br>Bedford      |
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 18 lessons and held meetings with governors, members of staff, the school council and other groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at curriculum planning, information from the monitoring of pupils' progress and the quality of provision, samples of pupils' work, assessment and attendance data, and school improvement planning. Ninety-three questionnaires for parents and carers were evaluated.

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

- how well the specialist provision class meets the needs of its pupils
- how much progress pupils make in Years 3 and 4 and whether it is enough
- what the provision is like for the more able pupils in the school
- the extent to which governors know what they need to do to develop their roles further
- how successful the school has been in planning for the change of headteacher.

## Information about the school

Ramsey Manor is a larger than average first school serving the local area. In addition, the school has specialist provision for six pupils with a primary diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder. This facility serves the whole of central Bedfordshire with many of the pupils travelling some distance to the school. These pupils have their own classroom base but integrate into mainstream lessons as appropriate. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two parallel Reception classes and this parallel class arrangement continues through the school. The school has achieved the national Healthy School status. The headteacher is leaving the school at the end of the autumn term 2009. The deputy headteacher will be acting headteacher in the interim before a new headteacher is in post.

In February 2010, when new building work is complete, there will be an Extended Services facility on site including provision for pre-school children, wrap-around care, a Children's Centre and a community room. An after-school club currently operates on the premises but is not managed by the school's governing body. A separate report is available on the inspection of this provision.

**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

Ramsey Manor Lower School has moved from satisfactory effectiveness to good and has a good capacity to sustain this improvement. It has a number of notable features and strengths.

Pupils work and play happily together and thoroughly enjoy their time in school. They work hard in lessons, achieve well and make good progress. Learning is fun and motivates pupils well so that they reach above average standards by the end of Year 4.

Children start in Reception with knowledge and skills a little below those expected for their age. They make a good start to their education and progress well. By the end of Reception, in most years, standards are above those expected for children of their age.

In the specialist provision, pupils make good progress and achieve well. Their attendance is well above average and demonstrates their enthusiasm for school. For these pupils, links with a wide range of outside agencies are excellent and help staff provide the right support for pupils and their families.

The school's 'values' education has a strong impact. Pupils' social skills, respect and consideration for each other are very well developed. Their behaviour is good and, at times, excellent. These qualities, together with their above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics, prepare them well for their future.

The quality of teaching is good. Generally the pace of work is brisk and productivity levels are good. Teaching assistants provide good support, especially for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, which means these pupils achieve as well as the others.

The curriculum is well planned with information and communication technology (ICT) used very effectively in many subjects.

The school provides excellent care, guidance and support for all its pupils and works effectively with other agencies to support individuals and their families. Safeguarding procedures are robust.

The headteacher and senior staff have a good grasp of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Encouraged by the headteacher, senior leaders have developed their management roles so that they can continue to lead improvement in the interim period before a newly appointed headteacher takes up post. Governors are very supportive of the school but are not yet sufficiently analytical about aspects of the school's work. For example, they have not analysed how well the school is promoting community cohesion. Four main areas stand out as the key to continuing the school's success.

While teaching is good overall, teaching for pupils in Years 3 and 4 is not consistently

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good and target setting, though improving, is not as aspirational as in other year groups.

In some lesson introductions, teaching does not always provide enough challenge for more able pupils.

In the Reception Year, two methods are used to help children learn letter sounds, which slows progress for some children, especially the more able.

Governors have more to do to become fully and systematically involved in evaluating the school.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the rate of progress and standards in Years 3 and 4 by:
  - monitoring rigorously teaching and learning to ensure consistently good teaching
  - refining target setting further to ensure targets are challenging, especially for more able pupils.
  - Ensure more able pupils have work to match their abilities in lesson introductions by:
    - including in teachers' planning what it is teachers expect these pupils to learn or reinforce in the session.
  - Improve the rate at which children learn and use letter sounds by:
    - re-thinking the use of the two approaches to teaching letter sounds in order to increase the number of letter sounds children learn, especially in their first term at school.
  - Develop governors' roles further by:
    - prioritising their planned development to ensure they gain a clear understanding of what needs to be done to promote community cohesion beyond the school and local community.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

From their start in school to the time they leave in Year 4, pupils' achievement and progress are good. Different groups of pupils make similar progress and also achieve well. Attainment in national assessments in Year 2 has risen exceptionally well since the last inspection and is now high. However, this high attainment is not fully sustained through Years 3 and 4. Pupils' current work and the school's tracking show standards to be above average, with more able pupils making satisfactory progress in reading and writing, rather than good. One reason for this is that there is an inconsistency in the amount of challenge in the work set. Target setting for the more able pupils is also not as aspirational as it could be in Years 3 and 4, except in mathematics where pupils in Year 4 are on track to attain high standards at the end of the year. Across the school,

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standards in ICT are above average and pupils make good use of their skills in subjects such as in English, where in one lesson pupils had to locate information about weather, read it and make bullet points on the most important facts. In this lesson pupils applied their skills very well and many included illustrations in their text.

Pupils are very positive about all the school has to offer. Comments such as 'it's the best school in the world' and 'everyone is friendly and it's safe here' were echoed by a great many. Attendance is above average and pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves fit and healthy and have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. Through the school's 'values' education, pupils develop a very clear understanding of values such as respect, freedom and responsibility. They have a satisfactory understanding of how cultural heritage can affect how people choose to live their lives.

Pupils in the specialist provision make particularly good progress in developing social skills, communicating with and working alongside others. The kindness and consideration shown by pupils in the mainstream classes for their friends from the specialist provision is impressive and has an excellent impact on their enjoyment of mainstream lessons.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>   | 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        |
| <b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>   | <b>1</b> |
| <b>Pupils' behaviour</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>   | 2        |
| <b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>  | <b>2</b> |

<sup>1</sup> 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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## How effective is the provision?

Teaching quality has improved to a good level throughout the school. Most lessons are of good quality and planned well to provide work that is carefully matched to individual needs. Such good teaching was observed in a Year 3 class where the wide range of articles to estimate, compare and weigh captured the enthusiasm of boys in particular and made them think hard. Sometimes, in Years 3 and 4, satisfactory teaching includes too much sitting on the carpet and too little challenge for more able pupils at the start of lessons.

Pupils in the specialist provision have teaching tailored to their complex needs. For some this means that very basic speech and language skills are taught with precision in their class base and they join the mainstream classes for physical education lessons or music. Others have appropriate work planned for them within mainstream literacy or mathematics lessons so that they can follow a similar theme. In these situations, teaching assistants provide expert support to ensure success.

The school has improved its curriculum by introducing more visits and visitors, following creative themes which link subjects together and widening its range of clubs. Evidence from pupils' learning logs indicates that they frequently continue to follow up their interests at home and show high levels of motivation. Good links with the middle school and sports partnership provide additional opportunities, especially in sports. The school knows that the next step is to ensure that even better links are made between subjects such as history and geography with English and mathematics.

The staff's good knowledge of their pupils means that pupils feel a strong sense of security and are adamant that they are safe in school. They know that if they have any concerns or anxieties they will be dealt with immediately by staff. Parents speak highly of the care and support the school provides for themselves and their children. Pupils in the specialist provision also receive excellent care, guidance and support. The special educational needs co-ordinator has ensured that all staff are well aware of the specific needs of individuals and how to manage them. Pupils' small step achievements are carefully documented, shared with parents and the next steps planned so that all are clear about the methods to be used to ensure success.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The quality of teaching</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The use of assessment to support learning  | 2        |
| <b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>   | <b>1</b> |

## How effective are leadership and management?

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The headteacher sets high expectations for staff and pupils. She has determinedly encouraged and enabled the school's leaders at all levels to develop their roles. They have responded very positively and all share the same ambition to succeed and continue the school's good improvement. Self-evaluation is good. Most leaders have monitored teaching and learning across the school, consequently, they are well-informed and aspirational for their areas of responsibility and know what needs to be done to improve further. The special educational needs co-ordinator frequently checks on the pupils from the specialist provision when they are in mainstream lessons but, as yet, has had few formal opportunities for observing the overall provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, individual education plans are monitored rigorously to ensure pupils make good progress and, if they are not, doing something about it.

Governors have a very clear picture of what they intend to do to develop their role further. For example, they know that they need to make parents more aware of who the governors are and what they do. They recognise that there is more to do to promote community cohesion particularly in developing pupils' awareness of Britain as a multi-cultural society.

Pupils have equal opportunities because staff work diligently to break down any barriers to learning and tackle any discrimination. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous, updated regularly and known by all. The school is a cohesive community and is beginning to promote links with the local community and beyond.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

**Early Years Foundation Stage**



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

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Good leadership and management ensure all adults work as an effective team who have children's welfare and progress at the heart of what they do. Each child is known very well by staff. Children learn in a stimulating, well organised and caring environment. Good links with parents and pre-school providers mean that children quickly settle into school routines. For example, in an outstanding snack session children demonstrated their good understanding of the need to wash their hands before handling food and then proceeded to follow a simple 'recipe' for making their own snacks from a good range of fruit and vegetables. Good planning includes children's ideas and suggestions and provides a good balance of guided activities and independent learning. Currently, though, staff do not always keep a check on which activities children take part in so do not always make sure children are encouraged to have a go at an activity they are unsure of. Basic literacy and numeracy skills are taught thoroughly. The school uses two methods of teaching letter formation and letter sounds. Each method is good but, when used together, they slow the rate at which children learn and use letter sounds to help them write and read.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>                   | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:   |          |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage                          | 2        |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage                       | 2        |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2        |

**Views of parents and carers**

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and all it provides. They particularly like the 'values' education the school promotes and feel that their children learn a lot from this. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed a variety of concerns. Of these, a few felt that the school did not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found behaviour in school to be good and also spoke with several groups of pupils who also felt the behaviour was good. A small number of parents and carers felt that their child was not making enough progress. Inspectors found that some more able pupils could make even better progress. A small number of parents and carers felt that the school did not take account of their concerns and suggestions. Inspectors found that there were many ways for parents and carers to communicate suggestions and concerns to the school and that the school dealt with these effectively.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ramsey Manor Lower 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 93 completed questionnaires, representing 95 families by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 272 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements  | Strongly Agree |    | Agree |    | Disagree |    | Strongly disagree |   |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
|   | Total          | %  | Total | %  | Total    | %  | Total             | % |
| My child enjoys school  | 69             | 74 | 24    | 26 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe  | 71             | 76 | 22    | 24 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress   | 47             | 51 | 46    | 49 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school   | 49             | 53 | 38    | 41 | 4        | 4  | 0                 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school   | 49             | 53 | 42    | 45 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning  | 43             | 46 | 47    | 51 | 1        | 1  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle   | 50             | 54 | 42    | 45 | 1        | 1  | 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) | 39             | 42 | 45    | 48 | 3        | 3  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs  | 44             | 47 | 45    | 48 | 1        | 1  | 1                 | 1 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour  | 42             | 45 | 38    | 41 | 9        | 10 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns   | 42             | 45 | 46    | 49 | 4        | 4  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively   | 44             | 47 | 45    | 48 | 3        | 3  | 0                 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school   | 58             | 62 | 33    | 35 | 1        | 1  | 0                 | 0 |

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul> |
| 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.**



25 November 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Ramsey Manor Lower School, Barton-le-Clay, Bedford. MK45 4NS

Thank you so much for welcoming us to your school. My particular thanks to those of you who sat and talked to inspectors at lunchtimes. You shared your thoughts and ideas about the school with us, and this helped us decide what your school is like.

We think you go to a good school. You told us that you enjoy school and we could see why, particularly when we saw the interesting work you have done and your super computer suite. You told us the 'teachers are fantastic' and everyone is friendly. We agree that teaching is good and all the adults care about you a great deal and work hard on your behalf. We could see that you behave well in lessons. You think about how well you have completed your work and try to reach the targets your teachers set for you. We noted that standards are above average and you are making good progress but we think that the older children may be able to do even better, especially in reading and writing.

Your headteacher and senior teachers provide good leadership. I have asked them and the governors to do four things to make your school even better:

- in Years 3 and 4, make sure your that all the teaching you get is good and that teachers set targets that are just a little harder to help you do even better in reading and writing
- make sure that in the beginning parts of your lessons everyone has to think hard to answer questions or work things out, including more able pupils
- make sure that Reception children learn letter sounds at a faster rate so that it helps them with reading and writing
- make sure governors develop their roles further and make sure you learn more about the multi-cultural society we live in.

Your school is successful, not only because of what the adults bring to it, but also because of your contributions. You are very positive about learning and we were very impressed with your good manners and how welcoming you are to visitors. Thank you again for your help and all good wishes for your continued success.

Yours sincerely

Cheryl Thompson

Lead Inspector

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