

Ramsey Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110686
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	337548
Inspection dates	9–10 December 2009
Reporting inspector	John Foster

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Candy Dodsley
Headteacher	Mrs Deborah Hannaford
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2007
School address	Station road Ramsey Huntingdon
Telephone number	01487 812500
Fax number	01487 710821
Email address	head@ramsey.cambs.sch.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2009

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's development plan, the governing body minutes, the headteacher's records of monitoring teaching and learning and children's records. Analysis was made of the 52 parental questionnaires returned.

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

- the pupils' attainment when they start at the school and the progress they make during their time there
- the range and quality of out-of-school activities in meeting pupils' needs
- because of difficulties in recruiting governors, how well the governing body monitors the school's performance
- how aware pupils are of other cultures.

Information about the school

The school is about average size, though the number on roll has fallen significantly over the past two years. Pupils start in Year 3, with most having attended the local infant school prior to entry. Most pupils are of White British heritage with a few from minority ethnic groups. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Many more than is usual nationally have statements of special educational needs. Of this group of pupils, about one half is identified as having behavioural, social or emotional needs. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The school holds the Healthy Schools Award, the ActiveMark and the Basic Skills Award.

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 where pupils are cared for exceptionally well and make good progress in their learning. The headteacher leads the school decisively, with a clear and positive vision for developing it further. She is well supported in this by the senior leadership team and governors.

The school's assessments over the past two years and the current work by pupils in Year 3, show clearly that most pupils start with average attainment overall. Many have considerable learning, behavioural and emotional difficulties. The latest unvalidated data show that the 2009 Year 6 group attained broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science, overall.

Pupils of all abilities in all year groups achieve well, enjoy school and are making good progress. The major reason for this is because they are taught well. This is an improvement from the previous inspection when teaching was identified as satisfactory. Since that time the school has experienced problems in maintaining a settled teaching team, but the current group of teachers are now well established, providing consistently good and outstanding teaching. Pupils make very good progress in reading, but do not achieve as well in writing as they are not given enough opportunities to write for a range of reasons. Evidence from pupils' books shows that they are currently making good progress in English and mathematics. The school has set challenging targets for pupils and teachers' assessments of pupils' progress indicate that they are on track to achieve these. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in relation to their starting points and abilities. Teachers assess pupils' work accurately and use the information gained well in planning work to help pupils to maintain their current good progress.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. They concentrate and work hard in lessons. They recognise the excellent support they receive from the staff and are not afraid to ask for help when they need it. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those identified as having particular social or emotional difficulties, receive outstanding levels of support in learning. When a group of pupils was asked how the school could be improved, one boy stated categorically: 'It couldn't be. I can't think of anything to make it better.' The other pupils agreed with him. Since the previous inspection, the school has introduced strategies to improve behaviour. These have been very successful and pupils' good behaviour has had a positive effect on their attitudes to learning.

The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are outstanding and pupils know what they must do to ensure their own and others' safety. The curriculum has a very extensive

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

range of activities beyond the school day which enhance pupils' education. Pupils support each other well at work and play and are very aware of right and wrong. Their spiritual and cultural development is enhanced well by regular opportunities to participate in art and musical activities. The school's displays of pupils' art and the work they have completed whilst studying a range of religions promotes this well. The care provided for pupils is outstanding. Pupils' welfare is first and foremost at the heart of the school's work.

The headteacher provides strong leadership and clear direction for the school which is shared by staff and governors. The positive impact of the recently formed leadership team is already being seen in the monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance. The school is aware that, while pupils know much about their local community, they are less aware of communities beyond the immediate locality, particularly the rich mix of cultures found in Britain. The school is well placed to maintain its improvement because it is led well and has demonstrated the ability to improve in many areas since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching has improved, pupils' behaviour and attitudes are much better and the levels of care given to pupils are improved.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing and mathematics, by:
 - giving pupils opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and to use their numeracy skills in different subjects.
 - Improving pupils' awareness of cultures other than their own by:
 - developing an action plan for the promotion of community cohesion, including establishing links with other schools and communities.

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

Pupils' reading skills are developing at a fast rate, but standards in writing lag behind those in reading. In mathematics and English, standards fell slightly in 2009 and the school has successfully implemented strategies to bring about improvement. The school has concentrated on developing pupils' reading through a programme of support, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for the few pupils from minority ethnic groups. While progress has been satisfactory over recent years, the school's tracking of pupils' progress and their current work show that most pupils are now making good progress. In lessons seen, pupils concentrate well and work hard to produce their best work because teachers have high expectations of them and they make learning fun. The work produced by pupils clearly confirms the teachers' assessments of pupils' good progress. The school has undertaken a recent review of the curriculum and identified that writing and numeracy skills are not used enough across the curriculum. Initiatives introduced to remedy these weaknesses are too recent to have impacted yet on standards.

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 relate well to each other and there are few incidents of inappropriate behaviour. In lessons pupils' behaviour is good overall and often it is excellent because of the effective ways in which teachers manage the pupils. Pupils contribute well to their communities, particularly within school. The school council has had a positive effect on their environment and the 'young leaders' group support and help all children in the playground, ensuring that they have friends to play with. Pupils readily undertake tasks within the school using their own initiative. They were involved in arranging for the sale of healthy snacks for pupils at break times. Within the wider community pupils take part in the town's activities. For example, the choir joins the local operatic group for a Christmas concert, and shows their 'Molly Dancing' skills at local festivities. Pupils participate enthusiastically in the physical education lessons and other sporting activities provided for them. They know that they should eat healthy food and most do so. Pupils told inspectors that they feel totally safe in school and that there is always an adult available if they need to talk over any problem. While attendance is satisfactory overall, it is improving because the school has worked hard to ensure that pupils attend regularly.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	1
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

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

How effective is the provision?

Of lessons seen on inspection the vast majority were good or outstanding with about a half being outstanding. It is because they are taught so well that pupils are now making good progress. The quality of teaching is strong because the teachers know their pupils' needs well and plan meticulously for each individual to make the best progress possible. This is done through effective assessment of pupils' work and staff using the information gained to identify the most appropriate levels to be achieved by each individual. The good teaching is a significant improvement from the previous inspection,. Where teaching was not as successful, the pupils were not given clear enough direction to achieve what they were to learn. The pace of learning in the best lessons was brisk, though pertinent to pupils' capabilities. Throughout the school, teachers have high expectations of pupils and, because of the mutual respect, pupils meet these expectations.

The school has recently undertaken a review of its curriculum. The findings led to a linking together of subjects offering greater opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in many lessons. This was effective, for example, when groups of pupils produced films about their visit to Colchester as part of their studies about the Romans. Visitors and visits are used well to support pupils' learning. Pupils have many opportunities to extend their learning through the many clubs made available for them by all the teachers and some support staff. The scope of the extra-curricular activities is wide, including photography, calligraphy and languages.

The staff know their pupils very well. Where pupils have specific emotional or social needs, they are given exceptional support to help them to overcome the problems. They are encouraged to discuss their problems with the staff and outside agencies are used excellently to give additional support to vulnerable pupils. Detailed records are kept of all incidents and they are followed up meticulously. Records relating to the care of vulnerable pupils are detailed and the school has very good links to outside agencies to help support these pupils. Thorough risk assessments are undertaken for activities within the school and for visits. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are given specific targeted support to help their learning. An important aspect of this is the outstanding nurture group, where vulnerable pupils and their families are given significant help. Pupils are involved well in identifying their targets and how they are to achieve them.

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

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

The effectiveness of care, guidance and support

1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's excellent leadership is a major reason for the school's effective support for pupils' academic, social and emotional development. She has a clear vision for improving the school and inspires her staff to work alongside her in the most effective way possible. She knows the strengths of her staff and uses them effectively, while ensuring that any limitations in the staff's expertise are overcome through well-planned support for them. The effective monitoring of teaching and learning by senior managers identifies specific areas for development by the teachers. The senior leadership team is having a positive impact on improving provision and raising standards as shown in pupils' books, the school's monitoring records and in lessons seen. The deputy headteacher was newly appointed in September and already has made a significant impact on the school through her involvement in planning for the school's future and her leadership and evaluation of performance within Years 3 and 4. Subject leaders, particularly of literacy and numeracy, monitor their subjects well and support other staff in ensuring that appropriate work is planned and delivered in order to raise standards. The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils receive their entitlement to a good quality education and are fully included in school activities.

The governing body works well with the headteacher to monitor the school's performance. Governors are linked to subject leaders in order to monitor the subjects and the governors' evaluation committee is fully involved in leading strategic planning for the school's future. The school overcomes difficulties in recruiting governors as well as possible. It works hard to establish secure relationships with parents in promoting their children's education and well-being. The school's arrangements for promoting community cohesion are satisfactory. While local links are well established, there is limited development to help pupils to understand cultures beyond the local area.

The school has established effective partnerships with other schools and with a range of outside agencies to support pupils' learning. Good arrangements for transfer to secondary education are well established and the school enjoys good relationships with its fellow cluster schools, undertaking many activities with them. For example, the young leaders from Year 5 run lunchtime activities for pupils at the local infant school and pupils from the cluster join together at the local secondary school when they enjoy, for example, scientific activity days.

All policies relating to safeguarding pupils are robust and up-to-date. They are reviewed regularly and staff ensure that they are fully implemented. The school is highly aware of the problems experienced by individual children and uses all means at its disposal, through a range of outside agencies, to deal very effectively with them. The school has three members of the teaching staff as trained and designated persons for child protection and all governors and staff have been trained in the relevant procedures.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
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	1
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

The very large majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire are positive about the school. They are happy with what it provides for their children and the support it gives them. A small minority of parents who responded felt that the school did not give enough information about their children's progress or how they could help them to improve. The same proportion felt that the school does not prepare their child well for the future. These responses do not reflect inspection findings.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ramsey 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 52 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 202 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	42	25	48	4	8	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	71	13	25	2	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	21	40	26	50	5	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	33	28	54	4	8	3	6
The teaching is good at this school	20	38	26	50	3	6	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	42	23	44	7	13	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	38	29	56	2	4	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)	15	29	29	56	5	10	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	38	27	52	4	8	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	38	25	48	3	6	3	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	35	26	50	4	8	3	6
The school is led and managed effectively	24	46	21	40	3	6	2	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	48	21	40	3	6	2	4

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.



11 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ramsey Junior School, Ramsey, PE26 1JA

Thank you for the welcome you gave to the inspection team when we came to inspect your school recently. I would like to thank you for helping us with our work and to tell you what we found out about your school.

You are very fortunate to go to a good school where the headteacher and staff care for you so well. Your headteacher, staff and governors work hard to make your lives enjoyable. You play your part well by supporting each other in your work and play, and by behaving sensibly around school and particularly in lessons. You told us that you feel safe in school and that there is always an adult to talk to if you have a problem. The teaching you receive is good and sometimes it is excellent. This is because your teachers plan exciting and challenging work, and you try hard at the tasks and make good progress.

Your school council does a good job for you and you can all be proud of your contribution to making the school so successful.

In order to make your school even better, we have asked your headteacher, the staff and governors to:

- ? help you to reach even higher standards in mathematics and writing, by giving you more opportunities to apply your skills in different subjects
- ? make sure that you know more about the lives of people from the many different cultural backgrounds in this country and in the rest of the world.

You can help the staff by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

John Foster

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.