

Ruskin Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121889
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	340035
Inspection dates	17–18 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jenny Boyes
Headteacher	Heather Eley
Date of previous school inspection	12-13 February 2008
School address	Ruskin Avenue Wellingborough Northamptonshire NN8 3EG
Telephone number	01933 675430
Fax number	01933 675678
Email address	bursar@ruskin-inf.northants-ed.gov.uk
Registered childcare provision	Ruskin Childcare
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	16
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	Not previously inspected.

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

Age group	Error! Reference source not found.3–7
Inspection date(s)	17–18 September 2009
Inspection number	340035

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation which included the school's analysis of pupils' progress, teachers' lesson plans, the school's improvement plan and also pupils' work. In addition, the responses of 69 parents' questionnaires were analysed and their comments taken into account.

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

- How strong is current learning particularly for higher attaining pupils?
- What are the factors that have led to more consistency in the quality of teaching and what needs to be done to make teaching consistently good?
- What are the key improvements in pupils' personal development that leads to a strengthening of the school's evaluation in these areas?
- How well do senior and middle leaders contribute to the school's evaluation processes and what is the impact of their work on pupils' learning?

Information about the school

Ruskin Infant is smaller than most infant schools and it shares a site with a partner junior school. Most pupils live in the immediate vicinity though an increasing number come from further afield and this has led the school to be oversubscribed. About three quarters of the pupils are of White British backgrounds and there are a few pupils from a wide range of other ethnic backgrounds. Of these, 13 are at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is double the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties who mainly have either speech, language and communication difficulties or behavioural, social and emotional difficulties, is above average. The school has gained the Healthy Schools and Sports Activemark awards.

The school provides childcare for up to 24 two to seven year old children from 08.00– 18.00 for 50 weeks each year. Currently there are 16 children on roll. This children's centre child care, which is part of Penrith Drive Children's Centre, is managed by the governing body. In addition, there is a breakfast and after-school club which is not managed by the governing body and is subject to a separate inspection.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Ruskin Infant continues to provide a satisfactory standard of education as it did at the time of the previous inspection. However, there have been improvements. At the heart of its work is a commitment to welcoming and including pupils with a wide range of needs. In particular, the staff work closely and well with a wide range of agencies to meet the needs of its vulnerable pupils. As a result of this good quality care and support, pupils behave well, develop positive attitudes to learning and forge good relationships with adults and their peers. Levels of attendance have improved since the previous inspection although they are still barely at the national average. Pupils' achievement is strengthening and this has led to a lifting of standards at the end of Year 2. This is because the quality of teaching is frequently good, particularly in Year 2, and this boosts pupils' learning. However, achievement remains satisfactory overall because there are some inconsistencies in teaching which means that some more able pupils do not progress as well as they might, particularly in mathematics.

Teaching has improved mainly as a result of the recent focus on strengthening the assessment of pupils' work. Ensuring that pupils have a clear view of when they have met lesson objectives and what they need to learn next is paying dividends. This is particularly the case in Year 2 where teachers' marking is of high quality and also because pupils regularly assess their own work. The school recognises that these good processes now need to be applied consistently in all classes. Provision for pupils who have learning and behavioural difficulties is particularly good. The needs of these pupils are identified clearly and they are given effective and sensitive support from a team of skilled teaching assistants. In consequence, they learn well and make good progress towards their individual targets. Even though the proportion of pupils gaining higher levels of attainment has increased, in some lessons activities are not challenging enough for some higher attaining pupils.

High levels of care are complemented by strengths in the partnership with parents. The school provides very well for parents, many of whom commented on how well the school helps them to develop their children's learning. This is because there is a dedicated member of staff to support families and there are regular literacy and family learning activities. In addition, the new Ruskin Childcare provides well for parents who are confident that they can leave their children in the safety of the staff.

The school has a good capacity for further improvement. This is because the headteacher continues to provide good and effective leadership. Working in close

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

partnership with the deputy headteacher she has steered good improvements since the previous inspection. Senior staff have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and information gained leads to a good quality improvement plan. In addition, they are supported well by subject leaders who now play a much more important role in the school's good procedures for self evaluation. Governance is satisfactory because too much responsibility is placed in the hands of a few governors who regularly attend meetings. Nonetheless, governors ensure that statutory requirements are met in full.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make the quality of teaching more consistently good by:
 - embedding the good assessment for learning strategies across all classrooms
 - ensuring that work is consistently challenging for all groups of pupils, particularly higher attaining pupils.

- Strengthen the role of governors by:
 - increasing the numbers of governors
 - ensuring that governors become more directly involved in the procedures for checking provision and pupils' progress and achievement.

- Increase the proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels in mathematics.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enjoy school and learning. They flourish in their personal development. By the time that they leave school, they have a good understanding of right and wrong. They enjoy working in groups and relish taking responsibility as reflected in their involvement with a group of parents in developing nearby waste land into a garden. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe. Although pupils understand the importance of conducting a healthy lifestyle including the importance and value of exercise, this is not always reflected in the food they eat.

Pupils respond with interest and enthusiasm in most lessons where they are actively engaged and when staff manage them sensitively and well. As a result, pupils of all abilities make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs and those at an early stage of learning English make good progress because the provision is well-tailored to meet their needs. Good learning is less evident in satisfactory lessons when pupils, on occasion, are required to sit for too long or the teacher has not sufficiently established good class management strategies. Consequently, although learning in many lessons observed was good and is strong in

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

Year 2, it is satisfactory overall. The focus on strengthening the learning of higher attaining pupils is bearing fruit. Results in national tests, although variable over the past three years, are improving. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels is increasing due to the good focus on strengthening pupils' learning although it remains weaker in mathematics.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Even though teaching remains satisfactory it has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers generally plan lessons well. Much more notice is now taken of ensuring that more able pupils are presented with work that is challenging. In most classes, teachers manage pupils well and ensure that the work set is varied and interesting. In addition, there has been an improvement in how well assessments are used to support learning. Teachers invariably use success criteria to help children to understand what they need to do and pupils say that this helps their learning. However, on occasion, pupils' behaviour is not managed well and this limits progress in these few lessons. Staff are adept at providing good opportunities for pupils to extend their speaking and listening skills. In one good lesson, for example, the teacher used a good drama activity to help pupils to understand aspects of a character in a book by role playing a 'freeze frame' from an illustration in the book being studied.

Since the last inspection, staff have been developing creative links between different subjects in the curriculum. This has been a success though the work has yet to be

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

fully completed and bedded down in all classes. The extra-curricular activities are very good with a well-attended wide range of clubs for pupils to enjoy.

The school is rightly proud of the way it helps vulnerable pupils. Staff organise a wide range of successful extra programmes and activities and can point to significant successes in helping pupils overcome difficult periods through work within school. The recently introduced ‘nurture’ group is particularly successful at supporting pupils who find social situations more challenging, and those who are immature socially. Sessions are led expertly by a teacher and teaching assistant who help these pupils to meet with success and boost their confidence and self esteem.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The staff work closely as a team and senior staff’s commitment to continuous improvement is shared by all. Morale is high and there is a positive climate of mutual support throughout the school. Responsibility is shared appropriately and good support is provided for new members of staff. Staff are keen to work closely together to evaluate each others’ teaching and to share successes. Systems to safeguard pupils and tackle inequalities are thorough. There has been a concerted effort to ensure that there has been improvement in the learning both for vulnerable and higher attaining pupils. This has been aided by increased rigour in tracking pupils’ progress and setting targets for improvements. This has helped to strengthen pupils’ learning and also to provide a clear means through which teachers can be held to account for their pupils’ progress.

There is a strong sense of community cohesion. Care has been taken to ensure that the school’s provision responds to the community’s needs and strengthens its position in the community. For example, there is to be a ‘Fun Day’ during a weekend following the inspection in which the infant and junior schools are showcasing the area’s community events.

Governors have made some improvements since the previous inspection but are not as effective as they might be. This is partly due to the fact that there have been a number of vacancies on the governing body for some years. This has resulted in over-burdening a small group of governors. Governors recognise that they do not yet monitor and check the work of the school sufficiently well to enable them to provide challenge for the headteacher and staff.

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

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	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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children receive a good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Even though many of the children had only been in school for one or two days at the time of the inspection, they were settled and enjoying the good range of activities prepared for them. This is because children are well cared for and the very good induction procedures enable children to make a happy start to their education. Behaviour is good and children develop very positive attitudes to work which are reflected in their obvious enjoyment of everything they do. They talk enthusiastically about their experiences. Most children enter the Ruskin Childcare or the Nursery with skills and knowledge that are below those expected for their age. A significant number have low levels of language, communication and social skills. Children make good progress in the registered childcare and Nursery and Reception class provision. By the time that they enter Year 1, a small majority achieve the expected levels particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. However, their language and communication skills and understanding of shape, space and measures are below average. Teaching is consistently good because it is firmly based on developing children's early language and social skills in a creative way this both in the indoor and outdoor learning spaces. For example, children thoroughly enjoyed attending the petrol station to re-fill their wheeled toys with petrol and they responded very positively to the good level of questioning by the practitioner who encouraged good speaking skills from even the most timid children. A particular strength is the way the adults observe children to assess and identify individual needs. This informs their planning for activities and promotes well-focused support and challenge for the more able. Particularly good use is made of the well-resourced outside areas to extend learning beyond the classroom although staff recognise that

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 space for adventurous play with wheeled toys is limited. The registered childcare provision in Ruskin Childcare fully complies with the requirements for registration.

Levels of care in the Ruskin Childcare are good because staff work closely together as a team and good levels of attention are paid to ensuring that children are supported well and helped to feel safe. Leadership and management are good because the leader’s knowledge of how young children learn is applied well in practice throughout all the rooms and there is a good level of consistency whether the children are two, three or four years old.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

The school clearly enjoys the confidence and support of those parents who returned the questionnaire. They are unanimous in saying that their children enjoy school and are kept safe. A number of individual comments reflected the good care, support and guidance given to pupils particularly for those that have special educational needs. The inspectors agree with these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ruskin Infant 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 69 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	42	61	27	39	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	57	30	43	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	31	45	35	51	3	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	43	34	49	4	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	33	48	35	51	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	33	48	33	48	3	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	49	34	49	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)	30	43	39	57	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	26	38	41	59	1	1	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	36	38	55	5	7	3	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	35	43	62	1	1	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	25	36	42	61	0	0	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	33	48	35	51	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 all 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

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 pupils' 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.

22 September 2009

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Ruskin Infant School, Wellingborough, NN8 3EG

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school to see you at work. You were very polite and we enjoyed talking with those of you we met. We were very impressed with your celebration assembly and pleased to see how much you enjoyed it. We were also very pleased to hear about how you enjoy growing your potatoes in the garden.

Your school gives you a satisfactory education. All the adults look after you exceptionally well and help you to feel safe and happy. Your school is warm and welcoming to you, your parents and also to visitors like us. Your teachers are working hard to make sure that the lessons that they plan for you are interesting and enjoyable though sometimes you are asked to sit and listen for too long. Your behaviour is good, you enjoy school and playing with your friends. We know that you are particularly pleased with all the opportunities provided for you to attend after-school clubs.

In order to make sure your school gets better, we have asked your headteacher, governors and staff to make sure that:

- your teachers make all your lessons are as good as the best by ensuring that you always know what you have to do to be successful in lessons and that those of you who find learning easy are given work that makes you think
- your governors get more governors for the school and make sure that they are involved in checking how well you are doing
- more of you reach higher levels in mathematics.

You can continue to help by working hard. We hope that you enjoy your future learning.

Yours faithfully

Keith Sadler
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.

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](tel:08456404045), or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.