

Inspection of Ruskin Infant School

Ruskin Avenue, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire NN8 3EG

Inspection dates: 26–27 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are enthusiastic about their friendly school. They feel safe and know that staff listen to them. Pupils enjoy their learning because teachers plan exciting experiences, such as making charcoal at forest school. However, the curriculum does not make sure that pupils build on their knowledge. Not all teachers are clear about what pupils must learn.

Leaders want pupils to be happy and helpful. They have ensured that pupils know the importance of the school's values. Pupils show respect and know that aspiration is about going for their goals. They enjoy trips to places such as stately homes.

Pupils enjoy being 'buddies' and helping others on the playground. They are responsible school councillors. They respect differences and are clear that they are all special. Pupils said: 'It doesn't matter if you are peach or brown, Ugandan or Romanian.'

Pupils are polite. They think rules are fair and know right from wrong. They enjoy receiving value gems for best work and attitudes. Pupils say that bullying is rare and adults sort out any problems. They use their 'network hands' to identify safe people to talk to.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The headteacher has made sure that all adults have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Leaders have made sure that pupils understand the importance of learning. Pupils behave well and are keen to learn. Leaders' actions to improve the quality of education do not match this success yet.

Leaders have improved guidance on how staff should teach phonics. All staff have received training. Teachers now use more careful checks to make sure that pupils who fall behind catch up and keep up. Leaders make sure that pupils who need it get extra help. Pupils' achievement in phonics is improving.

Leaders have made sure that teachers read exciting books to pupils. They have improved the library. Pupils enjoy choosing books. Pupils know that reading is important and read with enjoyment. Leaders are making sure that teachers are becoming clearer about what pupils need to learn to be fluent readers. They have started to provide more materials to support teachers. However, leaders have not yet established their preferred approach to teaching reading. Some teachers ask probing questions. Some adapt teaching well and ensure that work is demanding. This is not consistent across all classes.

In mathematics, leaders have put in place a well-sequenced curriculum. However, they have not made sure that all teachers have a secure knowledge of this subject. Teachers do not always spot what pupils do not understand or when they need more demanding work.

Leaders have checked that the curriculum covers what it should in other subjects. They make sure that pupils cover interesting topics. Pupils remembered seeing a fizzy drink 'explode' when the teacher added a mint. But they did not recall what they learned from this. Teachers' plans do not always build up knowledge and skills from pupils' experiences. Most subject leaders are new to their role. They have received some training. They are not all ready to help colleagues improve teaching in their subject area.

Leaders accurately identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They also consider the extra help other vulnerable pupils may need. They are diligent in making sure that pupils' pastoral needs are met. They want to ensure that learning targets are better matched to pupils' needs.

Senior leaders know the areas they need to improve. Guidance from the local authority has not helped the school to plan precise actions. This has slowed the pace of improvement.

Staff in the early years ensure that children settle well. Parents and carers are confident that their children are happy and safe. Children are quick to join in the clear routines. Staff plan activities to develop children's language skills. For example, children enjoy learning traditional rhymes and stories such as 'The Three Little Pigs'. Leaders are ensuring that all staff understand the importance of early phonics and numbers. Curriculum leaders are starting to identify how early learning links to later learning.

Pupils behave very well. Pupils discuss right and wrong, for example trying to move through 'temptation alley'. They enjoy sharing their achievements with their parents in celebration assemblies. Leaders use local links well. For instance, the police and fire service help teach about safety. Visits to the local church and gurdwara help pupils to understand different beliefs.

Leaders have established a team ethos. Staff feel that leaders listen and consider their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders put pupils' welfare first. They make sure that staff are well trained. Staff share any concerns without delay. Some staff receive training to give extra emotional support to pupils who need it.

Leaders work well with other agencies and organisations. They ensure that pupils and families get help when they need it. Checks on pupils' absence and staff recruitment are thorough and timely.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. For instance, they learn who is safe to talk to and how to stay safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Over the past 12 months, leaders have established a consistent approach and clear guidance on teaching phonics. They have raised teachers' awareness of the component parts of building up skills and knowledge to help pupils become more fluent, confident readers. However, leaders do not give sufficiently clear guidance on how the component parts should link together. Leaders should establish a coherent approach to teaching reading that is consistently well implemented in line with their curriculum ambition.
- Leaders have mapped out coverage of subjects across the curriculum and started providing guidance for teachers to improve the sequencing of learning across year groups. However, they have not yet identified the most important knowledge and skills they want pupils to learn in all subjects. Pupils do not consistently remember what they are taught. Leaders should ensure that teachers are clear about what should be taught and revisited, so that pupils remember more and achieve well across all subjects.
- Leaders have not provided teachers with sufficient training to secure consistent subject knowledge across the subjects they teach, including mathematics. Teachers are not consistently skilled in adapting the curriculum to make sure that it is appropriately demanding for all pupils. Leaders should ensure that teachers deepen their subject knowledge and their pedagogical knowledge so that more pupils achieve what they are capable of.
- New curriculum leaders have not received sufficient support to fulfil their role effectively. This means that they are not yet consistently supporting colleagues to improve the quality of education in their subject area. Senior leaders should ensure that leaders receive appropriate training to undertake their intended role effectively.
- Senior leaders have plans to improve the focus and rigour of monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of curriculum implementation. These need to be put in place, so that weaknesses are accurately identified, and appropriate action quickly taken, so the quality of education improves to meet leaders' ambitions.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	121889
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10121204
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	248
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Derrick Humphries
Headteacher	Catherine Starnes
Website	www.ruskininfantschool.org
Date of previous inspection	2–3 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The number of pupils on the school roll has dropped significantly from 323 in 2018.
- Many curriculum leaders are new to their role, including the deputy headteacher.
- The school has a nursery and has provision for two-year-olds.
- There is before- and after-school childcare managed by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. We met with the chair of the governing body and one other governor. We spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- We did deep dives into reading, writing, mathematics, science and history. This included discussions with subject leaders, teachers and pupils, visits to lessons with leaders and scrutiny of pupils' work.

- We checked the school's approach to safeguarding. We met with the designated safeguarding leader and school administrative staff. We scrutinised documentation, including school policies and records of recruitment and vetting checks. We spoke about safeguarding with a range of staff, including breakfast club supervisors, lunchtime supervisors, office staff and classroom-based staff.
- We spoke with pupils about their school. We observed pupils during the school day, including at lunchtime. We spoke with parents at the start of the school day and considered the 26 responses to Ofsted Parent View. We considered the 36 responses to the online staff questionnaire in paper format. There were no responses to the online pupil questionnaire to consider.
- We examined a range of documentation, including published information about the school's performance in national assessments, the school's self-evaluation, the school's improvement plan, information related to behaviour and attendance, and information published on the school's website.

Inspection team

Mandy Wilding, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Heidi Malliff	Ofsted Inspector
Liz Moore	Ofsted Inspector

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