

Ryecroft Primary School

Stonebridge Grove, Farnley, Leeds, LS12 5AW

Inspection dates 29–30 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Between Year 1 and Year 6, pupils do not make enough progress in writing and mathematics. Too few pupils meet or exceed the levels expected in these subjects.
- Too much teaching either requires improvement or is inadequate which slows the progress pupils make.
- Too many pupils lack the levels of independence needed to be responsible for sensible behaviour without having to rely on adult guidance and supervision. As a result, pupils' behaviour requires improvement.
- Systems to hold teachers and classroom assistants to account for pupils' achievements are not sharply focused on raising standards across the school.
- The school's view of its own performance is too generous. Leaders do not take good enough account of pupils' learning when observing lessons.
- While the governing body is supportive and exhibits a degree of challenge, governors are not holding senior leaders sufficiently to account for weaknesses in teaching and achievement; both have declined since the last inspection.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders now have a good understanding of the reasons for the school's weaknesses and what needs to be done to bring about improvement; as a result, the school is progressing well on a number of fronts. For example, provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is now good; an exciting curriculum, effective teaching and strong leadership ensure children do well.
- A focused programme of teaching letters and the sounds they make (phonics) ensures pupils' reading is improving more quickly than their writing and mathematics.
- Dedicated support workers help pupils who struggle to manage their own behaviour so that they are able to take part fully in the life of the school.
- The school identifies and supports disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs successfully, ensuring that their rates of progress are improving well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 15 lessons or part lessons and observed all teachers teaching. Two of the lessons were observed jointly, one with the headteacher and another with one of the deputy headteachers.
- A range of documentation was analysed, including that relating to safeguarding, pupils' achievements, attendance, behaviour, the school's self-evaluation, minutes of meetings of the governing body, performance management, systems for improving teaching and learning, and how the funding allocated for the pupil premium is spent. (Pupil premium is the additional funding provided by the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and the children of service families.)
- Inspectors looked at pupils' workbooks and spoke to pupils about their work. They talked to pupils informally during break and lunchtimes and met with the school council.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and scrutinised reading records.
- Inspectors considered the 11 responses to the on-line questionnaire, (Parent View) and they also spoke informally with parents as they brought their children to school.
- Inspectors met with two members of the governing body, the senior leadership team, the inclusion support manager and the manager for special educational needs, as well as a senior officer from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered responses from 25 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

James Kilner, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christine Birchall

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this school

- Ryecroft Primary is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is almost twice the national figure. Pupils' needs vary, but, in the main, support is provided for behaviour, communication and language development.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is well above the national figure.
- The senior leadership team has recently been restructured to include two deputy headteachers and the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good to ensure that pupils between Year 1 and Year 6 make good progress by:
 - eradicating all inadequate teaching
 - ensuring that all teachers use the information about pupils' achievements to plan lessons which accurately meet the full range of needs in the class
 - deploying classroom assistants more effectively so that the pupils they support in lessons make good progress
 - ensuring that all teachers build on the good quality feedback given to pupils in marking, so that misconceptions and mistakes are not repeated and pupils move rapidly towards their achievement targets
 - reducing the amount of time teachers spend giving direct instructions so that pupils have more time to investigate for themselves
 - reducing pupils' dependence on adults so that more are able to manage their own behaviour in lessons and at break times.
- Raise achievement in writing and mathematics so that at least an above-average percentage of pupils meets the levels expected by the end of Year 6 by:
 - ensuring that pupils have meaningful opportunities to write for a variety of purposes in a range of subjects other than English
 - providing pupils with a variety of opportunities to investigate mathematical problems without having to rely too much on worksheets.
- Improve leadership, management and governance by:
 - making sure more rigorous checks are made on the quality of teaching so that it quickly improves
 - reviewing the job descriptions of classroom assistants and making sure that performance management systems for all staff are linked to raising pupils' achievement

- ensuring that the planned actions of leaders and the governing body are directly linked to improving pupils' achievement and have very clear, measurable criteria by which to judge success
- developing governors' knowledge of the school's performance so that they are better able to hold the school to account for pupils' progress and teachers' performance.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Achievement is inadequate. Between Year 1 and Year 6, pupils' progress in writing and mathematics is too slow. Despite a slight improvement in both attainment and progress in the end of Key Stage 2 national test results in 2012, inspection evidence shows that this will not be sustained. Too few pupils are on target to make the expected levels of progress in writing and mathematics and very few will reach the higher levels. In reading, however, pupils are making gains and will be nearer to national expectations at the end of Year 6.
- Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of skills well below those typical for their age and make good progress. They benefit from expert guidance and accurate assessments which move them rapidly to the next levels in their learning. When they enter Year 1, they are working much closer to the expected outcomes for their age.
- Pupils' progress fluctuates far too much between Years 1 and 6 because there is too much variation in the effectiveness and quality of teaching. Consequently, very few pupils are on track to make the expected progress over the year and certainly not the accelerated progress which the school has set as a target.
- Although still low, attainment in reading is improving as a result of a structured approach to teaching phonics. Outcomes in the 2012 phonics test for Year 1 pupils, for example, were broadly in line with national averages. Younger pupils are confident when using their newly acquired reading skills. When reading a number problem, a Year 1 pupil mis-read 'banana' for 'bunches'. When prompted to use her phonic skills she sounded out the word and correctly read 'bunches'.
- Pupils are not sufficiently skilled to write for a range of purposes or use their understanding of number to apply their mathematical skills in meaningful or practical ways.
- Pupils are too reliant on adult intervention and using prepared worksheets to support their learning. Consequently, when asked to describe how they arrived at a solution or put forward a point of view they lack the confidence to explain their ideas clearly.
- Progress for different groups in school, for the most part, does not differ from that of all pupils. It is better for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs whose achievement is close to their peers nationally, although this still requires improvement.
- In results in national tests in 2012 for Year 6 pupils, the overall average point score of those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and for whom the school receives the pupil premium, compared favourably with this group nationally. In this year group, in reading, the average point score of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals was much higher than for those pupils who were not eligible. Nationally, this is not the case. This is as a result of good support and one-to-one tuition, particularly in reading, and the effective pastoral support to ensure that pupils are ready to learn when they arrive at school in the morning. Even so, equal opportunities are not well promoted because there is still too much teaching that is inadequate.
- Pupils identified with speech and communication difficulties receive individual support and are making similar rates of progress to their classmates. Those who have difficulty in managing their own behaviour benefit greatly from skilled support given by the school's dedicated workers. Consequently these pupils are remaining in school and beginning to make better progress.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching is inadequate; there is too little that is good or better. During the inspection, in half the lessons seen teaching required improvement and in almost a quarter it was inadequate. Currently, there is not enough good teaching to close the gaps in pupils' skills and knowledge quickly enough.
- In too many lessons, teachers do not make best use of information about what pupils can already do. This means that teachers do not plan lessons which accurately meet the full range of

needs in the class well enough. Classroom assistants are proving effective in teaching phonics in small groups. However, they are not always deployed well by teachers in whole-class lessons, which means that progress for their groups or for individual pupils is slowed.

- All teachers mark pupils' work well, pointing out the strengths and guiding them to the next levels. However, not all teachers pick up on the points previously raised for pupils to improve in the next piece of work when the same mistakes are made. In these instances, spelling mistakes, factual inaccuracies and targets to improve are not tackled by the pupil nor followed up subsequently by the teacher.
- Some teachers rely too much on photocopied worksheets to support pupils' learning. This means that pupils are not challenged enough and merely fill in blank boxes or missing letters rather than being given meaningful opportunities to write or investigate their mathematics and think for themselves. Similarly, teachers spend too much time giving direct instructions so that pupils do not have enough time to investigate for themselves.
- Over-long and unnecessary explanations, in some instances, mean that pupils remain seated for too long when they could be getting to grips with meaningful tasks. This can result in pupils getting fidgety and losing concentration.
- Better teaching seen during the inspection was exemplified by high expectations of what pupils can achieve, effective deployment of adults who know exactly what the pupils are to learn and how their success will be assessed.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Adult-led discussions with children ensure that they can make decisions for themselves and apply their new skills to new experiences. Since the last inspection, staff have created a stimulating environment both indoors and outside in which children move around confidently. Children enjoy exploring the ice trays, or halting their classmates on large wheeled toys in the role of a lollipop person. All adults support the children well so that there is a clear sense of achievement and enthusiasm for learning and trying out new things.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils rely heavily on adult guidance and supervision and have few opportunities to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Consequently, when not directly supervised, the behaviour of some pupils falls below expectations. Equally, when lessons are less than good, pupils become boisterous and lose attention.
- Pupils say that behaviour has improved in lessons and around school and that they enjoy school. For the most part they are polite and well-mannered and take their roles on the school council or as playground helpers very seriously. Pupils say that bullying, should it occur, is dealt with fairly by senior staff. They understand that there are different types of bullying and, for example, that name calling or use of racist or homophobic language is not acceptable and should be reported to adults. They acknowledge that some pupils forget the school rules sometimes and that they can be unkind or 'silly' in lessons.
- Parents said they felt that the school keeps their children safe and that behaviour has improved. For their part, pupils have understood presentations on internet and mobile phone safety and know what to do to keep safe when online. Younger pupils understand about how to keep safe through presentations and assemblies which cover road safety and stranger danger.
- Those pupils who are identified as requiring support to manage their behaviour receive effective guidance and care, and as a result exclusions have been reduced dramatically. A review of the school's behaviour and incidents log reveals that behaviour is improving over time.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are positive with praise given often for acts of kindness and good behaviour.
- The dedicated and effective work of the inclusion support managers ensures that attendance has improved and is now broadly average, with very few pupils who are persistently absent. They are now rightly focused on improving punctuality with several families.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Recent appointments and additions to the senior leadership team have significantly strengthened the leadership of the school and the capacity of the school to improve. All the staff responding to the questionnaire hold positive views about the school and morale is high.
- The most marked improvements are undoubtedly in the leadership and management and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage following the appointment, last year, of new members of the senior leadership team.
- The school's view of its own performance, especially of the quality of teaching, has until recently focussed too heavily on teaching skills rather than how well pupils are learning. This is why some weaknesses in the quality of teaching have gone undetected and has resulted in pupils' inadequate achievement. The checks made on the quality of teaching across the school are still not rigorous enough to ensure the quality of teaching improves quickly enough.
- Although the overall profile of teaching is inadequate, senior leaders have already made significant inroads into making it better, by sharing the good practice already in the school. The local authority has assisted the school in ensuring that teachers assess pupils' achievements accurately. Teachers' planning is focussed more accurately on raising attainment and the school is now in a much stronger position to improve the quality of teaching, by making sure that work is more appropriately matched to what pupils already know and can do.
- Targets for the headteacher's performance management are linked to ensuring the school tackles the areas for development from the last inspection. Up until recently, teachers' performance management targets were not sharply focussed on making sure enough pupils reach and exceed the nationally expected levels by the end of Year 6. Senior leaders now place a much greater emphasis on holding teachers to account for the progress of their pupils. They have ensured that the performance management targets for teachers are directly linked to pupils' achievement and to the quality of teaching. It is too early to gauge fully the impact of these changes and it is still not clear enough exactly how leaders and governors intend to measure the successes of their actions, particularly to target the proportion of pupils making or exceeding the expected rates of progress.
- The roles and responsibilities of classroom assistants have changed over recent years, but their job descriptions have not kept pace with their new roles and so not all share the same level of accountability for pupils' progress. The arrangements for their performance and line management are not consistently focused on improving outcomes for the pupils they support.
- While pupils benefit from a range of visitors such as story tellers and scientists, the curriculum does not give pupils enough opportunities to use and apply their literacy and numeracy skills across a range of subjects. However, appropriate attention is paid to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and they make steady progress in their personal development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors provide a degree of challenge to the school's leaders. For example, governors requested further information prior to agreeing the recent staff appointment in Year 6. Following training by the local authority on the interpretation of data about pupils' achievements, their skills to challenge the school are improving. Some governors are regular visitors and do much to support the school's work. However, their effectiveness has been limited by their lack of involvement in checking the impact of the school's actions and, as a result, they are not in a position to hold the school to account for pupils' progress and teachers' performance. Until recently, governors did not give enough consideration to how well teachers were performing when making decisions about how to reward them. Finances are managed astutely with planned savings used effectively, for example, to refurbish the outdoor area of the Early Years Foundation Stage and to ensure the pupil premium funds are spent wisely. All safeguarding arrangements are met and vetting procedures are firmly in place to ensure that pupils are well cared for and safe.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	107977
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	405143

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	173
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Tiffany
Headteacher	Jan Tootill
Date of previous school inspection	28 September 2010
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