

Ramsden Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112208
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	337866
Inspection dates	17–18 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Mrs Sue Sharkey

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	150
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Phil Solloway
Headteacher	Mrs N Brewerton
Date of previous school inspection	April 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons. Seven teachers were observed and meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors talked informally to parents. They observed the school's work and looked at the school's system for tracking pupils' progress, pupils' books, documentation regarding safeguarding, key policies and assessments. Inspection questionnaires from 97 parents and carers were received.

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

- whether actions taken to improve provision in mathematics has had an impact on pupils' progress
- how monitoring impacts on raising attainment and pupils' achievement
- whether strategies to raise boys' achievement have been successful
- the impact assessment has on pupils' achievement.

Information about the school

This is a small school with an Early Years Foundation Stage for Nursery and Reception children. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is above average. A large majority of children is from White British backgrounds and very few children have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The school has gained a number of awards in relation to promoting pupils' environmental awareness and healthy lifestyles.

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

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. It has a good reputation and parents and carers praise the school for giving their children an excellent start to their education. Every child in school is important, is valued as an individual and given equal opportunity to succeed. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Excellent links with other schools, agencies and organisations bring substantial benefits to pupils' learning and personal development. The school's evaluation of its own performance is accurate. Leadership is highly focused on continuously improving outcomes for pupils. The successful actions taken to achieve this show that the school has an outstanding capacity to improve further.

In this secure and happy environment, pupils thrive and make outstanding progress. This includes those for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their enjoyment of learning starts in the outstanding Early Years Foundation Stage, where children are stimulated and inspired. Throughout Years 1 and 2, outstanding teaching and the school's first-class curriculum ensure that pupils continue to make excellent progress so that when they leave the school their attainment is high. Staff work closely together, planning collaboratively and sharing good practice. They raise pupils' self-esteem by constantly offering them praise and encouraging comments. Teachers set a strong pace in lessons, they question pupils frequently to assess their development and to modify planning, but this questioning is not of a consistently high standard throughout the school. Prominent strengths in teaching include the strong relationships in all classes and the high number of teaching assistants, who make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning and especially for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and adopt these in practice. They have a very good sense of belonging, to the school and to their local community. They respond to issues raised by the Resident's Association and talk about how to improve their community and have put forward suggestions for improvements. Year 2 pupils are proud of helping at playtime. They enjoy caring for younger pupils and help to keep the school and playground tidy.

The drive and ambition of the headteacher and her senior leadership team ensure that the school is always seeking ways to support pupils even more. In their aim to provide continuous support, the school works very closely with parents and carers,

who are encouraged to be actively involved in their children's learning. For example, they can take part in the Challenge Club where they enjoy solving fun problems with their children or attend Family Learning and explore a new skill. This close contact with families helps the school to be keenly aware of pupil's needs so that staff are confident that they are doing the very best for each individual.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the assessment of pupils by questioning during lessons is of a consistently high standard throughout the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupil's achievement and enjoyment are outstanding. The school gives pupils many opportunities to explore and learn both indoors and out, they are highly engaged and are well motivated. They learn to work and play alongside each other, often in specific small groups and in a nurturing environment. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make excellent progress and achieve outstandingly well from their starting points which are usually well below those typical for four-year-olds, particularly in speech and language and in cooperative play. As a result, attainment is often significantly above the national average by the end of Year 2. The school employs a wide range of successful approaches to help pupils improve their communication and cooperation skills, as well as mathematical development. For example, pupils were excited during a lesson when they had to list their favourite food to take on a picnic. They sounded out letters and wrote with enthusiasm. In another class, pupils were looking at three dimensional mathematical shapes. They worked well together, sharing suggestions and listening to each other's contributions. Children who speak English as an additional language are provided for successfully and so make very good progress.

Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school constantly focuses on encouraging pupils to cooperate well together, encouraging them to work in teams and resolve any problems amicably. Pupils are sensitively encouraged to try new situations and to experience unfamiliar activities through which their enquiring minds and willingness to participate develop well. They have positive attitudes and their enjoyment of learning is a key factor in their above average attendance. Pupils' understanding of a healthy lifestyle is excellent. From an early age, pupils engage enthusiastically in games and sports activities. They say they enjoy their daily fruit and Year 2 pupils talk enthusiastically about their responsibility to collect fruit peelings and apple cores for the compost bin. Pupils' involvement in the school and the active part they play in community activities are admirable. They enjoy helping others, including raising funds to support local and international charities. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and is well managed during lessons and at break time. They are very considerate and visitors to school comment positively about this. Pupils say they feel safe and that adults care for them and will always help them.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Pupils make excellent progress through school because the quality of teaching and of the curriculum is outstanding. Classrooms and the outdoors are lively areas for learning. Lessons are creative, capturing the imagination of pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils extremely well, enabling activities with focused groups to take place readily alongside pupils who are working independently. Movement from one activity to another is calm and seamless and pupils understand the clear expectations for their work and behaviour. Assessment through questioning by teachers in lessons, to extend pupils learning and modify teachers' planning, is sometimes excellent, but as yet, this is not consistent throughout the school. Information and communication technology is used extremely well providing pupils with different learning experiences and they enjoy the regular use of computers and cameras to support their learning and help to make it fun.

The curriculum is exciting and is used well by teachers to underpin pupils' learning. It provides an excellent balance between creative, physical and academic work. A strength is the way in which different subjects are linked together to motivate and engage pupils, giving them extensive opportunities to apply their basic skills in literacy and mathematics. The school has a high focus on pupil's personal, social, health and citizenship education and alongside a wide range of visits and excellent extra-curricular activities it has a strong impact on pupil's personal development. Art based activities are particularly impressive, allowing pupils who have strengths in this area to flourish.

Staff have a very close knowledge of pupil's needs and support pupils and families exceedingly well. Pupils' excellent progress through the school is aided by the outstanding care, guidance and support they receive. Staff work very well with outside agencies to provide help for pupils' social and emotional needs and to ensure that vulnerable pupils receive support tailored to their own individual needs.

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

Arrangements for children starting in the nursery are highly effective and Year 2 pupils say that teachers are helping them very well in preparing for Key Stage 2.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

All leaders are highly focused in their desire to pursue a continuous rise in pupils' achievement. Subject leaders share the headteacher's vision for making the school even better. They accurately evaluate pupils' performance in their subjects and have an excellent understanding of their roles in always aiming to improve pupils' achievement. Governors understand the school's strengths well; they are involved well in shaping its future direction, through the excellent partnership with the headteacher and staff. A high priority is given to pupils' safety and well-being on the premises. Policies and procedures for safeguarding are good. The school meets all requirements; policies are in line with government regulations and are monitored robustly.

Equality of opportunity is promoted extremely well and the school works diligently to remove any barriers to learning for all pupils. All staff have high expectations and work methodically to meet pupils' individual needs. The school's involvement in the local community, and its success in extending pupils' awareness of other beliefs and ways of life, demonstrates its good promotion of community cohesion. The school is aware that it needs to provide pupils with opportunities to meet with other pupils from different cultures in the wider community. Links with parents and carers are a real strength of the school. These are valued by parents and carers who know they are always welcome and that the headteacher and staff will help them if they have a problem.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
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	1
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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Nursery settle well because of the first-class induction programme and the strong parental and carer involvement. The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding and children make excellent progress. Children flourish in their Nursery and Reception Years, so that by the time they reach Year 1 most children have reached age-related expectations, particularly in knowledge and understanding of the world and also in speech and language. Teaching is excellent because adults questions challenge children’s thinking and practical learning is well supported by stimulating resources.

Leadership and management are excellent and ensure that adults plan well together as a team and have a clear understanding of how young children learn. Within a rich, stimulating environment, both indoor and outdoor activities are well chosen and very carefully focused on developing children’s personal, social, emotional and academic qualities. For example, boys talk together as they get to grips with the many tools available to make repairs whilst another group use magnets to attract different materials in water. Children behave extremely well and are keen to learn; good behaviour and caring for others are encouraged from the outset. Teachers make excellent use of assessment information in helping identify what children need to learn to do next. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress because early assessment highlights their needs and teaching assistants provide first class support.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaire are positive about the way the school cares for and educates their children. They feel that their children enjoy school, are kept safe and they are very pleased with their children’s progress. Some took time to add comments to the questionnaire they returned, many to reinforce the strength of their positive views and inspectors agree with them. A very small minority of parents and carers feel that the school does not always deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. During the course of the inspection it was found that pupils’ behaviour and their manners both in lessons and around school were excellent. The school has a wide range of behaviour management strategies which pupils respond to well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ramsden 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 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 97 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 150 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	76	78	18	19	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	80	82	16	16	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	60	62	33	34	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	70	72	26	27	0	0	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	75	77	21	22	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	62	64	33	34	0	0	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	51	53	44	45	0	0	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)	59	61	35	36	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	65	67	25	26	1	1	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	53	55	36	37	4	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	54	56	35	36	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	70	72	25	26	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	78	80	17	18	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.

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.



21 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ramsden Infant School, Barrow-in-Furness, LA14 1AN

I am writing to thank you for making the inspection team feel so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to all of you and have very good memories of how friendly and well behaved you were. Your excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and take lots of exercise also impressed me. Many of you told me about your responsibilities in school, which shows how well you care about each other and your school. It was also very good to see that you raise funds for charity and help out in your community.

We enjoyed watching how well you learn in your classrooms and outside. The school provides an excellent range of activities for you, which we were pleased to see you find exciting. Teachers work very hard to help you learn and we think that teaching and the curriculum that teachers plan in your school are excellent. We also thought your work was excellent and that you achieve extremely well. To help you do even better in lessons we have asked the school to make sure that they ask you even better questions to help with your learning. Adults know you really well and we were extremely pleased that you feel confident that they will help you if you have any worries

I was delighted to tell your headteacher that your school is an outstanding school. Well done and I hope you all continue to work hard and enjoy school and your friends.

Best wishes

Mrs Sue Sharkey
Lead inspector

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