

Ramsden Infant School

Thwaite Street, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA14 1AN

Inspection dates 6–7 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement is good. Pupils make excellent progress in learning to write and become eager readers.
- Teaching is good. Some teaching is outstanding. Classrooms buzz with the sound of happy pupils who are keen to learn.
- Pupils feel absolutely safe in school. Their behaviour is outstanding both in lessons and around the school.
- The headteacher's strong leadership ensures all staff work together as a team. Everyone shows a high level of commitment in wanting the very best for each pupil.
- Leaders have established effective methods for checking on pupils' progress. All teachers have their work appraised regularly. The impact of this good leadership is seen in improvements to pupils' achievement and attendance in the last two years.
- The governing body provides good support and challenge.
- Stimulating activities in music, sport and art and visits to places of interest make learning exciting for pupils. This strongly promotes pupils' personal development.
- Parents' say their children are eager to come to school and relish being there.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding. In some lessons, work is not pitched at the right level.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is not as strong as in reading and writing, particularly for most able pupils.
- Middle leaders do not have enough impact on improving teaching and raising achievement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight teachers teaching 11 lessons.
- The inspector looked at the work in pupils' books to assess achievement currently and over time and the quality of teachers' marking. Some of this was done jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector spoke to groups of pupils to get their views of, amongst other things, behaviour in the school, what they enjoy learning and their views about the quality of teaching. The inspector took account of the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) but there were too few responses to generate sufficient information. The inspector looked at parents' comments to a questionnaire recently sent out by the school.
- Meetings were held with the governing body, teachers and support staff and a phone conversation took place with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a number of documents including the school's view of its work, the school improvement plan and various policies, for example, on behaviour. The inspector looked at safeguarding documents.
- The inspector took account of the school's view of the quality of teaching. Together with the headteacher, the inspector looked at the school's tracking of pupils' progress. The inspector analysed the results of the 2012 and 2013 end of Year 2 assessment tasks.
- The inspector listened to 18 pupils read and looked at their reading records.

Inspection team

David Law, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ramsden Infant School is a smaller than averaged-size infant school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average as is the proportion of pupils whose first language is not English.
- A below average proportion of pupils are supported at school action. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or are supported at school action plus is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so more is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that learning is consistently aimed at the right level thus enabling pupils make the best possible progress at all times
 - developing methods for teaching mathematics so that the progress of all pupils is as brisk as it can be and particularly to provide sufficient challenge for the most able.
- Improve middle leadership by ensuring these leaders have the skills and opportunities to check on and improve the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills, knowledge and understanding below what is typical at this age. In some years, for a substantial proportion such skills are well below those typical. From these low starting points, pupils make good progress overall across the school.
- By the end of Year 2 in 2013, pupils left with standards of attainment above or well above those seen nationally. Following the last inspection, standards of attainment dipped to below average but have recovered in the last two years, particularly in reading, because school leaders acted resolutely to secure improvement.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle confidently into school routines and make good progress. Personal and social skills are quickly acquired. For example, children helped each other to search for Goldilocks who was lost somewhere in school but had left a trail of empty porridge bowls behind as a clue to her whereabouts.
- Currently, pupils' books, school data and teaching in lessons show pupils at Key Stage 1 make at least good progress across all subjects. For example, they gain a good understanding of history when finding out about the 'Gunpowder Plot' and confidently recall the exciting story of Guy Fawkes.
- Pupils make good progress in learning to read. They recognise key words on sight and read unfamiliar words by making good use of their knowledge of letters and sounds (phonics). Pupils read a range of books. They read frequently both to themselves and to adults to practise their skills.
- Pupils' achievement in writing is outstanding. From frequently low starting points, they make exceptionally strong progress. At the end of Year 2 in 2013, standards of attainment were well above average. Pupils currently in Year 2 are making brisk progress in gaining writing skills, for example, as seen in excellent writing about the life of Victorian school children.
- Pupils use their numeracy and literacy skills well in a number of subjects, for example, when they study local geography and write about a trip into town.
- Overall, pupils make good progress in mathematics but achievement is not quite as strong as in reading and writing. For example, in some lessons, pupils are over-reliant on counting when mental calculation skills would be more appropriate and the most able pupils are not stretched enough.
- The school fosters good relations across all groups of pupils and tackles any discrimination well so everyone has an equal opportunity to learn. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress; some make outstanding progress in their emotional development because of very effective support. Pupils for whom English is not the first language and those from minority ethnic groups make good progress, especially in learning to read.
- Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make the same good progress as those not eligible for a free school meal. By the end of Year 2, the attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals is above that of similar pupils nationally by about one term.
- The most able pupils generally make good progress and many do particularly well in reading. However, when work is not well matched to their needs, particularly in mathematics, their progress slows.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching in all classes promotes good achievement. Examples of outstanding teaching are seen. For example, in one Year 2 lesson pupils wrote moving stories about the plight of soldiers in the trenches of the First World War.
- Pupils say their teachers are 'helpful' and 'do lots of fun activities'. For example, pupils say how

much they like art, physical education and playing with puppets.

- Teachers provide many practical and exciting activities that capture pupils' interest and imagination. These often involve visits to places of interest and visitors to the school. For example, Nursery children were enthralled when listening to visiting musicians, following which they joyfully made music of their own. Teachers plan and organise these activities well so they have a clear purpose and over time, this has a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- Relations in all classes are excellent. Teachers manage behaviour well and expect the very best from pupils at all times. This helps pupils to acquire positive attitudes, such as following instructions, doing their best and cooperating with others. Consequently, teaching over time effectively promotes pupils' moral and social development.
- The teaching of reading and writing is effective. Teachers plan to ensure pupils use their literacy skills well across different subjects. Since the last inspection, changes to the way reading is taught, for example, in teaching letters and sounds (phonics), have led to improved standards of attainment. This shows the impact of good teaching over time in promoting good achievement.
- Teachers plan carefully to meet the needs of various groups and are particularly skilled at supporting pupils with special educational needs to make good progress. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support this work. However, in some lessons work is not always pitched at the right level.
- Overall, mathematics is taught successfully although progress is not as strong as in reading and writing, for example, because pupils are not confident in mental calculation strategies. In some lessons, the most able pupils are not stretched because work fails to challenge them.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils acquire exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. They are proud of their school and eager to learn. They try their very best to succeed and learn to persist when they find something difficult. Pupils get on very well with each other and lessons proceed smoothly to the accompanying sounds of pupils happily working and playing together.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. They are considerate, helpful and polite. Pupils readily take responsibility, for example, by doing the important job of taking registers to the school office or by helping to tidy up the classroom. They quickly learn how to follow instructions, organise themselves and become independent.
- Pupils say they feel entirely safe in school and their parents agree. School leaders, teachers and other staff ensure pupils are kept safe. Pupils learn about various ways in which they can keep themselves safe, for example on the roads, because the school has excellent programmes to teach them about this.
- Pupils are free from bullying or any form of harassment. School leaders ensure methods for dealing with bullying are in place and the excellent programme of personal and social education helps pupils to learn about different types of bullying and how to deal with it.
- All adults are exceptionally vigilant in ensuring pupils' welfare and provide outstanding care. Methods for supporting vulnerable pupils and their families are excellent. Parents who have received this support say how grateful they are and how much it has helped their children.
- Attendance is at the national average. Pupils are eager to come to school and get into lessons because they enjoy learning so much. Attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection because school leaders and governors have made high attendance a priority.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides effective leadership which is centred on pupils' achievement and how teaching can improve this. She has built a strong team spirit, gives a clear sense of direction and

expects the very best for all pupils. Likewise, all leaders are ambitious for pupils to achieve well.

- School leaders have established methods for evaluating how well pupils are learning and intervene to improve teaching methods where this is needed. For example, leaders acted promptly to arrest a fall in reading standards by changing teaching methods.
- The headteacher visits classrooms regularly and meets with pupils to look at their books and ascertain how well they are learning. Her evaluations of teaching, together with information from the tracking of pupils' progress over time, are shared with teachers and used to ensure teaching continues to be of good and better quality. The appraisal of teachers' performance is securely in place.
- Teachers are keen to advance their practice and training to enable this is purposeful. Teachers meet frequently to review pupils' progress and this informs their planning of future lessons. All this is possible because leaders have established the clear expectation that teaching and achievement will be kept under review so it can be improved where this is needed.
- Leaders and governors aspire for pupils to experience an enjoyable education. They successfully achieve this through a range of visits and the use of visitors with particular expertise to enhance pupils' experiences in literature, art and sport. For example, pupils' experiences of literature were enriched when they came to school one evening to hear exciting bedtime stories, dressed in their nightclothes and clutching cuddly toys.
- Leaders ensure pupils experience different cultures and faiths, for example, when Reception children visited a Buddhist temple. This successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Leaders work very diligently to foster good relations between all groups of pupils so there is equality of opportunity to learn and the success of this is evident in the excellent relations between pupils.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to provide additional teaching support and the impact is seen in the good progress of this group of pupils. The recently acquired Primary School Sport funding is being used successfully for pupils to acquire a range of additional skills and to increase their participation and consequently this is enabling healthier lifestyles and improving physical well-being.
- Leaders and governors appreciate the support of the local authority, for example, in establishing links with other schools.
- School leaders and governors have developed strong links with parents and an effective range of partnerships with other schools, for example, to share training and teaching practices.
- Middle leaders are ambitious for pupils to achieve well and are highly committed to their welfare, but are not yet as experienced in assessing the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well informed about pupils' progress. The Chair of the Governing Body knows the school particularly well. Governors successfully deploy pupil premium funding and consequently, pupils in receipt make good progress. Governors ensure safeguarding requirements are met. They ensure the effective appraisal of teachers so any pay awards are merited. Some governors visit classrooms, for example, to help groups of pupils, and this helps them to form a sound view of the quality of learning and teaching.

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	112208
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	426285

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	147
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Solloway
Headteacher	Nicola Brewerton
Date of previous school inspection	17 June 2010
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