

Ravensfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134845
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	381750
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2012
Lead inspector	Christine Millett

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	398
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Beryl Edwards
Headteacher	Beverley Allford
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Christine Millett

Additional inspector

Paul Latham

Additional inspector

Michael Wintle

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 27 lessons or parts of lessons given by 19 members of staff, held meetings with groups of pupils, a member of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at work in pupils' books, school policies and plans, data tracking pupils' progress and records on safeguarding, health and safety and attendance. The inspector looked at the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) but no responses were recorded. Inspectors considered the 85 questionnaires completed by parents and carers as well as those from pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Ravensfield is larger than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A very small minority are from other minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The number of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average. The school has achieved a number of awards including Healthy School status and Eco Award (Bronze). The school exceeds the government's current floor standard for attainment and progress. The school has moved into a new building since the previous inspection and there have been a number of staff changes including the appointment of a new deputy headteacher. The school operates breakfast, after-school and holiday clubs.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Under the committed direction of the headteacher and her leadership team it has improved in key areas since the previous inspection.
- Children start school with skills and knowledge that are well below those expected for their age. They achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage although opportunities are sometimes missed to promote mark making particularly in the outdoor area. As a result of good teaching, pupils continue to make good progress and at the end of Key Stage 2 pupils leave with attainment that is broadly average in mathematics and English and improving rapidly. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because of effective intervention.
- Teaching is good overall, sometimes outstanding. There are strong relationships between teaching staff and pupils. All staff work very hard to create a calm and welcoming climate in which pupils feel well supported and able to learn. Where teaching is satisfactory, teachers often spend too much time introducing the lessons and pupils are not engaged in their learning quickly. The majority of marking is good and pupils receive effective guidance about what they need to do in order to improve.
- Pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour make a good contribution to their learning. Pupils say that they feel safe, and all the parents and carers who completed the questionnaire believe their children are kept safe at school. Most consider that behaviour is good.
- The school is led and managed well. Senior leaders, staff and members of the governing body have a shared sense of purpose. They are strongly committed to making the school as good as possible and use information from monitoring to drive improvement. The curriculum is broad and balanced yet there are inconsistencies in the opportunities it provides for exciting first-hand experiences or for problem solving across the curriculum.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the curriculum so that it extends pupils' skills consistently by:
 - widening the range of activities in the outdoor learning area in the Early Years Foundation Stage to include more opportunities for mark making
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to gain first-hand learning experiences which excite and stimulate their curiosity
 - embedding meaningful cross-curricular links which give pupils experience of applying their literacy and numeracy in problem solving

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the Nursery class with skills and knowledge well below those typical for their age in communication, language and literacy and number skills. They get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children make good progress during adult-led activities because staff match these well to the next steps in children's development. This helps children to gain a good knowledge of letters and sounds, and they are able to apply their understanding of the sounds letters make when spelling simple words. These experiences prepare them well for learning in Year 1, though the literacy skills of some are still below the national average.

Pupils' attainment in reading by the end of Key Stage 1 has been below average. However, the school's rigorous tracking system shows clearly that this is an improving picture and the gap with the national average is narrowing. By the end of Year 6 most pupils achieve well and their attainment, including in reading, is average. The current Year 6 pupils are on track to exceed their targets. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, make similar levels of progress from their different starting points. Of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire, all agreed that their child was making good progress.

Pupils are attentive and participate well in lessons. The overwhelming majority of pupils say the school helps them to do well. It is clear that pupils make good progress in lessons. This was seen in a literacy lesson where pupils were developing characters in preparation for writing a play script. All were engaged throughout and expressed their ideas eloquently. Good progress is also evident in the school's rigorous tracking system as well as from work in pupils' books.

Quality of teaching

The majority of lessons seen were good with examples of outstanding practice. In their questionnaires, all parents and carers agreed that their children are taught well. Inspectors endorse this view. Reading and writing are taught well. This was evident in a lesson where pupils were writing instructions on how to make a shaker. Skilful questioning by the teacher and her deliberate mistakes engendered a sense of fun which enabled pupils to demonstrate their secure knowledge of punctuation and spelling.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and try to make lessons interesting and varied. Pupils concentrate well and most are keen to learn. Lesson planning takes into account all levels of ability so work is well matched to pupils' needs. Learning objectives are shared with pupils so they have a clear understanding of what they are learning.

Assessment of pupils' progress is thorough and underachievement is identified quickly. Other adults give valuable support either in the classroom or with small groups. This contributes well to the quality of learning. In the best lessons, pace is brisk in order to maximise the time spent on the main part of the lesson and so promote independent learning. An example of outstanding practice was seen in a mathematics lesson on fractions where the teacher used a range of challenging questioning techniques and mini-plenaries to pick up misconceptions and move learning on at a rapid pace. Frequent opportunities for group work are helping to develop pupils' social skills.

Pupils have frequent opportunities to share ideas and discuss their learning through regular opportunities for 'talk partners'. The marking of pupils' work highlights strengths and areas for improvement, though it does not always focus sufficiently on the presentation of work. Information and communication technology is used effectively across the curriculum to enhance pupils' research skills and presents opportunities to apply literacy skills which are sometimes missed in other areas of the curriculum.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour was judged to be good at the previous inspection and this has continued to be the case. The very large majority of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were very confident that their children are well looked after and kept safe at school. They are equally satisfied with the way that the school deals with the rare instances of bullying or poor behaviour. This confidence is well founded. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. This is the result of an approach to behaviour management which consistently places high expectations on pupils, while providing warmth and compassion. Pupils are given the skills and support needed to help them manage their own behaviour.

The relationships that exist between pupils and staff are very strong. Pupils treat adults and each other with respect and collaborate well in lessons. Positive attitudes and a good work ethos are constantly reinforced. Pupils are confident that all members of staff are there to help them, and any problems that they may have are

dealt with quickly and effectively. One pupil's comment, 'my teacher is always there for me' was typical. In all lessons, starting from the nursery, pupils cooperate well together socially and are quick to celebrate one another's achievements. Older pupils take on responsibilities readily, and provide very good role models for the year groups below them.

Pupils have a good understanding as to what constitutes a safe and unsafe situation. The curriculum equips them for life through age-appropriate life-skills such as 'Stranger Danger' and Crucial Crew. Movement around school is extremely orderly which reinforces personal safety.

Leadership and management

The successes of the school in raising achievement and promoting consistently good attitudes and behaviour are the result of a cohesive team which is led and managed well. The headteacher leads by example, and has developed an effective team of senior leaders who implement her vision with passion and commitment. The curriculum is satisfactory because there are inconsistencies in the quality of first-hand learning experiences as well as the number of opportunities for pupils to apply literacy and numeracy skills to solve problems across different curriculum areas. In the best lessons, teachers have used meaningful cross-curricular links and innovative starting points to enhance the curriculum. These methods were seen to increase levels of motivation and stimulate learning. However, such practice is still variable across the school. Senior leaders are working to ensure there is uniformity across the school through the frequent monitoring of teaching and learning as well as the sharing of identified good practice. The curriculum has been identified by the school as an area for development.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a well-defined sense of right and wrong and benefit from a range of cultural experiences. A range of enrichment opportunities such as visits and visitors make a valuable contribution to this. The development of pupils' social skills benefits greatly from the strong relationships that exist between pupils and adults. Some of the older pupils encourage the younger ones to read by listening and helping them to decode difficult words. This mutually supportive approach to school is seen across the school. Music, art and drama also effectively promote pupils' social, spiritual and cultural development.

The governing body is well informed and is active in providing both challenge and support. Some members of the governing body are familiar figures around the school and this helps them to evaluate how well their plans are developing. Management systems are robust and the school runs smoothly. The breakfast and after-school clubs are effectively run. The school promotes equality of opportunity effectively. For example, parallel lunchtime clubs are held for those who are unable to attend after-school clubs. Safeguarding requirements are met and systems and procedures for child protection are in place. Self-evaluation is accurate, and staff at many levels are involved in monitoring the outcomes and impact of the school's activities. This, combined with a proven track record of success, means that the school has a good capacity for sustained success.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the children' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



16 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ravensfield Primary School, Dukinfield, SK16 4JG

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit and having the opportunity to talk to some of you and to see you in lessons and at play. You and your parents and carers told us that Ravensfield is a good school and we agree.

- Teaching is good and this helps you to make good progress.
- You get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and achieve well during your time in school. You attain average standards by the time you leave school.
- You told us that you enjoy school and feel safe and secure.
- You think that behaviour is usually good, and we found that you behave well in lessons and around the school.
- You have good relationships with your teachers and you get on well with each other.
- The headteacher, other adults and the governing body are working hard to make the school as good as possible for you.

In order to help you do even better in your learning we have asked them to develop the curriculum further so that:

- children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have a wider range of opportunities in the outdoor area to develop their writing skills
- you all have more opportunities for exciting first-hand experiences
- there are more links between different areas of the curriculum so you have the chance to apply what you are learning to other subjects.

All of you can help the school by continuing to try your best in lessons, coming to school regularly and always behaving well. We wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Christine Millett
Lead inspector

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