

Ruskin Academy

Ruskin Avenue, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire NN8 3EG

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| Inspection dates | 12–13 July 2016 |
| Overall effectiveness | Inadequate |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Inadequate |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Inadequate |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Inadequate |
| Outcomes for pupils | Inadequate |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Senior leaders have not put in place effective support to improve the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- Leaders have not ensured that the behaviour policy has been consistently applied. Consequently, pupils' behaviour is inadequate. Learning is affected by persistent low-level disruption.
- Pupils make poor progress through the school, and the attainment of the pupils is consistently below the national average by the end of key stage 2.
- Middle leaders have not demonstrated the capacity to raise standards in the subjects they lead.
- Teachers' planning in mathematics is poor. Pupils underachieve because they do not have enough opportunities to develop their mathematical understanding of the concepts taught. In addition, pupils have not developed good mental arithmetic strategies to develop their calculation skills.
- The teaching of reading is weak. Pupils' comprehension skills are underdeveloped.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils is poor. Leaders have not evaluated effectively the impact of the pupil premium funding.
- Governors have not been effective in their role to raise standards at the school.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able pupils make poor progress because teachers do not correctly match work to the pupils' abilities.
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is very low in the current academic year. A significant minority of pupils arrive late for school.
- The number of exclusions in the current year is very high. The number of pupils who have repeat exclusions is also very high. Leaders' recording of allegations of bullying has been inconsistent. Safeguarding procedures are ineffective.
- The curriculum is poorly planned. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to investigate in science.
- Pupils' spelling is weak. Pupils misspell too many words that they should know.
- Leaders have not evaluated the impact of the sports premium to check whether it is increasing pupils' participation in sport and ensuring high-quality physical education (PE) lessons are being taught.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are using ambitious vocabulary to make their writing livelier.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make expected progress through the school.

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - ensuring that all leaders have clear roles and responsibilities to raise the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
 - training senior and middle leaders to lead improvements in their areas of responsibility to raise standards
 - ensuring that the appraisal process for teachers contains precise actions and targets which support the improvement of teaching and learning
 - tracking the progress made by disadvantaged pupils more closely in order to evaluate the effectiveness of pupil premium expenditure
 - tracking the progress of the most able pupils to ensure that this group of pupils makes good progress
 - developing a curriculum which will enable the pupils to learn and embed key skills for reading, mathematics and science
 - strengthening governors' skills in holding senior leaders to account
 - analysing the effectiveness of the sports premium funding by checking whether more pupils are attending extra-curricular sporting clubs and that the school is delivering high-quality PE lessons
 - working closely with parents to increase their confidence in the work of the school.
- Improve the behaviour and personal development of pupils by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations of how pupils should behave and apply the school's behaviour policy consistently
 - ensuring that all incidents of alleged bullying are recorded to enable more staff to be aware of any potential issues and resolve them as quickly as possible
 - working with external agencies more effectively to reduce the number of exclusions
 - raising awareness of the importance of high attendance and punctuality among parents and pupils to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils in particular, and the punctuality of the minority of pupils who do not arrive at school on time
 - teaching the pupils how to be successful learners and how this quality can be demonstrated.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to raise standards by:
 - ensuring that all teachers raise their expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - providing opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts
 - developing pupils' mental arithmetic skills and improving their understanding of mathematics
 - setting work at the appropriate level for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to enable them to make good progress from their starting points
 - challenging the most able pupils to enable them to reach their full potential
 - improving pupils' ability to spell by ensuring that pupils know spelling rules and have a secure knowledge of how to spell high-frequency words
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their inference skills when reading
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to plan scientific investigations, record their results and write conclusions.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- Senior leaders have not been able to halt the decline in the quality of teaching across the school and the subsequent fall in standards at the end of key stage 2 since the last inspection. As a result, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are inadequate.
- Outcomes at the end of key stage 2 in both 2014 and 2015 were significantly below the national average in reading, English grammar, punctuation and spelling and in mathematics. Unconfirmed end of key stage 2 assessments for 2016 show the school's outcomes for all subjects are also below the national average.
- Leaders have not checked closely enough that the pupil premium funding is used to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, leaders do not know which intervention programmes have made a difference in accelerating the progress of disadvantaged pupils. The outcomes of disadvantaged pupils are below those achieved by other pupils nationally for reading, writing and mathematics.
- Performance targets for teachers have not been effective and have not improved the quality of teaching. The targets set do not always address the necessary areas for improvement. As a result, they do not have the intended impact and have not helped to raise standards.
- Middle leaders have been ineffective in their attempts to raise standards in their subject areas. Although they have carried out checks on the quality of teaching for their subject, their judgements have been too generous and the follow-up actions ineffective.
- Leaders have not successfully motivated staff to improve teaching. There has been a high turnover of staff. Morale has been low until recently. The acting principal, who had been in her current position for five weeks at the time of the inspection, has been successful in raising staff morale.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. Although the school has worked with a range of external agencies, the number of exclusions has been very high. The number of pupils who have had repeat exclusions is also very high. This demonstrates that the work the school has done to reduce poor behaviour has been ineffective.
- Leaders have not ensured that the school's behaviour policy has been consistently applied. Moreover, not all staff have high enough expectations of how pupils should behave. As a result, there is persistent low-level disruption in classrooms which stops everyone from learning. The majority of parents who responded to Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents) do not feel that their child is safe at the school.
- The designated senior leaders for safeguarding keep detailed records when a concern has been raised about the welfare of a pupil. Swift action is taken by leaders to protect pupils and they work closely with a range of agencies to meet the needs of pupils and their families. Staff have had training in how to protect pupils from the risk of radicalisation and extremism.
- The curriculum is not planned well enough to enable pupils to develop and embed the key skills for reading, mathematics and science. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their inference skills when reading; they do not have enough time to deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts or plan scientific investigations, record the results and summarise their findings in a conclusion. Consequently, the pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. However, the school does provide several extra-curricular clubs, including sports clubs, a science club and homework clubs to support learning. These are well attended by pupils.
- Leaders have not analysed whether the sports premium funding has increased the participation of different groups of pupils in extra-curricular sporting activities. In addition, leaders have not checked whether the school is delivering consistently high-quality PE lessons and they therefore cannot evaluate how effectively the sports premium funding has been used.
- Pupils know the British values of democracy, respect and tolerance. Pupils learn about different religions as well as visiting the local church for Christian festivals. However, pupils do not always respect each other and pupils told inspectors that bullying does happen at school and they would like the behaviour of pupils to be better. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not as good as it should be.
- Parents are concerned about the changes in the senior leadership that the school has had over the year. Parents who spoke to the inspectors expressed concerns about the behaviour of some pupils. The very large majority of parents who expressed their view on Parent View indicated that they would not recommend the school to other parents.

■ The governance of the school

- The governing body has been unsuccessful in improving outcomes for pupils, despite governors' commitment to doing so. The chair of the board challenges school leaders. She has questioned senior leaders about the progress of disadvantaged pupils repeatedly. However, there has been no impact on improving pupils' outcomes.
- Members of the governing body regularly visit the school to check whether progress is being made against key actions to improve the school. During these visits, they raised concerns about the quality of leadership and these were subsequently addressed by the Education Fellowship Trust. However, the governing body does not have the range of expertise to be able to hold senior leaders fully to account. Governors' actions have not helped pupils' achieve more.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are appropriate and meet statutory requirements. As a result, pupils are kept safe at school.
- The Education Fellowship Trust has not addressed the needs of the school in a strategic manner. Consequently, it has allowed the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, pupils' outcomes, personal development, behaviour and welfare, and the effectiveness of school leaders to decline. Recently, the director for outcomes has provided extensive support for the acting principal and they have a clear plan to raise standards during the last few weeks of the current academic year. However, there is no evidence of the impact of this work as yet.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

- The effectiveness of teaching has declined since the last inspection and is now inadequate. Teaching is not planned well enough to meet the needs of pupils, particularly those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or the most able. The work that teachers set is not matched well enough to the abilities of the pupils and, therefore, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- The teaching of mathematics is weak. Pupils do not get the opportunities to improve their mathematical understanding by developing their reasoning skills. Pupils' ability to calculate mentally is also underdeveloped. Moreover, teachers move pupils on too quickly before they have a good understanding of the concepts taught. As a result, pupils do not make good progress and outcomes at the end of key stage 2 for mathematics have been significantly below the national average in 2014 and 2015.
- Pupils' ability to understand what they have read is also underdeveloped. Pupils do not get enough opportunities to develop their inference skills in order to gain a deep understanding of different kinds of text. Some younger pupils are not developing their fluency in reading as well as they should. Consequently, reading outcomes by the end of key stage 2 are also significantly below the national average.
- Teachers do not give enough opportunities for pupils to investigate in science. Moreover, when pupils have been given the opportunity to carry out a science investigation, they have not always recorded their results or written a conclusion. Pupils are not achieving well in this subject.
- The expectations of teachers are sometimes too low. In addition, some pupils are confused about how to complete an activity because the teachers have not explained fully what they have to do. Consequently, pupils' learning is slowed and poor progress is made.
- Teachers have successfully encouraged pupils to use ambitious vocabulary in their writing. In Year 6, teachers have used the book 'Clockwork' by Philip Pullman to identify stylistic features used by the author to inspire pupils to write. One pupil in Year 6 wrote, 'I could sense an ominous aura surrounding him.'
- The school provides tailored tuition for pupils who speak English as an additional language. This group of pupils make broadly expected progress through the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Pupils are not aware of the qualities they need to demonstrate successful learning. When pupils have been given tasks that may challenge them, pupils do not concentrate or demonstrate resilience as well as they should, and the amount of work they complete is minimal. Consequently, many pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.

- Pupils and parents say that bullying does happen. The majority of pupils who completed the online survey said that teachers do not deal with bullying well enough when it has been reported. However, pupils who spoke to an inspector said that, while bullying does happen, they are confident that teachers do deal with it effectively. Leaders' record-keeping of bullying has not been consistent and, therefore, not everyone has been made aware of cases of alleged bullying that should have been. The acting principal has now reintroduced a system to record all incidents of bullying.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of how to stay healthy and some attend extra-curricular clubs, for example football club and lunchtime clubs, to exercise. However, the school has not analysed whether participation rates in extra-curricular clubs have increased or which groups of pupils attend and which do not.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Low-level disruption is common around the school, which slows pupils' learning. A significant minority of pupils are disrespectful to staff and refuse to carry out instructions on the first time of asking. As a result, pupils make limited or no progress in lessons.
- The number of incidents of poor behaviour is high and has shown no signs of decreasing. Not all teachers have had high enough expectations of how pupils should behave. In addition, the leaders' recording of poor behaviour has been inconsistent and the behaviour policy has not been applied as it should have been. Consequently, pupils' behaviour has deteriorated in the school. The acting principal has recently raised teachers' expectations of how pupils should behave, but too many incidents of poor behaviour remain.
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is very low. The overall attendance of all pupils has decreased this year compared with previous years. A significant minority of pupils are persistently absent and a small group of pupils are late for school.

Outcomes for pupils

are inadequate

- Pupils' achievement is inadequate. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. However, pupils left the school in 2014 and 2015 with attainment significantly below the national average.
- Unconfirmed outcomes for the end of key stage 2 assessments in 2016 show that the proportion of pupils who achieved age-related expectations in reading, mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling is likely to be below the national average. Outcomes in writing are also below, but closer to the national average.
- Disadvantaged pupils made poor progress in reading, writing and mathematics in 2015. Gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others did narrow in 2015 but this was largely because the attainment of other pupils fell. Unconfirmed outcomes in the 2016 end of key stage 2 assessments show that disadvantaged pupils have attained more highly than their classmates in reading, writing and English grammar, spelling and punctuation. However, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving at age-related expectations in those subjects is still below all pupils nationally except in writing, which is in line.
- Too many pupils do not correctly spell words that they should know at their age. In addition, too many pupils do not use capital letters for proper nouns. These weaknesses inhibit the quality of their writing.
- Current school information shows that girls are achieving better than boys in all subjects in Years 3 and 4. Teachers' assessments in Years 5 and 6 show that girls are achieving better than boys in writing but girls and boys are achieving broadly the same in reading and mathematics.
- Leaders do not track the progress of the most able pupils through the school. This group of pupils are not consistently challenged in their learning. For example, reading comprehension questions did not require the pupils to think hard and write detailed answers.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make weak progress from their starting points, particularly in reading, and their attainment is low.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make broadly average progress. In 2015, this group of pupils achieved better than all pupils nationally in reading, writing and English grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- Most pupils are not well prepared for the next stage of education because of weaknesses in reading, mathematics and English grammar, spelling and punctuation skills.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 138886 |
| Local authority | Northamptonshire |
| Inspection number | 10011764 |

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

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| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 260 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Rachel Mallows |
| Acting Principal | Kelly O'Connor |
| Telephone number | 01933 381600 |
| Website | www.ruskin.northants.dbprimary.com |
| Email address | head@ruskinjunior.net |
| Date of previous inspection | 11–12 June 2014 |

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special education needs and/or disabilities is just above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is just above the national average.
- The school did not meet the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school provides a breakfast club, which is managed by the governing body.
- There have been several changes of staff in the current academic year. There have also been three principals. The acting principal had been in post for five weeks prior to the inspection, following her absence on maternity leave. She is the substantive vice-principal.
- The school does not meet the requirements on the publication of specified information on its website. The school has not evaluated the impact of the sports premium funding from the previous academic year. In addition, the school does not provide details of the curriculum for mathematics or English.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed parts of 18 lessons, some with the acting principal. The inspectors also looked at examples of pupils' work in their books.
- The inspection team met with a group of pupils and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the leaders of English, mathematics, computing, science and PE, the curriculum leader, designated senior leads for safeguarding, as well as members of the governing body and representatives of the Education Fellowship Trust.
- The inspector spoke informally to parents at the start of the inspection. The inspection team also considered the 23 responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, and the 13 responses to the free text service provided by Ofsted.
- The inspector also considered the questionnaires completed by 12 pupils and the 10 responses completed by members of staff.
- The inspector also looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the minutes of the governing body meetings, the school development plan, external reports and information relating to behaviour, attendance, performance management and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Martin Finch, lead inspector

Janis Warren

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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