

Rufford Primary School

Bredon Avenue, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY9 7NR

Inspection dates

22–23 November 2016

| Overall effectiveness | Requires improvement |
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| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Requires improvement |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Requires improvement |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Requires improvement |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The school's effectiveness and pupils' achievement have declined since the previous inspection.
- In some classes, teachers do not challenge the most able pupils enough or extend the learning of pupils who fall just short of reaching age-related standards.
- Pupils make slower progress in reading and mathematics than in writing. However, there is more stable staffing now, which is starting to improve achievement.
- Pupils are not being encouraged enough to read widely and often. Pupils do not read enough challenging books or texts.
- Although reducing, there are differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others who are not disadvantaged.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not always make enough progress. Leaders and staff are not checking with sufficient rigour to see if the interventions or support provided for these pupils are helping all of them to reach their learning targets.
- Leaders are not evaluating the quality of teaching robustly enough. Governors are not challenging leaders sufficiently. The priorities for improvement set out in the school development plan are unclear.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and governors have managed and dealt with significant staff changes and a budget deficit well. They have now brought stability to the school and eradicated inadequate teaching, but recognise that there is still more to be done to improve teaching.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils' good behaviour has been maintained since the previous inspection.
- Early reading and phonics in Nursery, Reception and key stage 1 are taught consistently well. Pupils across the school achieve well in writing.
- Children in the early years achieve well, including those in the early stages of learning to speak English, because of good support and teaching.
- There are good relationships between pupils, parents and staff. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance by:
 - making sure that leaders monitor and assess the quality of teaching and pupils' work in books more robustly and check that pupils are making enough progress
 - identifying the most common strengths and weaknesses in teaching and communicating these to teachers and support staff so they know how best to improve their practice
 - ensuring that governors are more actively engaged with school leaders to help them understand more about the actions taken to improve teachers' performance and pupils' progress
 - setting clear targets, priorities and measures of success in the school development plan to help leaders and governors gauge the impact of actions taken to sustain improvements to teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - making sure, particularly in key stage 2, that teachers and support staff have consistently high expectations for work and progress
 - providing work in lessons that is more challenging for the most able pupils and for those who are close to reaching age-related standards
 - checking that teachers and support staff intervene more when pupils make mistakes so they can assess any misunderstandings and provide opportunities for pupils to correct their work, particularly in mathematics
 - making sure that teachers and support staff ask more challenging questions rather than going over too much work already learned.
- Build on the good start made in the early years and key stage 1 to sustain improvements to pupils' attainment and progress in reading and mathematics by:
 - closing still further the difference between the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils and others nationally who are not disadvantaged
 - making sure that pupils read more widely and often to broaden their vocabulary and experience a wider range of books, texts, authors and genres
 - improving pupils' reasoning and numeracy skills in mathematics so they can use the most efficient and effective methods of calculation when solving problems.
- Make sure that leaders and governors check that the teaching and support provided for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are helping all of these pupils make more rapid progress towards their individual learning targets.

An external review of governance, including the use being made of pupil premium funding, should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since joining the school in April 2013, the headteacher has worked closely with governors to manage a large budget deficit. This caused instability because the school had to reduce staffing levels. These difficulties hampered leaders' efforts to improve teaching and contributed to the decline in the school's effectiveness since the previous inspection.
- Although leaders' self-evaluations are accurate, the staffing issues they faced distracted them from establishing clear priorities for improvement. The actions that leaders set out in the school development plan cover too many areas, so lack focus. The development plan does not include clear measures of success to help leaders gauge the impact of their actions on improving teaching and learning.
- Although leaders carry out routine monitoring of lessons, the advice they provide for staff focuses too much on what teachers are doing or planning, and less on how well pupils are learning. However, more stable staffing has enabled the headteacher and deputy headteacher to focus more on training and staff development. Work in pupils' books, assessment information and monitoring records kept by leaders provide convincing evidence of more consistent and increasingly effective teaching.
- Leaders have, rightly, identified that some of the teaching still requires improvement. The most effective teachers and support staff are sharing best practice and carrying out training with other staff to influence and improve the consistency of teaching across the school. Professional development and training are well devised and effective, resulting in more consistent practice in lessons and in pupils' workbooks.
- There are now signs of recovery and improvement. Staffing is now much more stable than previously and leaders have deployed and recruited strong teachers who are bringing about improvement. The deputy headteacher manages the early years well and has been successful in maintaining good provision. Assessment information about pupils' achievement and progress is now being used consistently by teachers to monitor and identify pupils who are still at risk of falling behind.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have stood firm and managed to maintain staff morale and, at the same time, deal with and eradicate inadequate teaching. The response to this inspection's staff survey has been positive, reflecting the fact that teachers and support staff now feel that they are being supported and leaders have brought back consistency and stability.
- Parents' views from surveys and responses by text or email to Ofsted's regional office also reflect this positivity. All the parents that spoke with an inspector expressed their satisfaction with the efforts of leaders and staff, recognising also that it has been difficult for the staff in recent times.
- Staff, governors and leaders demonstrate that there is capacity for sustained improvement. Provision in the early years remains good; the teaching in key stage 1 is consistently bringing about improvement to pupils' achievement, particularly in early reading and phonics; and pupils in most classes in key stage 2 are now making more progress compared with their achievement in recent years, particularly in writing.

- The management and oversight of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities require improvement. The funding for special educational needs provision is being largely used to provide additional adult support for pupils who have education, health and care plans or statements of special educational needs. This support is mostly effective as it is helping pupils to make progress towards their learning targets.
- However, there are inconsistent expectations set for those pupils who do not have individualised statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans, but have additional learning needs. Leaders do not monitor work and interventions robustly enough for pupils who are withdrawn for parts of lessons or taught in small groups. As a result, the impact of these interventions varies, so some pupils are making better progress than others.
- The school's curriculum is having a positive impact on pupils' personal development, as well as their behaviour and attitudes to learning. The headteacher and deputy headteacher oversee curriculum plans to make sure that pupils cover core skills in all subjects, although more is still needed to encourage pupils to read widely and often.
- Teachers plan interesting topics alongside subjects of the national curriculum, including religious education, a modern foreign language (French), history, geography, science, the creative arts, music and physical education. Pupils say they enjoy school very much and are energised by the many topics and educational visits they experience. For example, a recent visit to Warwick Castle inspired pupils to write about features of castles and they illustrated their work with some art and design displays of high quality.
- The primary school physical education sports premium is used well to make sure that all pupils learn to swim and to provide expert coaches who regularly teach team games, sports and gymnastics.
- The staff make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school is successful in promoting a strong emphasis on British values of tolerance and respect for democracy and equality. Pupils cover a range of topics and themes, which prepare them well for life in modern multicultural Britain. The school council, head boy and head girl, as well as other roles that pupils are encouraged to adopt, demonstrate how well staff value pupils' contributions and how much of a say pupils have in the life and work of the school.
- The local authority has intervened recently to challenge and support the school by carrying out reviews and deploying a consultant to provide advice and training. It would have been better to have intervened sooner during the previous year when standards started to decline. There has been some complacency on the part of the local authority in this respect.

Governance of the school

- Governance requires improvement because it has not sustained the quality of education provided at the time of the previous inspection.
- Although governors have coped with reducing the budget deficit this year, staffing levels were clearly unsustainable after the previous inspection, so governors should

have acted sooner to address this.

- The finance committee of the governing body monitors pupil premium funding but with mixed results. Governors do not have a clear enough assessment of the reasons why the achievement of disadvantaged pupils varies across classes.
- Governors receive assessment information about strengths and weaknesses but do not challenge leaders enough to make sure that any differences or variations in pupils' learning and progress are fully explained to the governing body.
- Governors are committed to the school and its community. Good use is made of some governors who regularly visit the school to provide support and advice, as well as contributing to school assemblies and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff recruitment and vetting procedures are rigorous. There is a vigilant culture of safeguarding. Every member of staff, including supervisory staff and adults who manage the breakfast club, understand their roles in relation to child protection procedures. Staff and governors know what to do and who to ask to seek advice about the safety and welfare of pupils.
- The parents that spoke to an inspector were positive about the school and are pleased with the way that leaders and staff are committed to pupils' well-being and safety. Teachers and support staff are well trained and vigilant. Administrative staff diligently check and verify the identity of visitors when they arrive at school.
- The safety and well-being of children in the early years (Nursery and Reception class) are well managed and the early years welfare requirements are fully met.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Pupils' work, assessment information and lesson observations show that teaching has not yet led to consistently good achievement for pupils in all classes.
- Inspection findings confirm that teachers are increasingly adopting more consistent practice, but are not always expecting enough or insisting that pupils complete their work on time. For example, pupils are not always clear about how much work they are expected to complete and this is more common in some key stage 2 classes.
- Teachers do not ask enough questions to probe further and deepen pupils' understanding and knowledge. This slows learning and prevents pupils from developing higher levels of understanding or attaining standards at greater depth. The work set for pupils is not always challenging enough, especially for the most able pupils and those who are close to reaching age-related standards, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Staff stability and more consistent classroom practice are now helping pupils to catch up lost ground in most classes. However, pupils do less well in reading because they are not being encouraged to read regularly enough, and do not have opportunities to

read widely from a range of books, authors and texts.

- In mathematics, the deputy headteacher has led some effective training to help teachers plan more reasoning and problem-solving work for pupils. There are early signs of improvement in pupils' books, although in some lessons pupils are not using the most efficient methods of calculation to solve problems.
- Class discussions help pupils contribute and share ideas. In some lessons, they are given opportunities to read aloud to others or to explain their answers in complete sentences, which improves their speech and language. Pupils in Year 2, for example, were observed answering questions fully because the teacher provided ample opportunities for productive discussion in groups. Evidence from their previous work shows that Year 3 pupils often have time to map out and share their ideas before writing independently. This was also a good feature of teaching seen in other classes across the school, which helps pupils achieve well in writing.
- Teachers' assessments are improving as there is now consistent practice. Teachers usually offer good guidance for pupils so they can understand the next steps in their learning, although teachers' expectations are not always high enough.
- In mathematics books, pupils are often expected to solve problems that engage and interest them. Problem-solving and reasoning are now being taught regularly to improve standards. The most effective teaching helps pupils to improve their knowledge and understanding because teachers are helping pupils to correct errors and go over mistakes. However, in some classes, problems are too easy or too hard. Pupils either complete a whole page, getting everything correct without enough challenge to their learning, or they complete a page incorrectly and are not being taught an efficient method of calculation.
- Despite these weaknesses there are signs of improvement. Many lessons are well structured, pupils are managed well and positive relationships are developed. The most effective teaching sets high expectations for behaviour and learning. This enables pupils to achieve well and show keen attitudes to work that contribute well to their learning.
- Good-quality work and displays around the school reflect the wide range of opportunities on offer to the pupils, as well as the good contribution that the school's planned curriculum makes to pupils' personal development.
- Both teachers and support staff plan and teach small groups of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils who have additional learning needs make similar rates of progress as other pupils, although this varies across groups. Teachers and those responsible for monitoring these pupils are not checking the impact of each intervention programme to make sure they are best suited to help pupils reach their expected learning targets.
- Pupils in the early stages of learning English are provided with support that is well planned and effective to meet their needs. These pupils soon settle into the school and improve their spoken and written English.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils respond well to learning in lessons and the good opportunities they have to celebrate the success of other pupils during celebration assemblies each week. Pupils have many opportunities to share ideas and to learn about the world's major faiths, customs and cultures. This makes a good contribution to their spiritual and moral development.
- The school is successful in tackling any form of discrimination in a cohesive and supportive school community. This is done through special topics, cultural and religious festivals and celebrations and a wide range of educational visits or visitors to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of the different cultural, religious and ethnic traditions that exist in the United Kingdom and beyond. These activities make a strong contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.
- Pupils are confident, mature and responsible young people who look out for each other and, as many told inspectors, it is easy to make and keep friendships. There are positive and trusting relationships between adults and pupils, and among pupils.
- There are effective systems used by staff to record concerns about an individual pupil or group. These are followed up by senior staff and teachers so that any pupil at risk of harm or who may be worried about something has an adult they know they can trust. The staff are vigilant and caring and have been trained to prevent pupils from exposure to racist or extremist views. Pupils are respectful of each other's differences and the school successfully promotes British values of tolerance, democracy and the rule of law. Elected school councillors, monitors and other helpful roles given to pupils enable them to make a good contribution to their school and community.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Good behaviour has been maintained since the previous inspection. In nearly all of the lessons observed, inspectors found pupils to be attentive and well behaved. Pupils are keen to learn and do their best. They cooperate well when working in groups or with a partner, and are willing to tackle problems, demonstrating resilience and perseverance.
- Pupils behave well and safely outside of lessons. School councillors make a significant contribution to their school community and come up with ideas and suggestions to improve the school.
- Pupils have good manners, are polite and generally show respect for others' feelings. They are helpful and courteous to adults and visitors, and are helpful and respectful to pupils with disabilities or when a child has an accident. In these instances, they are quick to volunteer to alert an adult or seek help.
- In a few lessons observed, pupils strayed off task because the teaching was not challenging them enough. In these lessons, pupils were not expected to produce

enough work because the staff were less vigilant when pupils worked independently and expectations were not high enough.

- Leaders and staff keep robust records and monitor patterns of absence well. Staff have worked well with parents to encourage pupils to attend regularly and to come to school on time. As a result, attendance is improving but remains just below the national average and requires further improvement. Leaders and other staff use effective measures by working with families to reduce persistent absence rates, which are getting closer to the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Leaders and staff were quick to respond to the disappointing national test results for Year 6 pupils in 2016. Last year's national assessments, and test results in 2016, show that pupils did not achieve as well as they should in reading and mathematics. Too few pupils reached the age-related standard in reading in Year 6 last year and made slow progress compared with writing and mathematics.
- It is not possible to compare the most recent national test results (2016) for pupils in Year 6 with previous years' results. This year's tests were the first to be administered as part of the revised national curriculum and there are different attainment criteria compared to previous years. The Year 1 phonics screening test results improved again, reflecting three consecutive years' improvement. These results can be compared with previous years as they have not changed and the most recent results confirm that standards in early reading and phonics are in line with the national average. This indicates good progress in both the early years and key stage 1 in early reading and phonics.
- In key stages 1 and 2, the 2016 national tests showed that the overall attainment of pupils in reading and mathematics was below the national average. In 2015, the school did not meet the government's floor standards at that time (the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics for Year 6 pupils). These results show that some pupils are not making enough progress, in reading particularly, and, to a lesser extent, in mathematics.
- Current progress measures in most classes show that the headteacher and senior leaders have improved teaching enough to start raising standards. The school's accurate assessment information shows that current progress and attainment in classes across the school show improvement. However, improvements are not yet at a consistent or even pace across classes, reflecting inconsistencies in the quality and effectiveness of teaching that still remain.
- The difference between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others who are not disadvantaged is diminishing although, again, this is uneven as the differences are wider in some classes compared with others. The school's use of pupil premium funding to target and support the achievement of disadvantaged pupils requires improvement in order to achieve greater consistency across classes.
- Pupils are making better progress in writing compared with reading and mathematics. This is because, in most classes, the teaching is more effective and consistent than previously and there is now stable staffing. Across the school, there are increasing

opportunities for pupils to write more extensively and independently in other subjects, such as science, religious education and humanities (history and geography), and the quality of handwriting and spelling is reasonably consistent, reflecting teachers' consistent expectations and a good range of topics covered in the school's curriculum.

- The most able pupils are not always reaching high enough standards, including those that are disadvantaged who fall short of reaching these higher standards. However, there are signs of improvement in mathematics and, to a lesser extent, in reading, where an increasing proportion of pupils are on track to reach higher standards.
- Younger pupils in the early years and key stage 1 are increasingly using their phonics skills well to read independently with confidence. However, some pupils, including older pupils in key stage 2, do not read with full understanding because they are not reading often enough or experiencing more challenging and varied books, authors and genres of literature.
- Most pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress, although this is inconsistent in some classes because, like other pupils, some make slower progress. However, most pupils, including new arrivals who speak little or no English, learn to converse with their classmates and settle into school quickly. Nearly half of pupils who join the school are learning English as an additional language. By the time they finish key stage 1 and key stage 2, the large majority of these pupils become fluent English speakers.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, in all year groups, make similar progress to most other pupils, including those that are disadvantaged. In some classes and in the early years, planned support and interventions, particularly in English and mathematics lessons, and topic work in science and other subjects, help pupils who find learning difficult to keep up with others. Some interventions for pupils who have additional learning needs are not as effective as others, reflecting inconsistent expectations and teaching.

Early years provision

Good

- Children's work and progress show that early years provision is making a good contribution to children's all-round development. There is good teaching and effective leadership in the early years. The staff are vigilant, caring and effective in making sure that the children play and learn together safely and productively.
- The youngest children have settled very well into the routines of the morning Nursery class. Adults know and look after the children well, and set them tasks that are usually interesting and varied. Activities in both the Nursery and Reception classes are linked to children's own experiences, such as role-play shopping and cooking and tidying away and cleaning when children finish sessions.
- Most children join the early years with skills and abilities that are well below those typical for their age. Good teaching, combined with strong pastoral support for both children and families, in the Nursery and Reception years is getting all the children off to a good start. The staff have a good understanding of this phase of education and have built strong working relationships with children and their families.
- The children's learning journeys (pictorial and written accounts or records of their work

and progress) show that the children make good progress in relation to their low starting points. Assessments are accurate, so that teachers and support staff have a clear understanding of the needs of all children and a firm basis for planning children's learning. The children's learning journeys are catalogued individually for each child and are very well presented.

- The teaching is consistent and effective across the Nursery and Reception classes. There are daily opportunities for indoor and outdoor play. Children experiment with the effects of different textures and materials, such as sand, dough and water, which improves their dexterity and spatial awareness. The children explore the world around them and are energised by the many and varied opportunities they have to investigate, for example, when Nursery children explored shapes and Reception children looked for 'teddies' during their outdoor 'teddy bear hunt'.
- Children, whatever their starting points or backgrounds, make good progress in early reading and writing. Teachers and support staff are good at linking the teaching of early reading with that of early writing. There is a strong emphasis on speaking and listening, which provides strong foundations for the children's development of early language and literacy. However, there are occasions when adults do not intervene when children work independently, so that some, particularly boys, flit from one area to another. This slows the pace of learning for children who do not sustain an activity.
- There are regular opportunities each day for children to count objects and identify patterns in shapes and numbers. This, too, is providing firm foundations for the children's development of early mathematics, although more could be done for the most able children, who are ready to do more problem-solving and reasoning work.
- Reception children are rapidly developing their understanding of phonics to break down component sounds in unfamiliar words, and this is being built on at the same pace and effectiveness in Year 1. This accounts for the consistent improvement in early reading and phonics results, both in the early years and key stage 1. The early years prepares children well for Year 1.
- The children's communication skills are less well developed than their skills in other areas of learning when they join the school, and particularly so for the majority of children who are learning English as an additional language. Teachers and leaders make sure that all adults working with children ask questions that encourage extended responses. Adults encourage children who are multilingual to talk with others and improve their spoken English. Children often work in pairs or small groups, which helps them to grow in confidence when they talk to their classmates.
- The children are well behaved and attentive. Children are looked after very well and are encouraged to play and work together with other children safely and responsibly. Adults successfully encourage children to cooperate and take turns. Children quickly learn to treat each other with respect and kindness. Their attitudes are good and they show a growing willingness and enthusiasm to work hard and do their best.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 103803 |
| Local authority | Dudley |
| Inspection number | 10025299 |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 229 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Janet Pycraft |
| Headteacher | Alice Middleton |
| Telephone number | 01384 818 975 |
| Website | www.rufford.dudley.sch.uk/ |
| Email address | info@rufford.dudley.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 11–12 December 2012 |

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- There have been significant staff changes since the previous inspection. Leaders and governors had to deal with a large budget deficit over the last two years, resulting in a restructuring of staffing and adjustments to staff roles and responsibilities.
- The school did not meet floor standards in 2015, which are the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- This is a small primary school. There is early years provision comprising a Nursery class for three-year-old children who attend in the mornings only. There is one Reception class for four- and five-year olds who all attend full-time.
- Just over half of pupils are of Pakistani heritage and over a third are from White British

backgrounds. Other pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds representing minority ethnic groups. Over half of all pupils speak English as an additional language and approximately one third of pupils who join the school, particularly in the early years (Nursery or Reception), speak little or no English when they start.

- The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above that of most schools.
- The school runs a morning breakfast club and after-school clubs for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- In addition to lesson observations, some of which were carried with the headteacher, inspectors reviewed pupils' recorded work and met with groups of pupils to discuss their work, behaviour and safety, or to hear them read. Inspectors spoke to pupils informally during break and lunchtimes to ask them their views about the school. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and safety in the playground and at other times. An inspector observed a school assembly.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation including the leaders' and governors own evaluations of the school's effectiveness, the school's development plan, information about pupils' achievement, progress and performance and documents and information related to governance, teaching, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, inclusion manager, administrator and other members of teaching and support staff. The lead inspector met three governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. He also met with an education improvement adviser and a literacy consultant from Dudley local authority. Inspectors spoke to pupils during lessons about their work and progress.
- The lead inspector spoke informally to a number of parents and carers to seek their views about the school. Inspectors considered the 22 responses from parents to the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the views of parents who sent their comments to the West Midlands Ofsted regional office by text or email.
- Inspectors spoke to nearly all teaching staff to provide feedback on lessons observed. Inspectors also considered the views of 12 members of staff who completed the online inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Charalambos Loizou, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Catherine Crooks | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Julie McCarthy | Ofsted Inspector |

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