

Rufford Primary School

Bredon Avenue, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY9 7NR

Inspection dates

26–27 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning is variable across the school. In some parts of the school and in some subjects it is not good enough.
- Not all teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Some teachers do not ensure that they plan tasks that build on what pupils already know and can do. As a result, pupils' attainment and progress are inconsistent.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupil premium funding is used as effectively as possible. As a result, disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Their progress, although improving, is not strong enough to ensure that they catch up with other pupils nationally.
- The teaching of phonics is inconsistent. Some pupils, particularly the least able, do not acquire the skills they need to be able to decode words successfully. This means that some pupils do not read fluently and accurately by the end of key stage 1.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics across the school, while improving, remain low in several year groups.
- The school's wider curriculum is not planned well enough to ensure that pupils develop knowledge and skills in a wide range of subjects. The role of the subject leader requires further development.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, the recent strategies they have introduced to improve the quality of education are appropriate. However, these improvements are not embedded throughout the school.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and as they move around the school. They are polite, well mannered and welcoming to visitors.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. They enjoy coming to school, where their needs are well met.
- Leaders are working hard to improve attendance. Overall attendance is currently in line with the national average for primary schools.
- The school provides effective personal, social and emotional support for vulnerable pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in order to improve pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that all teachers make effective use of assessment information to plan tasks that build on what pupils already know and can do
 - ensuring that all teachers have consistently high expectations of the quality and presentation of pupils' work in all subjects
 - ensuring that phonics is taught consistently well in key stage 1
 - improving all adults' questioning skills so that they are in line with those of the strongest practitioners in the school.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - senior leaders review and adapt pupil premium spending to make sure that disadvantaged pupils make strong progress in a range of subjects across the curriculum
 - governors check the school's pupil premium strategy and evaluation reports in order to challenge leaders more effectively about the impact of this funding
 - the curriculum is reviewed so that it has a strong focus on building pupils' knowledge and skills in all subjects
 - support continues to be provided for the developing role of subject leaders.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how the school may improve this aspect of its work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Although overall effectiveness is not yet good, this is an improving school. Since September 2018, the headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have formed an excellent partnership and they are ambitious for the school. They have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. After careful consideration of what needs to be improved, they have introduced several new initiatives. However, this work is very recent and it is too soon for these improvements to have established consistently good teaching, learning and assessment across the school.
- Most staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire and those whom inspectors spoke to during the inspection are proud to be part of the school. Many say that it has improved since the last inspection. Staff understand what needs to improve and they appreciate the training that leaders have provided and agree that it is helping them to be better practitioners. Staff feel listened to and valued; as a result, morale is high.
- Over time, teachers' assessments have been inaccurate. In response to this, leaders have ensured that all staff have benefited from training to assess pupils' work correctly. Last year, moderation of judgements by the local authority showed that teachers' assessments are now accurate. However, some teachers do not make good use of this assessment information to plan tasks that build on what pupils already know and can do. Leaders have introduced an assessment system that allows them to track the progress that pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics. This information is analysed carefully so that additional support can be provided for pupils who are not making enough progress. While assessment information about current pupils shows that rates of progress are improving in reading, writing and mathematics, this is inconsistent across the school.
- Leaders have used some of the pupil premium funding effectively, for example to support disadvantaged pupils' speech and language development. However, leaders have not considered the needs of all disadvantaged pupils throughout the school, and there are limited interventions to improve the progress and attainment of this group of pupils. Leaders and governors do not evaluate the effectiveness of the pupil premium strategy well enough. Often, evaluations are too broad and do not include precise information about the impact of any initiatives or interventions.
- Physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is used to develop teaching skills and to ensure that pupils experience a broad range of sports. It is also used to support a range of after-school clubs and activities at lunchtime. Currently, senior leaders and governors do not check plans or monitor the impact of the funding closely enough, although there are plans in place to do this during this academic year.
- The additional funding to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is used effectively. The coordinator for the provision of pupils with SEND accurately identifies pupils' needs, supports the planning of interventions and makes checks on pupils' progress. Most pupils make good progress from their starting points, particularly in reading and writing.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively. Pupils learn about different world religions and cultures and they demonstrate high levels of

respect for each other's different beliefs. Leaders have recently reviewed how pupils learn about British values. Pupils could explain to inspectors their understanding of democracy through linking it to elections of school council members in school.

- Subject leadership is in the early stages of development. Senior leaders have recently clarified the expectations of this role and they are providing support for subject leaders to produce action plans. While the curriculum is broad and provides a range of opportunities to enrich learning with trips and visitors, there are limited opportunities for pupils to gain a deep understanding of what they are learning about. Leaders are currently reviewing the content of the curriculum to ensure that there is a focus on building pupils' knowledge and skills as they progress through each key stage in a wide range of subjects.
- Most parents and carers are positive about the work of the school. They agree that their children are safe and happy. Many parents praise the approachable staff, who always have time to solve any problems that children might have.

Governance of the school

- Governors are proud to be part of the school and they are determined to improve outcomes for all pupils.
- Following the last inspection, there was a review of the governing body. Since then, governors have ensured that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to be effective. Members of the governing body, including some very recently appointed governors, have a broad range of skills and experience, which they are now using well to bring about whole-school improvement.
- Governors now have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement of the school. This is because they check for themselves what leaders have told them. Governors make visits to school, where they work alongside leaders to carry out monitoring activities, including visits to lessons, talking to pupils and looking at pupils' work. However, this work needs further development so that governors can challenge and hold leaders and managers to account more effectively. For example, governors acknowledge that they have not held leaders well enough to account for the use of the pupil premium and how additional funding for PE is spent.
- Governors have accessed a range of relevant training to ensure that they fulfil their statutory safeguarding duties. This includes safer recruitment, child protection and 'Prevent' duty training.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff recruitment processes and management of the school's single central register of staff are rigorous. All staff benefit from up-to-date safeguarding training, including on the 'Prevent' duty. As a result, all staff know how to spot the signs of abuse and how to report any concerns they have.
- Leaders ensure that child protection records are stored securely. They are well organised and contain the relevant information needed to support vulnerable pupils as

effectively as possible. Leaders also track the attendance of persistently absent pupils very carefully and make extra checks on these pupils to ensure that they are safe when absent from school.

- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. They have every confidence that any adult in school would help them to solve any problems they might have. Staff told inspectors that they firmly believe that pupils are safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable across year groups and subjects. While improvements are emerging, some teachers are not following agreed whole-school approaches well enough. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are inconsistent. As a result, in some classes, work is not well matched to what pupils already know and can do. This limits the progress that pupils can make to reach the standard of which they are capable in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Some teachers and teaching assistants use questions particularly well to clarify and extend pupils' learning. However, some staff do not use questions well enough to make pupils think harder about what they are doing.
- A new approach to teaching mathematics has been introduced this academic year. Leaders have ensured that all staff have secure subject knowledge. Most teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to practise calculation skills. In addition, pupils in most year groups are expected to apply their knowledge and understanding when solving a range of problems. As a result, mathematical fluency is improving throughout the school. However, some of this work is in the early stages of development, and in some classes planned tasks are too easy for the most able or too hard for the least able pupils.
- The teaching of reading is improving. Last year, leaders revised how reading was taught and now ensure that all pupils share and discuss high-quality texts that are well matched to the standards typical for their age. In addition, leaders have increased the focus on developing pupils' comprehension skills. Early indications of success can be seen in upper key stage 2, where pupils' books show that they are confidently responding to questions about the impact of characters' actions, the author's intent and predictions. Pupils told inspectors that they like the new approach. One summed up the view of the group by saying, 'We now read much more interesting books than last year.'
- All teachers ensure that there are planned opportunities for pupils to write extended pieces as part of English lessons. Since September, there has been an increased focus on spelling, grammar and punctuation. In some year groups, pupils also have regular opportunities to apply their writing skills in topic work. As a result, pupils in upper key stage 2 are making strong progress this year. However, this practice is not embedded throughout the school.
- The teaching of phonics is not consistently good throughout key stage 1. This is because adults do not ensure that they are building well enough on what pupils can already do. Leaders have made this a priority for improvement.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are strong. Pupils enjoy lessons and they will readily ask for help if they need it. They enjoy receiving praise, and this motivates them to do their best.

- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported to communicate with their classmates. As a result, they are confident learners who demonstrate enthusiasm for a wide range of subjects. In some classes, this group of pupils make strong progress, particularly in reading and writing. This is because of the constant focus on language acquisition and because teachers know how to meet the particular needs of pupils who are new to English. However, some teachers need further guidance to do this as effectively as possible.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils with SEND. They ensure that there is a tight focus on pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills and knowledge. Pupils in the Acorn room are particularly well supported to manage their personal, emotional and social skills so that they are able to concentrate on completing planned tasks that are well matched to their different abilities.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say that they are safe in school and that they feel well cared for. They are confident that any adult in the school would help them with any problems they might have. Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying and they know what to do if they have any concerns about this happening to them or a friend.
- Pupils are respectful of adults and one another. They demonstrate a good understanding of different faiths and cultures. Pupils are adamant that everyone is welcome at their school, regardless of their culture, skin colour or religion. Pupils also acquire a good understanding of democracy and what it means to them, for example through the election of school council members.
- The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn how to be safe, healthy and happy. For example, pupils learn how to use the internet safely. Pupils have a good understanding that a healthy lifestyle has a balanced diet and plenty of exercise. Adults are mindful of pupils' mental health and ensure that worry boxes are checked daily. Older pupils have also had first-aid training.
- Last year, leaders provided training for all staff on how to build pupils' resilience to new challenges in their learning. Many pupils have responded well to this and are growing in self-confidence. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and know that they need to work hard to produce their best work.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils told me that everyone understands the rules and that almost everybody behaves well. They agreed that teachers apply the rules fairly when someone misbehaves.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and as they move around the school. They focus on their learning and there are very few disruptions to lessons. Pupils are polite, well mannered and welcoming to visitors.

- Pupils behave well during breaktimes and lunchtimes. Pupils enjoy the range of activities on offer at lunchtime. Play leaders organise games and activities, including in quiet areas, and they ensure that no pupils are left alone or unhappy.
- Leaders track attendance carefully. They support the importance of good attendance and punctuality. Leaders celebrate good and improving attendance with certificates and rewards for pupils. Overall absence rates are in line with the national average. Over the last two years, there has been an increase in the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent, and it remains above the national average. Leaders work with families and a range of external agencies when attendance issues arise. As a result, current records show that attendance rates are improving for the majority of identified pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over the last three years, rates of progress have been inconsistent in key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress in reading was well below average in each year.
- In 2017 and 2018, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was well below the national average. Very few pupils achieved a greater depth of learning in any subject.
- In 2018, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 was also below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Current assessment information shows that there is an increase in the proportion of pupils who are working at the standard typical for their age in each year group in reading, writing and mathematics. However, proportions in some year groups remain low. In addition, pupils' books in both key stages show variability in rates of progress. For example, the most able pupils are now making stronger rates of progress than in the past, but progress for low-attaining pupils remains weak in some classes.
- The rates of progress for disadvantaged pupils are variable across the school. Assessment information and pupils' books show that disadvantaged pupils are now making better progress than in the past. However, in some year groups, this is not strong enough to help pupils catch up and reach the attainment usual for their age. Very few disadvantaged pupils across the school are working at greater depth in any subject.
- Last year there was a dip in the proportion of Year 1 pupils who achieved the required standard in the phonics screening check. Current pupils' progress in phonics is not strong enough to allow a significant proportion of pupils to develop good early reading skills.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress from their varying starting points in reading and writing. They make less progress in mathematics.
- The wider curriculum ensures that all pupils experience learning in a wide range of subjects. However, curriculum plans do not ensure that pupils build on their knowledge and skills year-on-year. Consequently, pupils' achievement in the wider curriculum is variable in different subjects and across the curriculum.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of the early years is effective. Careful checks are made on children's learning and development in all areas of learning. This information is used to ensure that teachers plan activities that build on what children already know and can do. Evidence in children's learning journey books shows that they make good progress in all aspects of the curriculum.
- Many children enter the early years with weak skills in most areas of learning but particularly in speech, language and communication. As a result, adults place a high priority on developing children's vocabulary, speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Adults also promote children's personal, social and emotional development well. This means that children become confident learners who have positive attitudes to learning.
- The environment both indoors and outside is well organised to reflect all areas of learning. Resources are well chosen to promote high engagement through exploration, investigation and creativity. Adults ensure that they take account of children's interests and build these into topics and specific areas of the environment. Many activities have no fixed outcome, and adults encourage children to go where their learning will take them.
- In addition, adults take every opportunity to promote reading and writing in all work stations and themed areas throughout the setting. Planned reading tasks are often linked to children's interests. For example, during the inspection, a group of children were sharing a book about farm animals. They excitedly recalled the animals they had seen on a recent trip to a farm. Phonics is taught well in the early years because adults are knowledgeable and make learning to read fun.
- Additional funding is used well. Leaders ensure that ratios of children to adults are as low as possible. In addition, they ensure that adults are trained to meet the specific needs of disadvantaged children and those with SEND. For example, one teaching assistant is trained to deliver interventions that target children's speech and communication skills. Children make strong progress in this aspect of their learning.
- Relationships between adults and children and children with one another are positive. Children behave well. Adults interact well with children and encourage them to talk about what they are doing. Sometimes adults do not use questioning as effectively as they could to take children's learning forward. This is because some adults do not model a wide enough range of vocabulary or expect children to develop their answers more fully when they answer questions.
- Teachers in Reception are developing more effective transition arrangements between the early years and key stage 1. This is to ensure that as many children as possible are personally and academically well prepared for Year 1.
- Adults value the contribution of parents and meet with them regularly to discuss their child's progress. Parents are invited to attend workshops, for example about phonics, to help them support their child's learning at home.
- Leaders ensure that the arrangements for welfare and safeguarding children in the early years meet requirements.

School details

Unique reference number	103803
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10088473

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

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	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Tom Fish
Headteacher	Ms Alice Middleton
Telephone number	01384 818975
Website	www.rufford.dudley.sch.uk/
Email address	Info@rufford.dudley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–23 November 2016

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The deputy headteacher left the school in July 2018 and this post is currently being filled by the assistant headteacher who is now the acting deputy headteacher.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The local authority has deployed an adviser to support and provide challenge to the school. A review was carried out earlier this year and the school is acting on the advice provided. The school has been allocated funding to work with a national leader of education, but this work is in the very early stages of development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment in all classes and in a range of subjects. Some of the observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in a range of subjects across the curriculum.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talked to them about their reading.
- The lead inspector met with a group of governors and a representative from the local authority.
- A range of evidence, such as published data, was analysed prior to the inspection. Information on the school's website was also considered.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents during the inspection, including assessment and attendance records, minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding documentation and leaders' monitoring records.
- Parents' views were gathered at the start of the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the 11 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 42 responses to the staff questionnaire and 142 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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