

Richard Atkins Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Unique reference number | 100578 |
| Local authority | Lambeth |
| Inspection number | 376416 |
| Inspection dates | 6–7 March 2012 |
| Lead inspector | Penny Spencer |

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 | 428 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Nigel East |
| Headteacher | Julie Roberts |
| Date of previous school inspection | 9–10 July 2009 |
| School address | New Park Road Brixton Hill London SW2 4JP |
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Introduction

Inspection team

Penny Spencer

Additional Inspector

Howard Dodd

Additional inspector

Samuel Ofori-Kyereh

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team saw 18 lessons and observed 16 teachers. They carried out several learning walks and met with the headteacher, senior leaders, members of the governing body, the extended school manager, learning mentors, parents and carers, and members of the school council. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, development plan, data analysis and evidence of the monitoring and evaluation of teachers' performance. They also took note of the 126 responses from parents and carers to the questionnaire.

Information about the school

Richard Atkins is a larger-than-average primary school whose roll is rising. At the local authority's request, the school opened a third Reception class in September 2011. The majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, the main groups coming from Black African and Black Caribbean heritages. Over half the pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well-above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The proportion of pupils who joined or left the school other than at the normal times has been high, mainly because of the refurbishment of local housing. However, this movement has settled and is now broadly average. The school has a small breakfast club and after-school club managed by the governing body. There is a purpose-built learning and community centre on site, managed by the school, which provides a variety of classes and courses for parents and carers and pupils throughout the day, after school and at weekends. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Richard Atkins Primary School is a good school. It is also improving because of strong leadership. Its partnership with parents and carers is a notable strength. Its purpose-built centre, The Clapham Park Centre, is a landmark in the local area and is used extensively by the school and local community groups. The school is not outstanding because the quality of teaching is not consistently good or better.
- Achievement is good overall and improving. Most groups of pupils make good progress. However, some high-ability pupils are not always challenged sufficiently and make less progress than they should. Consequently, attainment at the higher levels in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, especially in mathematics, is below the national averages.
- Teaching is good overall. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a positive start because teachers plan interesting and engaging lessons that enable them to make good progress from their low starting points. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because the interventions they receive are carefully tailored to their needs. Teachers' marking and their use of targets, especially in mathematics, are not always comprehensive enough for pupils to understand how they might improve their work.
- Pupils are polite and respectful towards each other and most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. High expectations and a consistent approach to managing behaviour mean the school is a happy place to be. Parents and carers fully support the view that the school keeps their children safe.
- The headteacher, supported by an impressive governing body, leads the school with drive and ambition. Systems for monitoring and evaluation provide accurate, detailed information to sustain improvement. Monitoring of teaching and of teachers' performance is robust. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is excellent.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by July 2012, so all teaching is consistently

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good or better by ensuring that all teachers use data effectively to plan lessons that meet the needs of all learners, especially those who are more able.

- Improve the achievement of all pupils in the coming school year by:
 - ensuring marking gives pupils a clearer indication of exactly what they need to do to improve their work
 - making targets more specific and clearly linked to levels of attainment, especially in mathematics, with clear time frames for their achievement.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Achievement has improved steadily since the last inspection and pupils' attainment is now broadly average by the end of Key Stage 2. This means that many groups of pupils are now making accelerated progress from Key Stage 1 and gaps are closing. Parents and carers support this view wholeheartedly, as do the inspection findings, which judge that pupils' achievement is good.

Pupils enter the Nursery with much lower skills levels than are usually expected for their age. Communication and language skills are very low and children often lack the social and personal skills expected of them. Assessment information and observation by the inspection team show that all groups of children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The proportion of children reaching the expected goals for learning at the end of the Reception Year, while still lower than that expected, is increasing steadily.

Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1 and standards are rising so most pupils now attain the expected levels, especially in reading and writing. However, the proportion of pupils attaining at the higher levels, especially in mathematics, remains below average. Early identification and rapid intervention for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs mean they make good progress towards reaching their challenging targets. Good progress continues in Key Stage 2 and is reflected in the steady rise over time in pupils' overall attainment at the end of Year 6. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 remains below average.

Achievement in reading is good and pupils of all abilities use appropriate strategies to help them read for meaning. The school's structured approach to reading through a specific programme allows all pupils to access lessons at their level and helps teachers to monitor pupils' progress carefully. As a result, pupils' attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is good. Consequently, pupils are well placed to move on to the next stage of their education.

Quality of teaching

All teachers are knowledgeable and confident in their understanding of their pupils. Most are skilled at questioning pupils to deepen understanding and are able to alter

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their questions to allow pupils of different abilities to respond appropriately. This was evident during a Year 5 literacy lesson when specific, directed questioning allowed pupils to recall their previous learning and support each other to make good progress. Teachers model correct patterns of speech and actively encourage pupils to answer questions using full sentences. This was particularly the case during a literacy lesson when Year 1 pupils were responding orally to questions, based on their group reading book, with confidence and clarity.

In the best lessons, pupils are motivated and make good progress. However, progress in some lessons is too slow because the teacher talks for too long and pupils become disengaged. Even in the best lessons, work for the higher-ability pupils is not always sufficiently challenging to improve attainment rapidly. Rigorous monitoring of performance means teachers are increasingly accountable for the progress of their pupils. However, changes to the way data are analysed and disseminated and some recent changes in staffing mean that a few teachers do not have a clear enough picture of the current levels of attainment of pupils to enable them to plan work accordingly.

The interesting and varied curriculum gives all pupils exciting experiences that broaden their knowledge and understanding of the world and their place within it. This was seen to good effect in a lesson when pupils were enjoying learning about life in Sweden during a literacy lesson. Parents and carers fully support the view that their children are taught well and inspection evidence supports their views.

While marking is regular and pupils have some opportunities to respond, it fails sometimes to indicate in sufficient detail what pupils need to do next in relation to their targets. This means pupils' responses do not always demonstrate improved understanding. Pupils' targets are often not specific enough, progressive, or regularly evaluated to allow them to know when they have achieved them.

Teaching assistants are generally deployed well in the classrooms and work effectively as a team. They make a significant contribution to learning when working with pupils in small groups and on intervention activities.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, activities are well planned and staff are skilled at making appropriate interventions to optimise learning. Teaching encourages children to be actively engaged in their learning and excellent use is made of the outside environment. The classroom environments are generally stimulating and allow children to develop core skills in a cross-curricular way. Children are encouraged to become independent learners, although some inconsistency in approach means opportunities can be lost.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils, parents and carers agree that the school is a safe and happy place to be. Many parents and carers commented on how the school provides a safe haven from some of the issues in the local community and how it teaches all groups of pupils to

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get along with each other.

The school has a consistent approach to managing behaviour that is understood by all pupils. As a result, learning in lessons is rarely disrupted. In the lessons where teaching is less than good, some pupils disengage from learning and become passive bystanders, resulting in a lack of progress.

Pupils understand that bullying is wrong and are aware of the different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying. The school teaches pupils how to be safe in a variety of situations and had just completed a week of lessons on internet safety. Classes for parents and carers on the use of computers and the internet support a shared understanding of safety further. Pupils, parents and carers feel that bullying is rare and that the school deals with any reported incidents swiftly and effectively. This view is backed up by inspection findings through the scrutiny of incident logs. There have been no exclusions over the past few years.

The work of the learning mentors is increasingly influential in supporting families, whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, to work with the school and support school policies. It has been particularly successful in improving attendance, especially for those pupils who are at risk of becoming persistent absentees. As a result, attendance is now improved and is above average. Most pupils are punctual, but the school is working hard to improve this aspect even further.

Pupils on the school's council are fully engaged in the life of the school and report to the governing body on a number of issues. Playground 'buddies' are active in supporting pupils in the dining hall and playground and take their role seriously. New arrivals to the school are also given 'buddies' to support their induction.

Leadership and management

The strong, determined leadership of the headteacher, a very effective governing body, and an unwavering determination to do the very best for all pupils have ensured that the school has continued to improve since the last inspection. Parents and carers are fully supportive of the headteacher and her leadership and appreciate the opportunities they are given to improve their understanding of how to support their children. Recent changes to strengthen the senior leadership team and impressive opportunities for staff to undertake leadership training and a school-based post-graduate programme indicate that the school has strong capacity to improve.

The school makes excellent arrangements for safeguarding and systems are robust. As a result, families whose circumstances may make them potentially vulnerable are increasingly confident to become involved in their children's learning. Equality of opportunity is at the heart of everything the school stands for and it is highly effective at removing barriers to learning and success. A recent project on identity involved the school, families, and local community groups in celebrating success and achievement in all walks of life.

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The curriculum is broad and exciting and reflects the needs of the pupils well, as well as promoting their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. Topics show depth and use a wide range of activities, including trips, to promote learning. Pupils enjoy opportunities to celebrate the diversity within the school through the curriculum, assemblies and the celebration of festivals. Opportunities for pupils to enrich their education through singing, music, art, chess, and sport are eagerly embraced by pupils and play a significant role in extending their enjoyment and learning. The school uses its partnerships well. Strong links with the regeneration project for the local area and the building of the learning centre have further improved the school's positive image within the local community.

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 pupils' 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. |

8 March 2012



Dear Pupils

Inspection of Richard Atkins Primary School, London SW2 4JP

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. During our visit, we talked to many of you and we would like to thank you for the enthusiastic and thoughtful answers you gave to our questions. You, obviously, enjoy coming to school and get along well with each other.

We think you go to a good school that is still improving. Your headteacher and the staff know how to keep you safe and they help you to behave well. Your teachers plan and teach you interesting lessons that help you to improve your understanding and your learning. As a result, you achieve well, although you do better in English than you do in mathematics. If you find some learning difficult, teachers make sure you get extra support to help you catch up. You have lots of opportunities to take part in exciting clubs and you have achieved many awards for your singing.

To help you do even better, we have asked your headteacher to:

- make sure your teachers use the information they have to plan tasks and activities that meet the needs of you all in lessons, but especially those of you who find learning easy
- help all of you make even faster progress by giving you clearer targets, especially in mathematics, which help you to check how well you are doing, and marking your work in a way that really shows you how to improve.

You can help by keeping up your good behaviour and working hard every day.

We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Penny Spencer
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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