

Rodbourne Cheney Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126275
Local Authority	Swindon
Inspection number	360036
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Lorna Brackstone HMI

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Cooke
Headteacher	Lauren Connor
Date of previous school inspection	18 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector. The team observed seven teachers in 15 lessons or part sessions. Discussions were held with pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the development plan, an analysis of work within the community, the governing body minutes, individual education plans and information about pupils' progress. Confidential questionnaires from 92 pupils, 17 members of staff and 54 parents and carers were considered.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- How effective is the school in reducing the gap in achievement between different groups of pupils?
- Does the quality of teaching and curricular provision fully meet the needs of all pupils?
- Can leaders and managers sustain the pace of change given the extensive commitments across the federation?

Information about the school

Rodbourne Cheney is a small primary school, serving the northern part of the town which includes a high proportion of social housing. It is federated with Moredon Primary and Nursery School and Nyland Special School. Nearly all the pupils come from White British families and a very small minority speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. There are an average number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is a federated leadership team which consists of the executive headteacher, an operational headteacher in each school, a business manager, a children's centre manager and a shared governing body. Within Rodbourne Cheney, Reception and Year 1 are organised together into a large unit. The school has achieved National Healthy School status, a gold Sing Up award and an internationally recognised award for its work with schools abroad.

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: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The key to the success of this outstanding school is the way it promotes learning as a lifelong skill and ensures that all pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their learning. In doing so the school fully meets their aims and objectives by enabling all pupils to have a 'willingness to learn' which 'leads to success'. As the Rodbourne Cheney badge accurately depicts, it has been put safely in the hands of a more global federation which has nurtured, supported and developed it. Four years on from being a school requiring significant improvement with standards that were significantly below national averages, it has achieved a very rapid rate of development, and current standards are well above average.

This has been achieved through the following features.

- An executive headteacher who puts quality teaching and learning at the top of her agenda and ensures that all pupils receive very well-targeted support.
- Teaching staff that plan memorable experiences for developing academic skills and also encourage pupils' personal development, thus enabling them to become thoughtful and reflective young people.
- An Early Years Foundation Stage that provides the best start to school life.
- Top quality relationships with parents and carers which promote engagement in their children's learning.
- Close working partnerships with other schools in the federation, specialist support from agencies and sponsorship from local companies.
- A highly cohesive school community that reaches out locally, nationally and globally.
- Highly efficient and effective use of resources across the federation.

Senior leaders and managers have an accurate view of the strengths and areas for development and have successfully taken action to overcome weaknesses in provision. At the moment the school is reliant on strengths at senior level; the leadership and management skills of middle leaders are not as secure. Teaching has improved very rapidly, and a great deal is good and outstanding. The executive headteacher is acutely aware of how the few minor weaknesses in teaching should be improved to reach the next level. However, systems for record keeping about lesson monitoring do not allow efficient access for analysis, which means it is harder for a range of leaders to contribute to improvement plans for teaching. Nevertheless, action planning is clear and there is a shared commitment to maintaining the pace for further improvements. Given the track record of the leadership team, the school demonstrates a good capacity for further improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop smarter systems to enable wider analysis of how teaching may be improved.
- Support middle managers to develop their strategic role in the future leadership of the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Children start Reception with skills that are below age-related expectations. Inspectors observed exceptional quality of learning and progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Year 1. Pupils move smoothly into Year 2 and the pace of learning observed by inspectors demonstrates that progress is being well maintained. The quality of learning observed in Years 3 to 5 was good and accelerated to an exceptional pace in Year 6. Consequently, pupils attain well above average standards by the time they move on to secondary school. In the past boys did not achieve as well as girls in the Year 6 national tests. However, in the most recent tests results, this gender gap has closed and boys outperformed girls in mathematics. Current Year 6 pupils are on track to maintain these well above average standards. In Key Stage 1, however, boys' progress remains a little slower than that of girls. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress at the same rate as their peers and attain standards that are above those achieved nationally by similar groups.

Pupils enjoy their learning in lessons and were enthusiastic about it when they spoke to inspectors. The best learning takes place when the pupils are actively involved in group work. For instance, Year 6 pupils were required to work together to solve a murder mystery which involved the use of coordinates and quadrants. Pupils deployed themselves very effectively in different roles and worked on clues to find out the identity of the murderer. They apply their skills exceptionally well in business and enterprise projects. For example, through involvement in the 'make your mark with a tenner' initiative, excellent innovative and creative risk-taking strategies were demonstrated as they managed the economics of selling advertising space to local and national companies. Representation on the governing body, the responsibilities undertaken by members of the school council, and their involvement within the federation and with other Swindon schools, are just a few examples of the outstanding commitment that pupils show towards their school and its wider community.

The award of a nationally recognised status for healthy schools reflects the good understanding pupils have of eating sensibly and exercising regularly. This knowledge is not always reflected in the lunch boxes they bring to school. Pupils feel safe in school and most feel that their worries and concerns are dealt with promptly. Behaviour is good and pupils are respectful of each other. The pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was exemplified when they sensitively responded to a period of silence during Remembrance Day.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The consistent use of informative displays in classrooms is a highly effective way of providing a scaffold for pupils' learning. Lesson plans are detailed and activities exceptionally well planned to meet the individual needs of the pupils. Teaching assistants provide a high level of support and intervention groups successfully focus on specific problems with learning. Using laptops and interactive whiteboards to illustrate key skills makes learning interesting and meaningful. While teaching is very seldom less than good, learning has less pace when the pupils have to sit for too long listening to their teacher. Despite this, the impact of the provision is to produce excellent progress. This is because of exceptional strengths in the curriculum and assessment, and in the support and guidance pupils receive.

Assessment systems are of outstanding quality and, consequently, pupils have an excellent understanding of what National Curriculum level they are working at and what they need to do to improve. An innovative approach to curriculum planning, which makes meaningful links between literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), ensures that work is relevant to the needs and interests of the pupils. Theatre outings and trips to London and Berlin make their learning memorable. The extensive range of extra-curricular activities is much enjoyed and this is reflected in the high numbers who attend. The arrangement for sharing of a unit for Reception and Year 1 pupils is beneficial for both year groups, both in terms of continuity of learning and care. A

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thorough knowledge of each child and extremely close links with families and specialist outside agencies enable the school to provide pastoral care, support and guidance that are second to none. As one parent explained, 'They go above and beyond what they should do.'

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Under the inspirational leadership of the executive headteacher, there has been a relentless focus on raising standards and improving the quality of provision. The school community shares this sense of purpose and is very proud of its ongoing success. It has a detailed knowledge of how different groups of pupils perform and implements good strategies to support them. Tolerance and respect are promoted well and any anti-social incidents are rare. The school safeguards its pupils well, meeting all the current statutory requirements and providing good quality assurance systems and risk assessment checks. While the climate for further improvement is unquestionable, and the impact of the leadership of teaching and learning is exemplary, senior leaders recognise that their systems for storing evidence about the quality of teaching are insufficiently accessible. Senior leaders are also aware that although middle managers understand their role, more professional development is required for them to take a greater part in the ongoing development of the school. These things are particularly important for future improvement given the demands the wider federation makes on the most senior leaders. The governing body has a good understanding of the strengths and areas of school development but it is not fully involved in self-evaluation systems.

The popular 'Fabulous Friday' and 'Thrilling Thursday' sessions where parents and carers learn with their children, and specific family events, such as mastering French and cooking on a budget, are just a few examples of ways in which they enjoy extremely positive relationships with the school. The outstanding commitment to working in partnership with others is evident not only through the successful work of the federation but in the close links within the wider Swindon cluster of schools, teacher training providers, local industries and specialist outside agencies. The school's inclusive approach has far-reaching effects beyond its own federated community. This outstanding work has been reflected in a national award which recognised the quality of the international links with schools in China, India, The Gambia, Italy, Germany, Finland and Australia.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make excellent progress from their below average starting points and most exceed the early learning goals by the time they move to Year 1. This is because they are taught extremely well by adults who have an excellent understanding of the needs of this age group. Planning is exceptional and the activities organised ensure that the children engage in their learning. There is an excellent balance between tasks led by the teacher and opportunities for children to choose and plan their own activities. For example, children gleefully experienced the fun of torches as they played in their dark den. Other children made fairy wings and used cubes to measure the wing expanse. One child explained to an inspector that she was writing a book! On a 'welly walk', the children were totally immersed in finding aliens which had been hidden earlier. These activities were all part of the topic on 'fairies and star wars' which the children themselves had chosen. However, intermingled with these child-initiated activities were discrete learning sessions which teaching staff directed extremely well.

The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is exceptionally well led and managed by an extremely knowledgeable and competent coordinator who receives the highest quality support from the teaching assistants. The children's welfare, care and security are very secure in the capable hands of the Early Years Foundation Stage team.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers, who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, expressed very positive views about the school. As one explained, 'I am very happy with my son's school. It is a very lovely, little school.' Although a very small minority had concerns that the school did not prepare their children well enough for the future, inspectors found the preparation to be extremely good. A very small minority of parents and carers did not agree that the school helps their children to have a healthy lifestyle. Although inspectors found that the contents of many of the lunch boxes were not healthy, the school does promote sensible eating habits and the importance of regular exercise.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rodbourne Cheney Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 54 questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 199 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	32	59	22	41	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	67	18	33	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	30	56	24	44	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	63	19	35	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	41	76	13	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	57	21	39	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	44	28	52	2	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	23	43	27	50	3	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	57	23	43	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	50	26	48	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	43	30	56	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	38	70	16	30	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	70	16	30	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rodbourne Cheney Primary School, Swindon SN25 3BN

Thank you for making us so welcome at your school. We enjoyed spending time with you and finding out about all the things you do. We would like to say a particular thank you to those pupils we met who told us about life at your school.

We think that your school provides you with an outstanding quality of education. Your parents endorse our views that the experiences you have are happy ones. You really enjoy coming to school and behave well. By using your council to influence school management decisions, and, through your extremely thoughtful links you have established with schools in Berlin and India, you demonstrate how well you are developing into first-class citizens. Your participation in fund raising and business enterprise events and the excellent progress you make in your academic work prepare you well for the future. You are respectful of religious customs and beliefs other than your own and you showed great sensitivity during the two minutes silence on Remembrance Day. You understand the principles of keeping fit and healthy although the contents of your lunch box do not always reflect this! You have a good understanding of how to keep safe and know that the school takes good care of you.

Your teachers plan extremely interesting activities and this encourages you to learn because the themes they choose are meaningful to you. They use lots of practical activities and this helps you understand what you are learning. We were impressed that you all know your targets and use your teachers' marking to help you move onto the next step in your learning.

Your headteacher and the other adults involved in leading and managing your school do an excellent job and make sure that you receive a fantastic education. We have asked them to develop sharper ways to store information to help the school to improve continually. We have also asked them to support teachers who have extra responsibilities to develop further their role.

Once again, thank you for your help. Keep doing your best and working with the adults in school to make sure Rodbourne Cheney gets even better.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone

Her Majesty's Inspector

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