

# Rotherfield Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131740
<b>Local Authority</b>	Islington
<b>Inspection number</b>	360313
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 December 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	June Woolhouse

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	348
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Carolyn Wagstaff
<b>Headteacher</b>	Elaine Adams
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 December 2010
<b>School address</b>	Rotherfield Street London N1 3EE
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed 19 lessons led by 15 different teachers. Inspectors held meetings with school leaders, members of the governing body and groups of pupils. They talked to parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies, the school development plan, safeguarding documentation, the school site, and pupils' work, displays and photographs. Inspectors analysed 74 questionnaires returned from parents and carers, and others from staff and pupils.

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

- Is teaching in English consistently meeting the needs of all gender and ability groups?
- In mathematics, are teaching and the curriculum planned sufficiently well to ensure good progress for all groups, especially the most-able pupils?
- Is the school's capacity to sustain the planned improvements sufficiently well embedded in leadership at all levels?

## Information about the school

Rotherfield is a larger than average urban primary school serving its immediate neighbourhood. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average; their needs include specific and moderate learning difficulties, speech, language and communication needs, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder and physical difficulties. An above-average proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school holds the Artsmark and Activemark awards and Healthy Schools status. Rotherfield is an Eco-School and gained its Green Flag in 2009. A breakfast and after-school club operates on a daily basis. The headteacher and special educational needs co-ordinator support another primary school as part of the London Challenge.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Rotherfield Primary is a good school. It has maintained the momentum from the time of the last inspection and successfully addressed the key issues. Pupils achieve well; almost all parents and carers are pleased with what goes on in school and they all agree that their children enjoy school. One described it thus: 'We are happy being a part of Rotherfield Primary School's family.'

Children enter the school with skills and understanding that are well below the levels expected for their age, especially their emotional, social, communication and language skills. They make an increasingly good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and build on this well in later years. The broadly average standards seen in Year 6 represent good overall progress. This steadily improving trend is down to the headteacher's dedication and strong belief that all pupils can thrive and learn well if their needs are understood and provided for effectively. She has built up a committed, skilled and enthusiastic team who, along with an effective governing body, fully share her vision. Leadership responsibilities are spread amongst a number of staff including the senior team, the special educational needs coordinator and key stage and subject leaders, further supported by an effective team of learning mentors. This team work well together, and their effective self-evaluation practices give the school a good platform for sustained further improvement.

Key to the school's success in improving pupils' life chances is the outstanding way in which pupils are cared for, supported and guided in their learning and personal development. Accurate assessment of pupils' needs is quickly followed by the provision of individual support in lessons. Coupled with good involvement of parents and carers, this leads to effective learning and good progress. Pupils with special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language and pupils whose circumstance make them particularly vulnerable all make at least good progress, and for a few it is very good. Pupils say they feel safe and secure. Pupils behave well, enjoy school and are considerate towards each other.

The school has forged excellent partnerships with a range of agencies, resulting in good improvements in learning and attendance. In spite of an ongoing school focus on eradicating persistent absence, attendance is still low because a small number of parents and carers struggle to get their children into school on time and every day. However, it is improving steadily year on year, there was a significant drop in persistent absence last year, and older pupils' attendance is now broadly average.

Teaching is good overall. Teachers are increasingly skilful in the use of assessment materials to inform learning activities, but do not plan as well for the middle- and higher-ability pupils as for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, they are not always challenged to reach the higher levels they are capable of, especially in

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mathematics. This is because, although pupils' progress is tracked regularly, not all staff use information on pupils' individual attainment so they can ensure that planned activities challenge all pupils at exactly the right level. Marking is good, targets are clear and pupils know what to do next to improve. Presentation is satisfactory rather than good because handwriting is not consistently joined up in each class. The curriculum is much enhanced by visits, visitors and links with a range of performing arts, music and physical education partners. An emphasis on equality of opportunity that is deeply embedded in the school's ethos and reflected in good overall progress for all groups, mutual respect regardless of background, and very good relationships mean that the school is a harmonious and cohesive community.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise the proportion of pupils achieving Levels 4 and 5 in English and mathematics by the summer of 2012 by:
  - improving the use of termly assessment information to inform planning for different ability groups
  - ensuring that different practical tasks are planned for each group rather than all pupils completing the same work, especially in mathematics
  - ensuring that all teachers know the attainment levels of their pupils as well as the progress they are making
  - improving handwriting and presentation by adopting a whole-school approach to joined-up writing.
- Ensure that the improvements in attendance are sustained and built upon, by working closely with parents and carers to stress the ongoing importance of regular attendance.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Pupils start school from a low baseline but attainment has improved steadily over the past three years, and the Year 6 standards seen in lessons and pupils' books were broadly average in English and mathematics. Progress has been significantly above average over this time, reflecting better teaching and learning across the school. There are no significant differences in progress between boys and girls, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language. However, the middle-ability and most-able pupils are not always provided with more challenging tasks that encourage them to aim high.

Pupils like school and this shows in the way they behave in class and when they play together outside. They are unfailingly polite to each other and adults. They concentrate well when working independently, for example at the start of the day when completing spelling, reading and handwriting tasks. They support each other's learning in class activities and good teamwork means the less confident keep up. This was the case when they prepared presentations together to persuade their audience that 'chips should not be banned from school dinners' or that 'mobile phones should be allowed in school'. They practised and consolidated key literacy skills in this interesting session as well as personal skills such as cooperation and empathy, important for the next stage of their education. In

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a good numeracy lesson, pupils of differing abilities had different tasks to complete. Pupils worked with concentration and persistence to complete number squares applying their understanding of adding a ten or a unit to a number and then placing it in the right place. Sometimes, progress slows down in less-effective lessons because the wide range of ability is not always planned for precisely. Younger pupils did not fully understand how to order numbers in different ways within a class task without constant adult support.

Pupils have a good understanding about being healthy and run a well-supported fruit shop each playtime. They are justifiably proud of their award-winning edible garden and gaining Healthy School status and the Eco-Schools Green Flag, Artsmark and Activemark awards. They are articulate within their school council and contribute ideas to improve their school environment. They know how to keep safe and exercise good control as they move around a four-storey building. A few pupils continue to miss school and arrive late, often due to circumstances beyond their control, but they are very well supported and praised when they do succeed.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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 best lessons are characterised by detailed planning that is clear about what is going to be taught and how pupils will know when they have succeeded, and by different practical tasks suited to the range of ability. Teachers explain clearly the steps pupils need to consider and use the interactive whiteboards well to provide pictures and diagrams that

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aid understanding. Learning support assistants are deployed effectively to monitor learning and clarify any difficulties. Excellent support for individual pupils, whether in the classroom or in a withdrawal group, ensures that they make sufficient progress to keep up with the rest of the class. This extra support for literacy and numeracy has resulted in some less-able pupils making significant progress to reach the expected levels in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6. A small proportion of lessons are satisfactory rather than good, mainly because planning and teaching do not fully address the whole range of needs. Consequently, pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress. Presentation is satisfactory but handwriting is not always joined up, sometimes because teachers do not model best practice by joining up their own writing.

The curriculum meets pupils' needs well and increasing application of literacy and numeracy skills across a range of subjects makes learning more relevant and practical. The school is rightly proud of its recently commended Spanish teaching. Computers are used well by pupils to conduct their own enquiries or consolidate key numeracy or problem-solving skills. Pupils comment enthusiastically about trips to Sadler's Wells, urban hip-hop dance to be performed at The Barbican, and a range of competitive sporting activities. Pupils' personal development is promoted well through residential visits.

Pupils are nurtured very well so they can function successfully as learners and productive members of the school community. Their life chances are enhanced considerably because their needs and those of their families are addressed successfully. The coordinator for special educational needs provides outstanding leadership through her in-depth knowledge of pupils' personal and learning requirements. Provision is very well matched to individual circumstances and systematically tracked over time. Multi-agency support is excellent and complex needs are dealt with speedily and efficiently. Pupils move onto secondary school confidently because of thorough transition arrangements. Parents and carers are invited into school regularly and are well informed about their children's progress and school developments. Parenting classes have been successful. Pupils benefit from good after-school activities and a well-run breakfast club. All safeguarding and child protection procedures and training are fully in place.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher's quiet determination, leadership skills and passion for improving pupils' life chances are matched by the commitment and hard work of all staff, senior leaders, phase and subject leaders, and support staff. The effective governing body is committed to this vision and is both supportive and well informed about what needs to improve. It

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holds the school to account accordingly, and appropriate priorities are clearly set out in a well-organised school development plan. Teaching and learning are monitored systematically and judged accurately by senior leaders.

The results inform both teachers' planning and their professional development needs. There is no evidence of any form of discrimination and equality of opportunity is promoted well through careful analysis of individual needs and systematic monitoring of progress. No group underachieves and the most vulnerable pupils often do particularly well. Senior leaders are well aware that standards in English and mathematics for the middle-ability and most-able pupils are not yet as high as they could be. Safeguarding systems, health and safety, and financial controls are overseen effectively by the governing body. Community cohesion is particularly strong locally following a thorough analysis of need and subsequent involvement of local groups. Good links exist with national organisations and pupils' understanding of other cultures is enhanced by links with European and African schools.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make a good start to their education in the Nursery class and this continues in the Reception classes. They have few of the skills expected for their age when they start school but make good progress, especially in their personal development and language skills. They settle well into Nursery routines because parents and carers are fully involved from the start. Provision is good and children enjoy playing with good quality resources and equipment. The classrooms are welcoming, and attractive displays provide further stimulation for their learning. There is an appropriate focus on developing language skills and teachers deliver effective sessions which promote speaking and listening. Early reading, writing and number skills are well taught and children have opportunities to



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consolidate their learning when they choose activities for themselves. They write to Father Christmas and play bingo to practise number recognition. They concentrate well and persevere in small groups or when they play alone. Their natural curiosity and ability to solve problems, for example with puzzles or examining natural objects, is less well developed because they have had little previous experience. Leadership and management are good and staff work well together to promote children's well-being. Thorough planning covers each of the six learning goals and results in interesting tasks and activities both inside and outdoors. There is a good balance between what children choose for themselves and the time spent with adults in direct teaching. Accurate assessment is completed through first-hand observations and recorded in well-presented individual record books. Welfare and safety are meticulously maintained and children are confident and happy learners.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire was below average for a primary school, but their views were very positive. All agree that their children enjoy school, and everyone felt that the school keeps their children safe. Inspectors investigated some individual concerns raised by a very small number of parents and carers about how well the school helps their children to have a healthy lifestyle, meets children's particular needs and deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour, but during this inspection judged these aspects of provision to be good.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rotherfield 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 74 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 348 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	74	20	27	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	76	18	24	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	52	70	22	30	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	43	58	30	41	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	47	64	25	34	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	40	54	31	42	1	1	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	47	33	45	3	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	31	37	50	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	45	30	41	4	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	39	40	54	2	3	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	38	38	51	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	35	47	33	45	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	65	25	34	2	3	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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



9 December 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Rotherfield Primary School, Islington N1 3EE**

Thank you for helping my team and me to inspect your school. We enjoyed meeting and talking to you at various times during the day. We were impressed with how polite you are and the kind way you treat each other. We also saw that you try hard in class and this is showing in the way you are improving your work, especially in English and mathematics. You are responsible young people by the time you reach Year 6, and are well prepared to go to the secondary school.

You do especially well when the teachers give you lots of challenging things to organise and complete. We liked the way you helped each other so that everyone finished their work. Sometimes, those of you who learn quickly could make more progress if the tasks were a bit more challenging and different from what the rest of the class is doing. We have asked your teachers to make sure that this happens, especially in mathematics lessons, so that you will be able to reach higher standards. We also want the teachers to use the information they have about the standard you have reached in every class at the end of the year, so have asked the school to give them this information so they can plan better tasks for you.

We know that some of you do not come to school every day, but you are improving. It is very, very important to come to school every day, and on time, so that you do not miss your lessons. Please make sure you tell your parents and carers that you need to be in school and see that you have everything ready each morning so that you arrive on time.

We hope the rest of the term goes well and you enjoy preparing for Christmas if you celebrate that festival. We wish you well for the New Year and hope you continue to make the good progress we saw in your school during the inspection.

With good wishes to everyone

Yours sincerely

June Woolhouse

Lead inspector

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