

# Rickley Park Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135870
<b>Local Authority</b>	Milton Keynes
<b>Inspection number</b>	360771
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 July 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Edwards

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>	446
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sally McLaren
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Bateman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 July 1980
<b>School address</b>	Rickley Lane Milton Keynes MK3 6EW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01908 372979
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspection team visited 18 lessons taught by 13 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at national assessment data and the school's assessments, samples of pupils' work, school policies and minutes from governing body meetings, as well as curriculum documentation, including that relating to safeguarding of pupils. Also taken into account were 178 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as those from staff members and a sample of pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Pupils' progress in mathematics at Key Stage 1.
- The progress made by pupils in writing across the school.
- The strategies to improve pupils' attendance.

## Information about the school

Rickley Park is larger than most primary schools. The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. Other pupils are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is similar to that seen nationally. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The Early Years Foundation Stage caters for children in a Nursery class, who attend mornings, and two Reception classes. In addition, the school has designated nursery provision for up to seven children with complex learning needs who attend each morning.

The school was formed in September 2009 following the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools. For the first year it operated from the existing two sites and moved to a new building in August 2010, the building work being completed in March 2011. There is before- and after-school provision held on the school premises during term-time. This setting is privately managed and subject to a separate inspection.

**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

Rickley Park is a good school. Almost all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire believe the school is providing a good learning experience for their children. The views of two parents/carers were typical of many when commenting, 'We are very pleased with the school. The headteacher is always available to talk with parents about any issue and the atmosphere is great in the school' and 'The support and encouragement my child receives is exceptional. He has come on fantastically well.'

The senior leadership team has been effective in bringing two schools together, accurately identifying the strengths and weaknesses. There have been good improvements in key areas of the school's work. Teaching and learning are improving, resulting in good progress and a rising trend in attainment. However, the leaders are not complacent and recognise the importance of ensuring that teaching is consistently good in all classes. Good care, guidance and support ensure pupils are well looked after and provided with good advice about their learning and social development. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are also good. While attendance is average, it is improving quickly as a result of good incentives to pupils and effective monitoring. These contributing factors to the school's success are clear evidence of leaders' good capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils make good progress throughout the school. Children are given a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Well-planned support for speaking and listening and early reading skills quickly boosts children's confidence and enables them to make good progress in all areas of learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because provision for them is carefully tailored to their particular needs. A wide range of initiatives, delivered by skilled staff, engages these pupils well. Detailed checking of the progress of all groups of pupils ensures that their work improves well. Pupils' progress is good in mathematics at Key Stage 1 and also in writing across the school due to a whole school focus on this aspect. School assessment data and pupils' current work indicate a rising trend in attainment. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is above average in English and mathematics. This represents good achievement overall.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, not least because of the interesting curriculum which has a good range of activities to enrich their experiences outside of the classroom. Of particular note are the wealth of sporting and physical activities which contribute so well to their healthy lifestyles. Opportunities to work with visiting artists and musicians enhance pupils' cultural development well. Within their overall good personal development, pupils make a strong contribution to their school and are beginning to establish links with the wider community. Pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong and a strong social awareness, supporting a number of charities. While most of the teaching is good, there is a small amount that is satisfactory where teachers spend too long explaining tasks and do not always ensure activities are challenging. The school's planning for community cohesion

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is satisfactory. However, the evaluation of its policy has not been sufficiently rigorous and, consequently, the school has not identified that pupils' awareness of people from other backgrounds is a slightly weaker aspect of their otherwise good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is good or better in all classes by:
  - sharing best practice
  - ensuring learning is sufficiently challenging for all groups of pupils
  - ensuring that lesson introductions are not too long and that pupils are given enough time to complete tasks ?
  - providing pupils with more opportunities to develop their independent learning skills
  - enabling more-able pupils to move on to more challenging work sooner.
- Plan and evaluate carefully the opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of people from different cultures, religions and backgrounds in this and other countries.

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

**2**

Pupils are keen and enthusiastic and so they learn well in lessons. They are attentive to their teachers, and well behaved. When given the opportunity, they enjoy working independently, and help each other out with spellings and problem solving during lessons. Pupils are keen to share their ideas openly because they know that teachers and their peers value the contribution they make. They talk enthusiastically about the good range of learning activities such as working with a visiting artist in making the metal sculpture for the grounds. Pupils say they feel safe and are keen to talk about the exciting activities and clubs. They are proud of their achievements in competitive sports and talk enthusiastically about keeping healthy and fit. Pupils are keen to take responsibility and are enthusiastic members of the school council. Older pupils take on the role of playground sports leaders, encouraging participation by younger pupils in physical activities. They contribute very effectively to the promotion of healthy lifestyles by staffing the fruit bar at break times. Although pupils recall having studied different religions, their understanding of people from different cultures and backgrounds is less well developed.

Children enter the school with skills and abilities that are similar to those typical for their age and achieve well by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. There is no discernible difference between the progress made by boys compared with girls. The progress of pupils from minority ethnic groups is monitored carefully and good strategies put in place to ensure they progress well and take a full part in all activities. Pupils' speaking skills develop very well and they are confident and fluent readers. For example, in Year 2, pupils wrote additional text about 'Horrid Henry' and a number read their work aloud, expressively and with confidence to classmates. Pupils' mathematical skills progress well; their mental arithmetic skills are very secure, the result of regular practice. Pupils' good information and communication technology (ICT) skills are used to good effect. For example, in Year 4, pupils discovered much about the Vikings through the use of reference

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books and computers and were able to determine which was the most appropriate for different aspects of research. Pupils' above average basic skills, coupled with their ability to work effectively with one another, provide them with a good foundation for the next stage of education.

*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>	2
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>1</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>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<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?**

Teaching observed during the inspection was good overall. Teachers work hard to enthuse and inspire their pupils. They have a good awareness of the different ability groups within the class and work is planned accordingly. Occasionally, more-able pupils are not given enough opportunities to challenge their own thinking. Learning objectives sometimes lack clarity so it is not clear to all pupils what it is they are expected to have learned by the end of the lesson. Teaching assistants support pupils well, particularly learners who find concentrating and learning a little difficult. Marking of pupils' work is consistently good, providing pupils with a clear picture of what they need to do to improve. However, pupils do not always take note of, and respond to, teachers' written comments.

The well-organised curriculum provides a good range of activities for pupils. There are good opportunities for pupils to enhance their ICT skills through regular use of computers for research, writing and media presentations. Effective partnerships within the cluster provide good opportunities for pupils to improve their music skills through playing and singing in the Milton Keynes Music Festival. The Sports Partnership provides pupils with

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excellent opportunities to enhance their physical skills and consolidate their very good understanding of healthy lifestyles. Parents and carers thoroughly enjoyed watching and, for some, participating, in the 'Wake and Shake' session held outside at the start of the school day during the inspection. Pupils' enthusiasm was also very evident. Transition arrangements both in and out of the school are good. The regular teaching of French by staff from the local secondary school prepares pupils well for their move into high school. Pupils are very well known to the staff, provided with good support and well looked after. As a consequence of effective care, guidance and support, many aspects of pupils' personal development are good. Intervention strategies ensure that pupils who are at risk of falling behind, or who are finding work difficult, are provided with additional support, enabling them to progress in line with their peers.

*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>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Strong determined leadership by the headteacher and senior staff has resulted in improvements to the quality of teaching and learning. It is impressive that this has been achieved amidst the considerable turmoil of the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools and moving into a new building. There is a determination among all staff to drive improvement and they all aspire to provide the best for their pupils. Pupils' attainment in the key subjects of English and mathematics has continued to rise and their progress has accelerated. Monitoring of teaching and learning is systematic and rigorous and performance management of staff is fully implemented. The monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress have developed well and are used to improve progress in the main curriculum areas. The personalised information is used effectively to ensure all pupils have equality of opportunity, which is reflected in the comparable rates of progress made by all groups of pupils.

Members of the governing body are regular visitors to the school and know its strengths and weaknesses well. They are supportive but challenging. Planning for community cohesion is satisfactory. The school has rightly acknowledged the need to develop pupils' awareness and experiences of people from different cultural backgrounds in this country and further afield. Procedures to protect and safeguard pupils, including all risk assessments, are detailed and thorough and meet all statutory requirements. There are good partnerships with support agencies and secure child protection procedures. There are excellent links with parents and carers to support their children's learning. They are very appreciative of the way senior staff make themselves available to discuss concerns. The school has good procedures in place to canvass their views and, where appropriate, act upon their suggestions.

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*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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Parents and carers are happy with the start their children make in the Nursery and Reception classes and they feel they are kept well informed about how their children are progressing. The children's 'learning journey' files provide a very clear picture of all aspects of their development and parents are encouraged to contribute to the assessment process. Overall, children make good progress in all areas of learning, ensuring that on entry to Year 1, their attainment is above average. Staff make good use of the assessment information to plan activities that build effectively on the children's prior knowledge and understanding and match activities as closely as possible to children's needs.

Children are confident learners and keen to take part in the good range of activities available. There is a good balance of teacher-directed activities and those children choose for themselves. The staff use a variety of learning strategies to stimulate the children's enthusiasm. For example, children enjoy making their treasure maps and enjoy talking about the 'potion' that the staff will use to make the maps look older. Children enjoy selecting from the wide range of healthy snacks that are available each day. The extensive outside area is used very well to provide many learning opportunities, including creative and physical development. Teaching assistants provide effective support for the children, helping them to settle quickly and supporting those who need extra help and guidance. The children who have complex learning needs are provided with a good level of quality support and care, enabling them to take a full part in all aspects of the curriculum. It enables them to improve their social skills, integrating with children from a range of social and cultural backgrounds. Good leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage help to ensure transition arrangements are strong.



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*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:	
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 returning the questionnaire was higher than in other primary schools. Almost all parents and carers expressed positive views of all aspects of the school. Parents and carers are particularly happy with the way the children are supported and cared for and are happy with their children's experiences in school.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rickley Park 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 178 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 446 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	136	76	41	23	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	133	75	42	24	2	1	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	117	66	59	33	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	133	75	43	24	2	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	133	75	45	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	115	65	56	31	5	3	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	116	65	59	33	1	1	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)	117	66	58	33	1	1	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	112	63	60	34	4	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	98	55	66	37	8	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	89	50	82	46	4	2	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	119	67	58	33	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	141	79	36	20	1	1	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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.**



16 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rickley Park Primary School, Bletchley MK3 6EW

Thank you very much for welcoming us when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and watching you learn. This letter is to tell you what we found out about your school and what we have asked the school to do to become even better.

- You go to a happy and welcoming school which provides you with a good education.
- Your attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 is above average and you make good progress through the school.
- You say you enjoy school and we saw that in your enthusiasm and good behaviour. Your attendance is average and improving.
- You have an excellent understanding of what you need to do to keep yourselves healthy and fit.
- There is a good curriculum with a good range of clubs, activities, visits and visitors which make your work more interesting.
- The teachers and staff look after you well. They give those of you who find learning difficult or who have difficulties good help and support.
- Those in charge of the school are working hard to help it improve.

In order to make your school even better, we have asked your headteacher and staff to do the following.

- Make sure that all teaching is good so that you are able to learn more quickly.
- Provide you with opportunities to find out more about people from different cultures and backgrounds. You can help by making sure you respond to teachers' comments when they mark your work.

Yours sincerely

Paul Edwards

Lead inspector

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