

Rushy Meadow Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102989
Local Authority	Sutton
Inspection number	376794
Inspection dates	15–16 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Grace Marriott

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	444
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cuan Middleton
Headteacher	Karen Rhodes
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 19 lessons taught by 19 teachers and held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and governors. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation, analysis of results, development plan, attendance records, minutes of governing body meetings and the questionnaires returned by 82 parents and carers.

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

- How well the school is raising the attainment of all pupils but particularly in narrowing the gap for pupils known to be entitled to free school meals.
- How well the school is improving attendance, particularly of persistent absentees.
- The team examined whether the Early Years Foundation Stage is now providing a good experience for the children.
- How well the school leaders and the governing body have established an ethos and culture of high expectations and achievement.

Information about the school

Rushy Meadow is a larger-than-average-primary school. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above the national average and increasing. Most pupils are of White British heritage but about a quarter of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above average, though the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is much higher than in most schools because the school has a specialist unit for hearing impaired children. The breakfast club on the school site is not managed by the governing body and did not form part of this 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

Rushy Meadow is providing pupils with a good education in a welcoming and attractive environment. The school's strong sense of purpose and the ethos of high expectations are very evident. As one parent wrote 'the school brings out the best in my child, encouraging him to be independent, focused and supporting his learning needs.'

Led by the headteacher, and an energetic leadership team, staff have worked hard to achieve significant improvement since the previous inspection. Teaching is now consistently good, and pupils are making good progress, whereas previously many were underachieving. Children now get a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. Many pupils start school with knowledge, skills and understanding which are below expectations for their age but by the time they leave at the end of Year 6, their achievement is broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress. The work of the unit for hearing impaired pupils is outstanding and enables these pupils to join fully in school life. Those pupils known to be entitled to free school meals make better progress than in most other schools. The school has succeeded in closing the gap in attainment in English and mathematics for the younger pupils and this is starting to happen in the older age groups as well.

The pupils enjoy their lessons and behave well. Their positive attitudes and the good relationships reflect good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn to respect each other's cultures and traditions and learn to work and play well together. Their understanding of the wider community both in the United Kingdom and internationally is developing well and community cohesion is good. Pupils willingly take on responsibility, for example through the school council, and in their classes. Absence is being tackled rigorously and the attendance of almost all persistent absentees has improved considerably over the last year.

In lessons, lively teaching and interesting activities motivate pupils to learn. The level of challenge is well matched to the needs of pupils, but learning objectives are not always specific enough to help pupils to understand how much progress they could make. Staff are working hard to help pupils improve their use of standard English but the advice given, particularly on spelling, punctuation and handwriting, is not precise enough. Similarly, pupils' work is regularly marked but at times the comments are not as useful as they could be. The curriculum is well matched to pupils' needs, with good links being made between subjects to support literacy, numeracy and

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information and communication technology (ICT). The preparation for the next stage of pupils' education and for their future employment is satisfactory.

The care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding. The staff work tirelessly and highly effectively with pupils and their families so that all pupils, whatever their background or need, can benefit from what the school has to offer.

School leaders at all levels have a clear and realistic set of priorities for further improvement, based on rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes for pupils and the quality of teaching. Governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses well, and are fully involved in monitoring and planning. The rapid and secure improvement in pupils' achievement, attendance and improvement in the quality of teaching show that the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that learning objectives for lessons are more specific so that they help pupils to know how much progress they are making and challenge them to achieve even more
- Improve pupils' use of standard English through:
 - clearer and more precise advice on spelling and punctuation
 - improving handwriting and presentation of work
- Make sure that the marking provides pupils with more specific guidance on how they can improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' work shows that they are making increasingly rapid progress in all year groups. The information from tracking attainment shows that though progress is good overall, the progress and outcomes are better in reading and mathematics than in writing where good content is too often let down by mistakes in spelling and punctuation, and poor handwriting. The school's predictions for attainment in 2011 were accurate and those for 2012 show that the improvement in achievement is likely to be sustained.

Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, particularly those who have a hearing impairment, make outstanding progress because the support they receive is expertly tailored to their individual needs. Those who speak English as an additional language are also supported well, so that they make good and often outstanding progress.

Pupils are proud of their school and are polite and welcoming to visitors. They join enthusiastically in a good range of sporting and other activities, such as growing

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vegetables on the school allotment. This also helps to extend their understanding of healthy eating. Pupils feel safe at school and are confident that any bullying will be dealt with quickly and effectively. They learn how to keep themselves safe outside school through lessons and activities such as the very enjoyable 'Police Academy' sessions. Most pupils know that it is important to attend school regularly and on time. The school is successfully focusing on helping the small number of pupils, and their families, who are persistent absentees, to understand why attendance matters.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	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	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	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are well structured and move at a good pace. Teachers know their pupils well and plan activities that will interest them, using resources such as interactive whiteboards well to support learning. Highly effective teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants enables pupils to make good progress, as for example in a spelling session in Year 6 where the teaching assistant provided useful feedback on pupils' progress. The learning objectives were, however, usually the same for the whole class and seldom broken down into smaller steps which could help pupils to know how much progress they are making and challenge them to achieve even more.

Teachers systematically assess and record pupils' progress. They share this information so that pupils know both their current level of work and their targets. Pupils are used to assessing their own work and understanding and this gives

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

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teachers more information that they can use alongside their own assessments.

The school has successfully remodelled its curriculum to give pupils more opportunities to consolidate and use their basic skills in a range of subjects and for different purposes. For example, 'The Magic Toymaker' theme provided a good scientific challenge for Year 1 pupils who were designing and building their own moving toys. In other year groups mathematical activities were being used to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills.

The school has excellent systems for supporting both pupils and their families. Staff work closely with parents and carers, and a very wide range of organisations to ensure that all pupils, but particularly those who are potentially vulnerable, receive the support they need. Effective systems for promoting good behaviour are understood and supported by pupils. The careful, systematic monitoring of attendance and the robust action to deal with both casual and persistent absence have brought about real improvement. Staff know that they need to keep this up to maintain the current good attendance and reduce absence still further.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The drive and determination of the headteacher and senior leaders have been key to the improvement seen in the last two years. Their vision for the school is shared by staff with everyone feeling that they have a role in driving improvements. Subject leaders are fully involved in checking how well pupils are doing in their subjects. The governing body has high expectations and challenges the headteacher and staff. It ensures that raising achievement continues to be at the heart of what the school does. The school works extremely hard to forge good links with parents and carers and the impact of this is evident in pupils' greatly improved attendance. The links with other organisations, particularly the outstanding links to support those pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities; also contribute strongly to the school's success and the improvement seen in recent years.

The school's promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff work hard to try to make sure that pupils from all backgrounds achieve equally well. The school is very aware of its place in the local community and works hard to meet local needs. Links with a school in Devon and the work being done in many subjects, for example on

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environmental issues, are helping to increase pupils’ awareness of the national and global context in which they are growing up. The school’s safeguarding procedures are outstanding. Staff are clear about their responsibilities for child protection and are vigilant in ensuring that the school is a safe and secure place.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Nursery and Reception classes provide a bright, stimulating and well-equipped environment both indoors and outdoors in which children can become more independent and develop a wide range of skills, as well as learning the basic skills in literacy and numeracy. The Reception outdoor area is particularly good and has been imaginatively developed, for example providing spaces such as the outdoor reading room, as well as being well equipped for active play. The children were happy and relating well to one another and to adults as they learnt to play safely, to take turns and share. The children make good progress in all areas of their learning and development. This includes those who speak English as an additional language, as well as those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The staff are particularly aware of the need to develop children’s speech and language skills. They plan activities which will interest the children and encourage them to read, write and talk. Children were thoroughly enjoying the opportunity to talk about themselves and compare what they could do when they were babies with what they can do now.

Parents and carers are made welcome and are kept well informed about their children’s learning and development. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. The evaluation of the setting’s strengths and what is needed to improve it further is good. Staff are, for example, working hard to introduce children to a wider range of books and develop their understanding of

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shape and space in mathematical work.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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 response to the questionnaire from parents and carers was broadly average. These responses were very positive about the school. A very large majority of those parents and carers who responded agree that their children enjoy school, and all agreed that it keeps them safe. Most also agree that the teaching is good and that their children are making progress. Inspectors' judgements reflect the views of parents and carers in this and most other respects. A small minority of parents and carers did not feel well enough informed about their child's progress nor that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. The staff work very hard to involve parents and carers in their children's education and exceed the statutory requirements for reporting to them. Staff are accessible and willing to meet parents and carers to discuss individual needs. The behaviour observed during the inspection was good and inspectors found that the school has effective systems for managing behaviour and for dealing with any bullying.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rushy Meadow 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 82 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 433 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	41	50	39	48	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	40	49	42	51	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	27	33	45	55	8	10	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	39	41	50	5	6	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	28	34	48	59	3	4	1	1
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	27	33	48	59	3	4	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	35	47	57	5	6	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)	22	27	47	57	4	5	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	30	37	46	56	1	1	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	24	51	62	7	9	3	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	23	50	61	7	9	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	26	32	47	57	2	2	3	4
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	33	40	41	50	5	6	1	1

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 and 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.

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"> ■ 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.



18 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rushy Meadow Primary School, Sutton SM5 2SG

Thank you for welcoming us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and were pleased to find that you like school and enjoy learning. We looked at your work, talked to staff and governors and were interested in what your parents and carers think about the school.

We think Rushy Meadow is a good school. These are some of the things we thought were particularly good.

- Good teaching is helping you to make good progress and achieve more.
- The youngest children get a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- You work and play well together.
- Everyone who attends the school has the chance to do really well.
- The adults in school look after you very well. You feel safe in school and you also know why it is important to have a healthy lifestyle.

The headteacher and staff are working hard to make sure that all of you do well. We have agreed with them that there are a number of things that will help the school to improve even more. We have asked the headteacher to make sure that:

- when teachers mark your books they tell you more about how you can improve your work
- teachers break down the learning objectives for lessons into smaller steps which will help you to know how much progress you are making and challenge you to achieve even more
- teachers give you a better idea of how you can improve your handwriting, spelling and punctuation.

You can help by making sure that you come to school every day and always do your best. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Grace Marriott
Lead inspector

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