

Rye Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135299
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	381864
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Sheila Browning

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	306
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Niki Stuart
Headteacher	Paul Reilly
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 June 2009
School address	The Grove Rye TN31 7ND
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons taught by 18 staff. They observed the school's work and looked at school documentation, including that concerning safeguarding, and pupils' workbooks. They held discussions with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and senior staff. Questionnaires from 69 parents and carers, 29 staff and 124 pupils were analysed to help inform the inspection process.

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

- How successfully the school is raising pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6, especially in mathematics.
- The quality of teachers' plans in matching work to pupils' differing needs and abilities.
- How effectively leaders and managers at all levels ensure pupils make sufficient progress, particularly boys and average-attaining pupils.
- The way in which leaders adapt provision for the youngest children to best support their early reading, writing and mathematical skills.

Information about the school

The school is larger than average. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises two Reception classes. A separately managed children's centre, which is subject to its own inspection, shares the site. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The great majority of pupils are White British. A higher-than-average proportion of pupils leave or join the school other than at the normal times and especially in Year 6. The school has achieved a number of awards reflecting its commitment to promoting pupils' basic skills and healthy living and is a recognised Dyslexia Friendly school. There have been several changes in staffing, including at senior level, following the expansion of the school over the past academic year.

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

Rye Primary is a good school. The strong leadership of the headteacher and senior leaders has provided a clear vision to raise pupils' attainment and has enthused staff to improve their teaching and pupils' learning. The determination to build on pupils' improved achievement is shared by all staff, pupils, parents and carers. Pupils are immensely proud of their school, enjoy learning and make good progress. The many improvements made since the last inspection, robust monitoring of the school's work and good self-evaluation procedures ensure a good capacity to sustain further improvement.

Pupils' attainment has risen steadily since the last inspection and is broadly average by the end of Year 6 in both English and mathematics. Pupils achieve well as they make good progress overall from their starting points. Attainment is higher in reading and writing than in mathematics, and pupils' calculating skills are comparatively weak. School data on pupils' progress and inspection evidence show accelerated progress for most pupils since the last inspection. Accurate assessment information and rigorous tracking procedures mean that the school has a true picture of pupils' progress. Strategies to improve pupils' basic reading, writing and mathematical skills are beginning to take effect so that pupils are making up for previous lost ground. The gap between boys' and girls' attainment and those of average attainment is narrowing, but the more able are not always challenged.

The considerable focus on improving teaching has been effective. Teachers generally plan work well for pupils of different abilities. Most teaching is good. In the best lessons, pace is brisk and more-able pupils are stretched by challenging tasks, but this is not the case in every class. Marking of pupils' work is regular. Pupils say they know their targets and what they need to do to improve. Good-quality support and resources for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those joining part-way through the school year ensure their individual needs are met effectively and so they make good progress. The curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Themes and topics based on the local area make learning interesting. Art, sport, music, visits and visitors provide good enrichment to pupils' experiences. Opportunities for pupils to become aware of more distant communities are developing appropriately.

Staff work hard to nurture those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, enabling them to take a full part in school life. The good care, guidance and support,

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engagement with parents and carers, along with strong partnerships with a wide range of outside providers, have contributed well to the pupils' improved behaviour and to their emotional and social development. Though improving steadily, attendance is no better than broadly average. This is largely due to a few persistent absentees who fail to attend school regularly enough. Older pupils make a good contribution to school life through their roles as prefects and sports leaders helping younger ones. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and get on well with one another.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment and increase their progress in mathematics by:
 - ensuring pupils have good opportunities to develop and practise their mental calculation skills in practical ways
 - giving more-able pupils challenging activities
 - reducing the length of introductions at the start of lessons.
- Take steps to improve the attendance of the few pupils who are persistently absent, re-emphasising the importance of regular attendance at school.

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

When children join the Early Years Foundation Stage, their skills and knowledge levels are much lower than expected for their age, especially in communication, language, literacy and early number skills. Secure teaching, a stimulating learning environment, good-quality resources and focused activities mean they develop good skills as learners. Progress increases as they move through Key Stage 1. For example, in the Year 2 poetry workshops pupils blended letters and sounds and used 'wow' words to make amazing sentences about a forest snow scene. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 developed play scripts from narrative text using speech marks and stage directions, and recorded key words electronically for each other using 'talking tins'. Mathematicians in Year 6 were challenged when they investigated number patterns linked to real-life problems. Pupils apply their basic skills securely for a wide range of purposes, but basic calculation skills are relatively weak for the next phase of their education.

Throughout the school, pupils achieve well and attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly average. Lesson observations confirm that pupils' speaking skills and use of vocabulary are improving, as a result of increased opportunities through, for example, 'talk partners' and because key words are used and displayed in all classrooms. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. However, there are missed opportunities to consistently challenge the more-able pupils to achieve better. Pupils' music and art skills develop well, the result of very effective teaching, partnerships and curriculum enrichment. Pupils are polite, cooperate well with classmates and behave well. Pupils told

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inspectors that a few boys did not always behave as well as they should in lessons. Discussions with pupils indicate they feel safe and that where bullying takes place it is dealt with quickly. The good focus on encouraging healthy lifestyles is seen in the Healthy Schools award. Pupils say they try to make healthy choices at lunchtime and, to aid their exercise levels, a good number take part in sporting activities and clubs. They support the local community as members of the school council, plant trees and raise funds for a local children’s hospice and national charities. The school has worked hard with families and outside agencies to increase attendance levels but, despite improving recently, a few are still persistently absent, with restricting effects on their progress.

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	2
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 taught well by confident, well-informed staff. Pupils are enthused and teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do. For example, in an excellent literacy lesson, pupils in Years 4 and 5 collaborated well in pairs to identify what improvements they could make to their work to achieve a higher level. In lessons, teachers consistently remind pupils to become ‘independent learners’. Pupils particularly enjoy hands-on learning in design and technology, drama and science, for example, investigating light sources and shadows in the ‘Welcome to the dark side’ science lab in Year 2. All teachers make good use of technology to make learning fun for the pupils. Teachers make use of assessment information to plan lessons. On the few occasions when teaching is satisfactory, the delivery is not always brisk at the start, and tasks are not sufficiently challenging to ensure that the

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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more able are challenged.

The school is involved in several local authority and national initiatives to help improve pupils’ basic literacy and mathematical skills and their social and emotional development. The school’s recognition as a ‘Dyslexia Friendly’ organisation is reflected in its good-quality approach to teaching reading and writing skills. Many of the initiatives are recent but already beginning to have a positive impact on learning. Key topics are covered imaginatively, from spending the day as Victorian children at school, to exploring the coast and its inhabitants, and studying geography and history on the Marsh link railway from Hastings to Ashford. The youngest children had fun exploring Rye first hand and through using the internet. Pupils benefit from the expertise of staff and local artists; this is seen in the high quality of pupils’ artwork which is on display.

Personalised programmes for the sizeable group of pupils with special educational needs, and for those pupils who enter the school later in the year, ensure that their personal, social and emotional needs are well met. Their needs are assessed quickly, and effective support is put in place so that they become part of the ‘I can’ culture. Incentives such as ‘Greedy readers’, workshops and learning tips for families all help to remove barriers to learning. Families engage in music therapy and make use of the multi-sensory room.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

A few years ago the school requested to be part of a local authority support programme because of pupils’ low attainment. The headteacher, senior staff and governors have fostered significant improvements in teaching, learning, assessment and the curriculum, which have all successfully raised attainment and improved pupils’ progress. The school is also involved in several pilot projects to raise pupils’ attainment, to support the increasing numbers with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and to cater for pupils who join during the year. A well-structured transition programme, regular meetings to discuss pupils’ progress and key appointments to accelerate learning in Years 3 to 6 are all helping to ensure equality of opportunity. The school is effective in ensuring there is no discrimination. There is a shared determination to drive the school forward. Regular monitoring of teaching has been undertaken and has had a direct impact on improving its quality. Leaders at all levels undertake their roles and responsibilities effectively. The

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experienced members of the governing body support initiatives effectively and are increasingly challenging senior leaders. They ensure good attention to safeguarding arrangements for pupils’ safety. Risk assessments and procedures for child protection are rigorous.

The good partnerships with other schools and agencies contribute well to support pupils and staff development. The school works in effective partnership with the children’s centre particularly to ensure it meets the individual needs of children joining the Reception class. The school promotes community cohesion well at local levels and pupils in Year 6 have exchanged letters with a London school. Raising pupils’ awareness of people from different backgrounds further afield is not as well established.

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	2
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

Adults work well together to provide children with exciting learning opportunities which interest and motivate them. As a result of effective support by staff, children settle quickly to class routines. Right from the start, adults share with children and families the school’s ‘learning for life’ principles. Links with the children’s centre and other local settings ensure a smooth transition to the main school. Parents and carers use home contact books and story bags, and they are invited to ‘Welcome Wednesdays’ when they can snuggle up and share a book with their children. They send in ‘WoW’ cards showing what the children have achieved at home. These, learning logs and regular observations help form a clear picture of children’s progress. Aware that communication, language, literacy and early mathematical skill levels are much lower than expected for their age, the effective leader has ensured daily dedicated teaching of letters and sounds and early mathematical concepts.

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Teachers plan work that is well matched to the children’s abilities. As a result, children make good progress in all areas of learning, particularly in their social and emotional development, and quickly become independent learners.

Children enjoy learning, and well-planned activities ensure they are motivated. For example, after visiting the ‘deep dark’ wood they were motivated to write letters to the Gruffalo to say what they had seen. The role-play area in one of the classes, an imaginary bear’s cave and wood with small trees and furry creatures, supports their imagination, creativity and early reading and writing skills well. Teaching assistants provide good support when needed. The outside area continues to be developed to provide more permanent resources and cover, but this did not stop the children putting on their wellingtons to dig for buried treasure, play the musical instruments and write menus in the Gruffalo Café!

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 number of questionnaires returned was below average. In most of the questions, the views of parents and carers were largely positive. This was also reflected in the many positive written comments received. Most notably, parents and carers felt the school helps their children to have a healthy lifestyle. A small minority expressed the view that the school does not take account of their views and suggestions and that more-able pupils are not stretched. Inspectors found that the school uses the usual methods, including newsletters, parents’ meetings, a parents’ group and surveys, to seek parents’ and carers’ views. The school was able to provide evidence to show how it had responded to parents’ and carers’ concerns and suggestions. Inspectors found that more-able pupils could be challenged further.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rye Community 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 69 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 306 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	61	23	33	4	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	45	65	20	29	3	4	1	1
The school informs me about my child’s progress	35	51	28	41	5	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	49	30	43	1	1	4	6
The teaching is good at this school	37	54	25	36	1	1	3	4
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	37	54	25	36	3	4	3	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	51	32	46	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)	31	45	27	39	6	9	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	38	55	22	32	6	9	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	45	26	38	4	6	5	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	39	24	35	6	9	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	38	55	24	35	2	3	3	4
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	39	57	22	32	6	9	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.



3 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rye Community Primary School, Rye, TN31 7ND

We really enjoyed our visit to your school recently. We were impressed with your good behaviour and the way you work and play together. You told us that you had high expectations of behaviour and that a few boys did not always behave as well as they could. The Christmas Fair was great and it was lovely to see that so many of you had brought in different coloured things to sell. We know that you enjoyed face painting and seeing Father Christmas, and we thought the school musicians were brilliant! We think that your school is a good school and that it is improving fast.

- You are making good progress and reach at least average attainment.
- You told us how well all the adults look after you and that you enjoy school.
- The children in Reception have great fun in their work and settle quickly.
- You are taught well and teachers make learning interesting for you and provide lots of interesting activities, including trips, visits and visitors.
- You understand how to lead a healthy lifestyle and know how to stay safe.
- Mr Reilly, your teachers and the governors are all working hard to make your school the best!

We are asking the school to make the following changes so that you do even better.

- Help some of you to reach higher standards in mathematics and all of you to improve your mathematical skills, especially calculation skills.
- Help those of you who do not attend school regularly enough to do so and ensure your parents and carers understand that if you are not at school you will miss out on your learning and fall behind.

You can help by trying to improve your mathematical skills, especially your mental and calculating skills. Those of you who do not attend regularly should do so.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Browning
Lead inspector

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