

Rice Lane Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104585
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	377099
Inspection dates	2–3 May 2012
Lead inspector	Kathleen McArthur

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	312
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Frank Hilliard
Headteacher	Margaret Rowlands
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2008
School address	Brockenhurst Road Liverpool L9 3BU
Telephone number	0151 5253356
Fax number	0151 2847323
Email address	ricelanej-ao@ricelane-jun.liverpool.sch.uk



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



© Crown copyright 2012

Introduction

Inspection team

Kathleen McArthur

Ray Biglin

Peter Mather

Additional Inspector

Additional Inspector

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 18 lessons taught by 14 teachers and held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, staff and the local authority representative. They observed the school's work, and looked at documents including improvement plans, monitoring records, school and national data and procedures for the care and protection of pupils (safeguarding). Responses in the 123 questionnaires received from parents and carers and those completed by pupils and staff were analysed.

Information about the school

The school is larger than the average sized junior school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The number of pupils supported at school action plus is above average. There are no pupils with a statement of educational needs currently on roll. The school meets the current floor standards set by the government which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

Significant changes at senior leadership level since the previous inspection include internal promotions at headship and deputy headship level.

The school has Enhanced Healthy School status, the Basic Skills and Dyslexia Friendly Awards and an FA Charter Mark.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It is not outstanding because standards in writing are only average and although teaching is good overall, some inconsistencies remain. Pupils feel happy, safe and secure, shown by their good behaviour and attitudes and above-average attendance. Parents and carers expressed very positive views in their questionnaires, particularly about the way the school cares for their children.
- The school has particular strengths in the promotion of pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the way a wide variety of activities enrich the good curriculum and offer pupils experiences they might not otherwise meet.
- Achievement is good and attainment overall is above average. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school. By the end of Year 6, standards in reading and mathematics are above average, but average in writing. Pupils do not have many opportunities to write at length in different subjects, to review and improve their writing, and their handwriting and presentation often lack care.
- Teaching is good so all groups of pupils achieve well over time. Pupils enjoy their lessons and show good attitudes to learning. Some minor variations in teaching quality remain where assessment information is not used consistently in planning tasks that always meet pupils' different needs.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe in school, saying, 'There are lots of health and safety and first aid procedures'. They move around indoors and outside with consideration for others, hold doors open for adults and their classmates and carefully follow routines established for their safety.
- In response to the dip in standards in 2011, senior leaders swiftly implemented rigorous performance management, professional development and intensive pupil support. Inspection evidence and school data show attainment has swiftly risen to above average and progress is accelerating throughout the school. In addition, the proportion of good teaching has increased and much is outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length in different subjects
 - enabling pupils to review and improve their writing
 - implementing a consistent style of handwriting and presentation.
- Ensure all teaching is at least good or better by making consistent use of assessment information in planning lessons and tasks.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Attainment is generally above average when pupils enter the school in Year 3, though by greater margin in mathematics than in reading and writing. Inspectors agree with the responses in parent and carers' questionnaires that children progress well. Lesson observations show pupils work diligently, behave well and cooperate willingly with staff and their classmates, which supports their good progress. Good teaching and additional support meets individual learning needs effectively. Well-organised support for pupils supported at school action and those who may be vulnerable due to their circumstances, ensures any potential barriers to learning are minimised. Consequently, they progress as well as their classmates.

Pupils' books, school and national data show that attainment overall is above average by the end of Year 6. There is a steady upward trend in attainment over time until 2011 when specific and complex issues adversely affected pupils' performance. Effective actions have swiftly overcome this dip and pupils currently in Year 6 are securely on track to meet their challenging targets. Attainment in reading is above average at the end of Year 6. Pupils are keen readers, and say the library has a good selection of different genres. Younger pupils enjoy regular letters and sounds lessons which accelerate their progress in reading and spelling. Although much has been done to boost attainment in writing, and evidence shows that standards are rising, school actions have yet to become fully effective. Pupils have few opportunities to write at length across the curriculum or to check and improve their written work, and handwriting and presentation can be careless.

Quality of teaching

When asked which lessons they enjoy, pupils quickly replied, 'Everything!' Inspection findings confirm parents and carers' views that their children are taught well. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well in lessons, resulting in good behaviour and friendly relationships between pupils and staff, and with their 'talking partners'. Lessons are well organised with a wide variety of activities, making full use of the skills of the teaching assistants and all resources including the visualisers. Teachers are enthusiastic and demonstrate good subject knowledge. Well-framed questions make pupils think hard and they are expected to explain their answers. Where teaching is strongest, imaginative activities really motivate pupils so they make excellent progress. For example, a Year 4 lesson linked philosophy to literacy so pupils developed persuasive arguments and opinions on a moral issue, and in a Year 6 lesson, pupils competed to make the best use of connectives in their sentences. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs

receive skilled support well matched to their particular needs. Good quality assessment and tracking systems give teachers a clear view of pupils' progress. In the minority of lessons when this information is not used in planning, teaching is less effective and progress slows to satisfactory. Pupils say they know how well they are doing and all agreed that staff show them what they need to do to improve their work.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Inspection evidence supports the views of parents and carers, pupils and staff that the school is a safe environment. The curriculum ensures pupils are aware of how to care for their own safety, for example when using the internet or in the event of a fire. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns about behaviour issues; the school takes full account of such concerns and the number of incidents has decreased. Behaviour is managed well. The great majority of pupils feel behaviour is good, and this contributes strongly to their good progress. Pupils understand bullying can take different forms, such as racism or cyber bullying and say it is not a problem. Activities, such as anti-bullying week, ensure pupils know what to do if difficulties arise and they trust staff to sort them out. Attendance is above average and pupils arrive punctually each day. They feel very much part of the school: buddies look after activities in the playground and discussions in class and the school council give pupils opportunities to contribute to the decision-making process.

Leadership and management

An ambitious vision and commitment to ongoing improvement is shared by all leaders, managers and staff. Accurate self-assessment leads to clear priorities and tightly-focused improvement plans supported by appropriately rigorous actions. The school's monitoring records and inspection evidence show that the proportion of good teaching has increased and much is outstanding. Well-planned professional development and performance management targets based on the outcomes of self evaluation have rapidly boosted attainment after the dip in 2011 and throughout the school progress is accelerating, although writing is still weaker than reading and mathematics. The governing body is very involved, monitoring attendance and helping on residential visits. Members use their skills and local knowledge to support and challenge, for example, to ensure equality of opportunity has high priority and there is no discrimination. The school works closely with all external agencies to remove any barriers to learning, especially for pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable.

The curriculum is good because it fully covers all basic skills and prepares pupils well for the future. The wide variety of additional activities that enrich pupils' experience and capture their interest promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively. These include specialist French, sports and music teaching, Philosophy for Children, participation in Liverpool Children's University, and all pupils are offered a residential experience. Parents and carers feel well informed and helped to support learning at home and the school provides courses and a range of information. Safeguarding arrangements give no cause for concern and meet all current requirements. Staff and governors' training are up-to-date and the site is very secure.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



4 May 2012

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Rice Lane Junior School, Liverpool, L9 3BU

The team send their thanks to you for helping us during the inspection of your school. When we saw you in lessons, around the school, outside in the playground and in meetings you were all polite, friendly and well behaved. We enjoyed visiting the class council meetings when you discussed how to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. You told us you enjoy school and feel safe there, and your parents and carers agree.

You attend a good school, with good leaders and managers. We were impressed by the way you try hard in class. You are taught well so you make good progress and reach standards in reading and mathematics above those expected for your age when you leave, but we think your writing needs to improve. You told us you like all your lessons and all the extra activities that go on, such as the visits out of school.

To make your school even better, we have asked the leaders and managers to:

- help you improve your handwriting and the way you present your work, give you opportunities to do more writing in all subjects and to check back and improve your writing
- make sure all teaching is good or better.

We know you will work hard to help them. We hope you enjoy the Jubilee celebrations and send you our very best wishes,

Yours sincerely

Kathleen McArthur
Lead Inspector

