



Richard de Clare Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114765
LEA ESSEX LEA
Inspection number 279444
Inspection dates 30 January 2006 to 31 January 2006
Reporting inspector Ms. Ruth Frith LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Parsonage Street
School category	Community		CO9 2JT
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01787 472153
Number on roll	409	Fax number	01787475143
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	.Simon Green
Date of previous inspection	26 June 2000	Headteacher	Mr. David Iles

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 30 January 2006 - 31 January 2006	Inspection number 279444
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized primary school where most pupils come from the immediate, socially mixed, area. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is below the national average. Children's attainment on entry covers a wide range but overall is below that usually seen in children of this age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average and six have a statement of their special educational needs. These pupils have a wide range of learning difficulties and disabilities. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with several outstanding features. The support and care for each individual child lie at the heart of the school's work and staff are extremely effective at promoting the pupils' personal development and well being. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The enthusiasm and commitment of staff and governors, together with the headteacher's outstanding leadership, indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve still further. Staff have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and identify appropriate priorities for improvement. The results of the good self-evaluation procedures match closely with the inspection's findings. Quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good. From this base, pupils reach broadly average standards by Year 2. Due to recent improvements in the English curriculum and teaching, standards have risen significantly and are above average by the end of Year 6. They are broadly average in mathematics and science. This indicates that pupils' achievement is good over their time in school. Teaching, learning and assessment are good overall. Many pupils do not find learning easy and it is a credit to the staff that pupils become well motivated and do well. Staff now need to employ the same successful strategies used to improve English to raise standards further in mathematics. There is also a need to bring consistency to teachers' marking so that all pupils are clear about what they have achieved, and know how to improve their work. The curriculum is innovative and stimulating, making pupils enthusiastic, well behaved and keen to learn. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to raise standards in mathematics, particularly in mental mathematics and problem-solving skills.
- Ensure that the marking of pupils' work is consistently good throughout the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From below average starting points, pupils generally make good progress and achieve well. The good quality of teaching they receive in reception results in the children quickly settling into school routines. In Key Stage 1, there has been a steady improvement in reading, writing and mathematics over several years and in the 2005 national tests, pupils in Year 2 reached broadly average standards. This indicates good progress. Pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good in English and satisfactory in mathematics and science. Following a dip in 2004, standards are now continuing the previous steady trend of improvement. In response to the disappointing English results in 2004, the school adopted a range of strategies which have proved successful in developing pupils' writing. In the 2005 Year 6 national tests, pupils reached above average standards in English and broadly average standards in mathematics and science. More capable pupils frequently receive sufficiently challenging work which helps them to achieve well. This can be seen in the high percentage of pupils who attained a level

above that expected for their age in English in the 2005 national tests. However, this was not the case in mathematics. Pupils' mental mathematics and problem-solving skills are areas for the school to improve. Pupils in the current Years 2 and 6 are being challenged and are likely to meet the realistic but challenging targets set. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well because their needs are quickly identified and good support is given by teachers and effective support staff.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils are polite, behave well and look after each other because of the good management skills of teaching and support staff. Pupils enjoy their schooling and attend regularly. There is an excellent school council which ensures that pupils' views are heard. Older pupils look after the younger ones, and the use of Year 6 play leaders and peer mediators, trained by 'Childline' and supervised and supported by the deputy headteacher, is an outstanding example of this in operation. Pupils' moral and social development is excellent, and their spiritual and cultural development is good. The school's ethos and the programme of personal, social, and health education lessons ensure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and lead healthy lifestyles. The school has achieved the 'Advanced Healthy Schools Award' and it is now being used by the local authority as a lead school in the areas of pupils' behaviour, relationships and emotional well-being. The governors have ensured that the quality of school meals has improved and the school has increased the amount of physical activity in the work pupils do. Pupils contribute to their local community in a wide variety of ways, including raising money for charities. The school council decides which charities to support and their finance officers manage the accounts. The responsibilities which pupils are required to undertake and the way they are encouraged to work together, are good preparation for their adult lives and future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good because there is a constant drive for improvement. Teachers use learning targets in lessons that pupils understand so that they are always focused on how they can improve. This approach is contributing to pupils' good achievement. Teachers and support staff get on extremely well with pupils and this motivates them to try hard and to do their best. Pupils are regularly praised for good learning and good work and are rightly proud of their efforts. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan exciting lessons which interest pupils. In all lessons there were many examples of pupils really enjoying their learning. Planning takes good account of what pupils already know. Support for lower attaining pupils works well. Teachers know how well pupils are performing and use this information to pitch work at the correct level. Pupils know their targets and this is further supporting their good

achievement. Increasingly, pupils are assessing their own and each other's work, which is providing more information for them about how they can improve. Marking of pupils' work is improving. In some classes, teachers mark work using lesson targets or the list of key areas for success given to pupils to help them check their work. However, not all teachers are doing this consistently.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good because it creatively meets statutory requirements and the needs of all pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well provided for through a range of well targeted additional activities. In reception, the effective planning ensures that children take full advantage of learning through discovery and investigation. This helps them to develop good attitudes towards learning. Theme weeks, for example on science, help to raise the profile of a subject well. 'Visual-media months,' which focus on a specific topic such as dinosaurs, have been instrumental in raising standards in writing. Since the last inspection, significant improvements have been made to the information and communication technology (ICT) curriculum and the range of resources available. This has helped to widen the range of teaching styles used in lessons. The curriculum is enriched with a variety of educational visits, and visitors to the school are encouraged to share their expertise and widen the pupils' understanding. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care provided by the school is outstanding. The school is very supportive and focuses on developing pupils into confident and responsible young citizens. Parents and their children are rightly delighted with what the school offers. Pupils are well known, feel safe and, above all, feel that they are treated fairly. Requirements for the protection of pupils are in place and are understood by staff. Assessments of physical risk are undertaken and any areas of concern are quickly acted upon. The role of the family liaison officer is exceptionally well planned. All elements of pupils' care and links with outside agencies are tightly managed to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families are very well supported in many aspects of life. This high level of care is reflected in ongoing improvements in attendance, lack of exclusions and pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are aware of their targets and parents are informed so that home and school can work together to encourage pupils' improvement and success. Pupils with learning difficulties are provided with particularly good support so that they are fully included in all aspects of the school's work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good overall and it has a good capacity to improve. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and improved

standards, especially in English. This is mainly due to the quality of the school's process of self-evaluation, detailed analysis of pupils' achievement and a carefully prepared school improvement plan. There is also a productive working relationship with the local authority and with other external professionals who can benefit the school. The school provides good value for money. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. It is clear that pupils and staff enjoy being part of the school. The headteacher and staff have gained the support and confidence of parents and members of the community. The head and deputy headteacher constantly reinforce the school's philosophy of, 'Healthy child, in a healthy school, within a healthy community'. Subject leaders manage their areas well. Parents' and pupils' views are actively sought and acted upon. The new behaviour and relationships policy, which the pupils recognise has brought about marked improvements, is an outstanding example of a new initiative. The school's ethos ensures that pupils from all backgrounds, and those with learning difficulties, are fully integrated and treated as equals. Governors are extremely supportive and know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. There are good systems in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and progress of pupils.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to say how much we enjoyed visiting your school. Thank you for making us feel so welcome and for talking to us about your school and the work you have done. We particularly liked the following: - All the staff work very well together as a team to ensure that you learn a lot. They enjoy teaching you and the teaching is good. - You enjoy school and are keen to do good work. - You do well in school and the standards you reach in English are above those we often see in schools similar to Richard de Clare. We particularly like your writing. - The curriculum is good, which helps to make lessons interesting. - You behave well and are kind to each other. You work and play together very well. - Staff look after you exceptionally well and you feel safe in school. Mr Iles gives outstanding leadership and all staff work hard to improve the school and ensure you receive a good education. We have agreed that the school will get even better if you all work together on the following: - Improve mathematics standards, particularly your mental mathematics and problem-solving skills. - All teachers ensure that they mark your work in a similar way so that you are clear about what you have achieved and what you have to do next to improve. Thank you once again and good luck in the future.