



Runwell Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115037
LEA ESSEX LEA
Inspection number 279502
Inspection dates 6 June 2006 to 7 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs. Lynne Blakelock LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Canewdon Gardens
School category	Community		SS11 7BJ
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01268 735329
Number on roll	303	Fax number	01268 764879
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs. Pauline Lansdale
Date of previous inspection	29 November 2000	Headteacher	Mr. Jeremy Crook

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 6 June 2006 - 7 June 2006	Inspection number 279502
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school which has recently experienced considerable staff changes, including the appointment of a new headteacher in April 2005. Pupils enter the school with levels of knowledge and skills which are below those of most pupils nationally. A lower than average number of pupils has additional learning difficulties and disabilities. Fewer than average are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the number for which English is an additional language are lower than those found nationally. Mobility of pupils is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school that its effectiveness and the value for money provided are satisfactory. It is well placed to make further improvements. The headteacher has been in post for slightly longer than a year. He took over a school with low standards and staff and governors were unsure about how to rectify the situation quickly. Key Stage 1 and 2 test results in 2005 were well below the national average and progress of pupils at Key Stage 2 was inadequate. Standards of literacy throughout the school were particularly low. The new headteacher, ably supported by his deputy headteacher, has swiftly identified and acted on the underlying causes of this underachievement. Although standards in English, mathematics and science are still below average, there are good indications that the more rigorous monitoring and intervention strategies which are now in place are having a positive impact on standards and pupils' achievement. Provision and children's progress in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Reorganisation of teaching groups and robust monitoring of what is happening in lessons has resulted in improvements in teaching and learning. More detailed planning by teachers within year groups is also aiding learning. However, insufficient attention is given to the learning needs of more able pupils. Teachers' marking of work lacks the rigour needed to raise standards more quickly. Pupils are happy in school. Attendance rates are now above the national average. Pupils say they are cared for well. They relish the opportunities to help in school by taking on positions of responsibility, such as being on the school council. They enjoy lessons, particularly those in which they can learn for themselves, as in, for example information and communications technology (ICT) and physical education (PE). The head and deputy headteacher have shown good management skills by involving subject leaders more fully in school improvement planning although their role in evaluating the school's effectiveness is not developed enough. The more focused involvement of the governing body means they are now carrying out their roles satisfactorily and are helping to strengthen the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards throughout the school, particularly in English by improving the quality of teaching and learning. - Ensure that the work set in lessons provides sufficient challenge for all pupils, especially the more able. - Improve target setting procedures and the quality of marking so that all pupils are clear about how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Inspectors and the school agree that in 2005 standards were well below the national average and that progress was inadequate. Notably, standards in English were well below average throughout the school. However, progress in this academic year (2005/06), particularly for pupils in Year 6, has improved so that it is now satisfactory and as a result achievement is sound. Children in the Foundation Stage made good

progress in most areas of learning but at the end of the Reception year did not reach the levels expected for children of this age in literacy and numeracy. It is the implementation of whole school strategies such as those designed to ensure more consistency in planning of lessons which are significant contributory factors in bringing about improvement in rate of progress made by pupils. This is particularly so for boys, who last year were achieving less well than girls. The school is now setting more realistic targets and has appropriate intervention strategies in place to assist pupils who are not meeting them. However, more able pupils are not yet making as much progress as they could because the work they are given is not challenging enough. In contrast, those with additional learning needs are supported appropriately, enabling them to make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils are actively involved in the day-to-day running of their school and the school shows by its actions that every pupil is a valued member of the school community. Consequently they take the positions of responsibility they are offered very seriously. This includes their roles on the school council. Opportunities to help in school and to help their friends are used well. Pupils mature into friendly, competent and confident young people who are prepared satisfactorily for the next phase of their education and the future world of work. They have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to succeed. This applies particularly to PE lessons. They are motivated by the many new skills they can learn and their knowledge about the importance of keeping fit and eating a balanced diet is reinforced. They enjoy their lessons, as reflected in their attendance, which is now good. Pupils work and play happily together. They have a keen sense of justice and fair play, showing their good moral and social development. Pupils report that the few incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly and this contributes to their feeling of being safe in school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Some good and outstanding teaching was seen during the inspection indicating that the school has the potential to improve on its current performance. Several teachers are new to the school but the team is already proving to be effective. The improving quality of teaching is clearly beginning to raise standards. Teachers and support staff have good relationships with pupils. This helps all pupils to enjoy school and as a result they have positive attitudes to learning. Planning is satisfactory and teachers share clear learning objectives with pupils so that they are sure about what they are learning. Teachers use a range of methods to make lessons enjoyable, gain pupils' interest and involve them in their learning. Feedback to pupils on their work is always positive, but marking does not

provide pupils with enough information to enable them to clearly identify what they need to do to improve. Lower attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties are well supported. However, provision for higher attaining pupils is less effective and does not always challenge them sufficiently to ensure that they make the progress that they should. This view is supported by several parents.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. The strong emphasis currently placed on teaching basic skills in English and mathematics, is raising standards. While the curriculum is effectively planned to match the abilities of average and lower-attaining pupils, inconsistencies in assessment mean that planning for more-able pupils is often lacking in challenge, particularly in writing and mathematics, and this slows the progress that they are able to make. The school has recently introduced a good personal, social, and health education programme that supports pupils' personal development well. Pupils benefit from opportunities to apply their skills in ICT across other subjects. There is a good range of additional physical activities, in which they learn many new skills, and there is a suitable range of well-supported, extra-curricular activities during the lunch break and after school. Day and residential visits, such as the Year 6 visit to the Lake District, enrich the curriculum and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and wider development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school supports all pupils in their personal development well. Effective links with outside agencies and other educational professionals are particularly helpful for pupils with learning difficulties. Child protection and other safety checks are up to date and thorough. Staff are appropriately trained and know the procedures to follow when they have concerns. Staff know pupils well and the school has new and appropriate systems for tracking progress. However information regarding achievement is not yet being used effectively to help more able pupils, in particular, to achieve higher standards. Targets have been introduced recently and this is helping to focus work more tightly. The impact of these has been limited to date and discussions with pupils indicate that this is because they are not yet fully aware of how they can improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher's evaluation that leadership and management overall are satisfactory concurs with the judgement of the inspection team. However, the headteacher who is well supported by his deputy offers strong leadership. Skilful strategic planning is resulting in the implementation of policies and practices which are improving the quality of education. Through rigorous monitoring, the headteacher has identified

and responded decisively to the weaknesses causing underachievement, particularly in teaching and learning. Crucial to this has been the recruitment of staff who have skills which match those that are needed to help move the school forward. Although strategies to improve teaching and learning have been introduced relatively recently and standards are still below average pupils' achievement has improved, notably in Year 6. The headteacher has united staff and pupils very effectively by setting a clear direction to raise standards. Staff have a common purpose and shared vision. A good demonstration of the impact of the headteacher's actions is that attendance has been much improved and is now above the national average. Staff have higher expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. They are increasingly working as an effective team under the clear direction of senior management. They feel valued and empowered by their role in improvement planning although not all of them are yet involved in school self-evaluation. Appropriate training is being provided for staff, including subject leaders, to enable them to become more effective in monitoring and evaluating standards and the quality of teaching and learning. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is well led by the chair of governors and they have risen to the challenges facing the school. They now have an accurate understanding of their role and are actively involved in overseeing the school's work. Weaknesses identified in the last inspection report have been addressed satisfactorily and the strengthening of leadership, management and governance puts the school in a good position to improve further. The school is providing satisfactory value for money.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	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	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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

We enjoyed visiting your school recently and meeting you all. Thank you for talking to us. You seem very excited by the good changes that are happening in your school. This letter is to tell you what we liked about your school and what it needs to do to improve. It was clear to us that you are happy at school. We were very impressed by the way that you look after each other and get on so well together. You want to learn and that is a very good sign. You enjoy lessons, especially those where you can do things for yourselves and you try hard. You always behave sensibly so it is not surprising that your teachers are proud of you. Well done for improving your attendance. It is now above the national average. You know you are really lucky to have such a fantastic field and playground where you can spend breaks and lunchtimes. However, some things at your school need to be improved. The national test results last year were low and your teachers want to help you do much better. There are several good signs from the work you have been producing recently to show that you are now making better progress. We have asked your teachers to make sure that they do everything they can to help you keep this up. We have asked your teachers to make sure that the work they set for you is always just right, not too hard and not too easy. We have also asked them to make sure that when they mark your work they tell you what you should do to improve it. We would like your teachers to make sure that when they set targets for you it is very clear what you should do to achieve them.