



Rustington Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125851
LEA West Sussex
Inspection number 282011
Inspection dates 1 March 2006 to 2 March 2006
Reporting inspector David Collard AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	North Lane Rustington Littlehampton, West Sussex BN16 3PW
School category	Community	Telephone number	01903 785271
Age range of pupils	4 to 11	Fax number	01903 850743
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Chair of governors	Mr Peter Jones
Number on roll	407	Headteacher	Mr Geoff Coulson
Appropriate authority	The governing body		
Date of previous inspection	29 November 1999		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Rustington Primary is a larger than average school that has recently undergone extensive refurbishment. The school takes pupils from a socially mixed catchment area of mostly rented or owner-occupied accommodation. It has broadly average numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and a below average number of pupils from minority ethnic groups. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The effectiveness of this school is satisfactory and improving. It gives satisfactory value for money. Most pupils achieve at levels appropriate for their capability and standards are rising.

Children start school with the knowledge and skills expected for their age. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage because of the good quality provision and teaching. By Year 1, standards are above those expected. Pupils' achievement in the rest of the school is now satisfactory, but this has not always been the case. Standards have been too variable in the past and pupils' progress was not good enough between Year 2 and Year 6. Standards are now better and generally at age expected levels or higher. Good care and welfare at the school means that pupils' personal development is good and has been consistently so over time.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. There is good and even outstanding teaching. Past variability has been due to mediocre teaching and a lack of opportunities for pupils to use their investigational skills. Pupils now experience a wide and varied curriculum, which is good. The staff training and support has raised teachers' expectations about what pupils are capable of and assessment procedures are good. This has improved the overall progress of many pupils but some of those with potentially higher ability now need greater challenge.

Leadership is satisfactory and the school has a good capacity to continue improving. The combined strengths of the senior team mean developments are tackled with urgency and there is a realistic understanding in its own evaluations of what still needs to be done to improve things further.

The innovative new curriculum, the school's enhanced environment, the wealth of data analysis and the support of the local authority have brought about a whole new sense of purpose. Unfortunately, these improvements have not yet been successfully shared with parents, as communication is not as good as it might be and this has led to a lack of understanding. As a result, parents have a number of wrong conceptions about the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- help teachers to consistently use the good range of assessment information so that work planned for higher attainers provides them with more challenge
- build on the good practice in teaching to ensure pupils are consistently well taught, enabling them to achieve as well as they can and so make the best progress
- make parents more knowledgeable about their children's education by encouraging a closer working partnership with better communication

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is now satisfactory overall but is good in the Foundation Stage. The satisfactory achievement is reflected in national tests and pupils' work, which indicates a significant improvement in standards since 2003. Previously, not all pupils reached their potential because teaching did not consistently meet their needs or challenge them to work hard enough.

Children make a good start in the Reception Year and progress well because the teachers provide challenging opportunities that enable all children, whatever their capability, to extend their knowledge and skills in all areas of learning. Pupils in the present Year 1 are reaching standards above those expected for their age, although this varies each year depending on year group ability.

Standards by the end of Year 2 are still above those expected for their age but this changes and by Year 6 standards are average. This anomaly exists because of the legacy of unsatisfactory provision where older pupils have not always made sufficient progress. National test data supports the view that for the first time in three years pupils are making satisfactory progress between Year 2 and Year 6. The success of concentrated support for teaching can be seen in the suitably challenging targets for 2006. More pupils are now reaching the standards expected, particularly in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Unfortunately, a number of higher achieving pupils in Years 3 to 6 have still not made good enough progress and have the potential to do even better than they are doing now .

The good assessments strongly indicate that there are now fewer differences between groups of pupils. Boys or girls, those with learning difficulties and those from minority ethnic groups achieve as well as others.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Good provision for the pupils' personal development and well-being ensures that pupils behave well and enjoy school. Attendance is above average and is a good indication of pupils' positive attitudes to school. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and their cultural development is satisfactory. The new curriculum initiatives introduced this year have improved provision for spirituality through such activities as gardening projects and visits to the beach to study rare plants. In addition, pupils are learning about their emotions, for example, in lessons where anger is explored.

Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and they are developing good social skills such as acting as 'playground buddies' and supervising the use of playground equipment. It was the school council's idea to have 'friendship stops' in the playground following what they saw on a visit to another school. The school has identified the need to improve the pupils' cultural development by inviting more visitors from minority

ethnic backgrounds to contribute to the curriculum as well as creating further links with the school that pupils support in Africa.

Pupils have a good sense of how to stay healthy, for example, through their healthy eating projects. They feel safe and secure, follow safe practices and know who to go to if they have problems. Pupils make a very positive contribution to the local community and have raised an incredible £4,000 for the local Children's Hospice by organising a variety of projects.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall but good in the Foundation Stage, where pupils make the most progress. Evidence shows that there are pockets of good practice by individual teachers in other parts of the school. For instance, sometimes when teachers have good subject knowledge and are confident about what they are teaching, pupils are motivated well, interest is maintained and lessons are outstanding. There has been a successful focus on raising the quantity of good teaching and eliminating any unsatisfactory practice. The school's monitoring is achieving success and resulting in more consistent progress. Consequently, pupils' achievement is rising.

Teachers ensure classes are orderly and pupil motivation stems from calm and confident questioning. Common threads are developed very well between subjects such as the 'Emotion' theme seen in Year 5 where pupils wrote poems and used colours and pictures to represent feelings.

Marking is variable. It can be very good but sometimes does not indicate where pupils can improve. Better use is made of pupils' self-assessment such as when a group wrote of their classmate's work, 'next time try some adverbs like a tiger creeping slowly.'

Although teaching is improving and has some strengths, it is only just beginning to have an impact on the pupils' progress. The pupils have only recently started making consistently satisfactory progress. The better teaching has yet to impact fully on the achievement of those higher attainers who still have gaps in their previous learning because in the past they were not taught well enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum meets the needs of all groups of pupils. During the past year, the school has implemented many changes to improve provision and raise standards. These improvements have resulted in a highly creative and vibrant programme of studies, known by pupils as 'The River of Learning'. This whole school approach provides pupils with opportunities to study topics in much more depth and to see real relevance between all the things they are learning. Recent monitoring has identified that it has provided greater consistency in teaching, better cross-curricular links and a good

emphasis on developing thinking skills. A good range of popular clubs successfully develops pupils' interests and skills in a wide range of sporting, creative and musical experiences. Added to which, class visits enrich their knowledge within subjects such as history and the creative arts. Visitors to the school provide a good range of experiences, which extend pupils' literacy, drama, dance and musical skills and their understanding of other cultures and religions.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support of pupils are good. It has helped pupils feel secure so that they can work hard. The well qualified support staff deal with health and safety issues promptly and effectively. However, the information is not always successfully shared with parents. A part-time counsellor is available two days a week for the older pupils to turn to if they have problems and this is contributing to the pupils' good social and moral development. Appropriate attention is paid to child protection arrangements and security of the building is good.

Good systems are in place to assess learning which have been at the core of the recent improvement in achievement. Pupils are aware of their targets for improvement and many can explain what they need to do to extend their skills and reach higher levels. Regular assessments help to identify any pupils who need extra support or help and aid identification of where teaching needs to improve. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are appropriately supported and their progress is tracked well as they move through the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory which agrees with the school's own view. Accurate self-evaluation has enabled the leadership team to work on the most important priorities for school improvement. Over the past year, the headteacher and his deputy, together with the local authority, have worked effectively to bring about significant improvements in teaching. The newly established senior management team has created a new sense of purpose amongst staff. Teachers are more enthusiastic in their work and pupils clearly enjoy their learning. Some of these initiatives have taken too long to impact because the school did not find out quickly enough what was making a difference. However, the benefits are now evident in the steady rise in standards and better pupil achievement.

Good improvements have been made to the accommodation, including extra permanent classrooms and a new computer suite. Pupils are consulted about the school's priorities for development and their views are acted upon. This happens because the school expects the staff to consult with the school council about important changes to ensure that pupils understand the reasons for decisions.

A significant minority of parents are unhappy about communication and feel the school is unapproachable. In light of this, the senior management team is undertaking an urgent review aimed at establishing a much closer and successful working partnership.

Seven new governors have been appointed in the past two years and are playing an increasingly effective role in the school's management. They have a clear awareness of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement and provide good support for the new strategies in place. The school is in a good position to build on recent successes and has the capacity to improve further.

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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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	2	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	2	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?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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

Rustington Community Primary School North Lane Rustington, Littlehampton West Sussex
BN16 3PW

4 March 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you for looking after us so well during our recent visit to your school. We hope we did not disrupt your 'Book Week' too much. We enjoyed meeting so many of you and joining you in your lessons. You are probably wondering what we thought of your school so I have included some of the main points below.

- You told us how you enjoyed school. Those in the reception classes make a good start and we could see that the rest of you all became involved in the work you were asked to do.
- We like the new way you are using different subjects through the 'River of Learning.' Through that, you have done a lot of work in making the school look attractive. We like the way you all worked together on the ceiling frieze in the entrance hall.
- We think the school council is taking a lot of responsibility. We were very impressed with the huge amount of money you all raised for the local hospice.
- It seems that the standards you are achieving in English, mathematics and science are starting to rise after being a little low for the past few years. We think that the good range of data about how well you are doing shows that this progress is going to continue.
- Your teachers have worked hard to make the work they give you more exciting and this is working. It has helped them to become even better teachers and to make sure you all do your best. We have asked them to give even more challenging work to those of you who are capable of reaching higher standards.
- Some of your parents say that they would like to get more involved in knowing what is happening at the school and we agree. Your headteacher and the members of staff are going to try and find ways to improve the communication between your family and the school.

Finally, we wish you all the best for your time at Rustington and every success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

David Collard (Lead Inspector)