



Richmond Avenue Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 133957
LEA SOUTHEND-ON-SEA LEA
Inspection number 282398
Inspection dates 19 October 2005 to 20 October 2005
Reporting inspector Mr. David Manuel LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Richmond Avenue
School category	Community		SS3 9LG
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01702 293 302
Number on roll	412	Fax number	01702 290975
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Paul Green
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs. Bronwyn Lister-Smith

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3 to 11	19 October 2005 - 20 October 2005	282398

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average primary school has pupils mostly of white British heritage. A small number of pupils come from minority ethnic groups; six of these are at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils moving in and out of the school is broadly average. A higher than usual proportion of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities and attainment on entry is mostly well below average. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. The school was established as a primary school in 2003 following the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools. Nine new teachers have joined the school during the past two years. The school has gained an interim Healthy School Award and has just gained the Investor in People Award.

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. The inspection confirms the school's own evaluation. Parents and pupils justifiably hold it in high regard. A high proportion of pupils have a wide range of learning difficulties and disabilities. The care and support provided and their effect on pupils' all round personal development is good. From low attainment levels on entry, pupils make good progress, particularly in personal, social and emotional development, as a result of good teaching and provision in the Foundation Stage. This provides a good start to their education. Although standards by the end of Year 6 are still below the national average, pupils achieve well, given their starting points. The school provides good value for money. The school works closely with parents and the community for the benefit of pupils. The headteacher provides good leadership and management and is well supported by all staff. Senior managers have good knowledge of the strengths of the school and work hard to improve the weaknesses in an atmosphere where every pupil matters. Pupils enjoy their lessons and learn to work co-operatively with each other as a result. There is a firm commitment to raising standards and ensuring that all pupils reach their full potential, despite the learning and behavioural difficulties of a significant proportion. Improved assessment procedures have been introduced and are helping teachers identify pupils' learning needs more effectively. Attendance levels have been well below national figures for a few years but the school is working hard with parents to improve these and has achieved some success. The school has the capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue working with parents to improve attendance levels; - Raise standards in English, particularly writing, mathematics and science.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When pupils start in the nursery and reception classes, very few have the skills and knowledge typical of three- and four-year-olds. The low skills they have on starting school means that they have a lot of catching up to do. They make good progress because of the good teaching and the interesting things to do. There are more pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities in some year groups than in others. Consequently, standards can vary from year to year. Many in Year 2 and Year 6 do not do as well as most pupils of their age, particularly in writing. Last year the younger pupils did better than in previous years in reading and mathematics. The older pupils who left Year 6 this summer met the challenging targets they were set. These pupils had started school with exceptionally low skills and a very large number, almost 50%, had learning difficulties. Pupils with learning difficulties and those at an early stage of learning English get good support from teachers and teaching assistants and they do well. The few pupils who have been identified as gifted and talented are given challenging work to help them do as well as they should.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Most pupils behave well, enjoy school and are keen to learn. In discussions, one strongly supported comment was, 'It's just great! I really like being here!' Pupils know they are treated fairly and they are polite and courteous. They feel safe because they know that adults will help them if they have a problem. They like the provision of the 'bully box' where they can place comments and raise concerns. They contribute well to the community by taking part in a wide range of activities, raising sums of money for charities locally and further afield. Pupils know that their views are taken seriously because the school council asked for an adventure playground and now they have one. They choose healthy snacks, drink water regularly and sit up straight to sing with enjoyment in assembly. There are good opportunities for exercise and sport. The school knows it needs to improve pupils' skills in English and mathematics to prepare them for the future. As a result of the good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, pupils learn about and respect the views, values and beliefs of others. Working together in pairs and small groups helps them to mix happily together. Attendance is lower than in most schools and not all pupils arrive on time. It is improving because the school is working hard to promote better attendance. Some families take extended holidays in term-time without letting the school know and this disrupts their children's education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and helps pupils to learn well and make good progress over time. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together for the benefit of all pupils, particularly the high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. There is good co-ordination of advice and support for these pupils. Relationships are developed very well and ensure good levels of discipline and a positive atmosphere for learning. Teachers use a good range of strategies to make lessons enjoyable, gain pupils' interest and involve them in discussions about their learning, as observed in mathematics. Teachers consistently focus on behaviour management strategies to good effect and this ensures that pupils with potentially challenging behaviour are engaged in their work and do not interrupt others. From the Foundation Stage, due emphasis is placed on promoting confidence and encouraging personal and social development. These youngest pupils are engaged in a good range of purposeful activities both inside and outside the classroom. The new marking system helps older pupils to evaluate their own improvements but this system is still at an early stage. A small number of gifted and talented pupils is identified and good opportunities are provided for these pupils to do as well as they should.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the needs of pupils by concentrating on reading, writing, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). The range of resources to support learning in other subjects is inspiring. There are two computer rooms, a music studio and a design and technology centre. As a result, pupils are involved in many interesting projects and make good progress in these subjects. The school works hard to provide pupils with experiences they might not otherwise be able to enjoy. There is an impressive range of activities outside lessons. These include competitive and fun sports and opportunities to learn French and sing in the choir. All this encourages pupils to lead an active and healthy life and develop an interest in languages and the arts. Pupils visit museums, environmental centres and other local places of interest. These visits are well planned and enrich their education. Local members of the community visit the school to talk about various aspects of their work, which helps prepare pupils for later life. The school makes very good provision for pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities. Because of the sensitive support that is provided, these pupils make good progress. Pupils who are gifted and talented are encouraged to develop their skills and the school has some good links with the local secondary school and sports clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a very caring and supportive environment where pupils are happy and confident. Teachers know the pupils well and work very hard to provide a good level of care and support. Child protection arrangements are clear and pupils who are at risk or vulnerable are quickly identified and supported effectively. The school works successfully with the physiotherapist, education psychologist and other outside agencies to ensure pupils receive the support that they need to help them learn. Pupils and parents know their concerns will be listened to by all staff. For example, the 'Time 4 Talk' programme gives pupils the opportunity to discuss their worries and concerns with staff. All pupils work hard to achieve challenging targets in English, mathematics and science. The feedback pupils receive on their written work does not always help them know what they have to do to improve. Some pupils have individual targets towards which they work and they are aware of what they need to do to improve, but this does not happen in all classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides good leadership to the whole school community. Her strong commitment to provide the best for all pupils is shared successfully with all staff. It is very evident that they wish to plan the best for every pupil. The pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are encouraged and supported well by all staff. Senior managers form an effective team and have been successful in leading improvements

in a number of key areas. The headteacher and all staff have been particularly successful in creating a positive atmosphere in which pupils' personal development is a high priority. As a result, pupils' attitudes to learning are good and the challenging behaviour of a small number of pupils is very well managed. Resources are used effectively to create pupils' interest in learning, as observed in ICT and creative subjects such as art and music. The governing body is a source of good support and encouragement. All members are attached to a particular subject or key element of the school's development process and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. There is a strong commitment by all to the particular priorities in the school improvement plan. The views of parents and pupils are taken into account when establishing priorities. Financial management is good and the school is aware of the need to plan ahead to cope with forthcoming changes.

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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?	2	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	NA	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	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?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	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	3	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?	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?	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

Following our visit to your school, the inspectors would like to thank you for helping us. We very much enjoyed being in your school, meeting you. We were pleased to talk to you and that you shared your ideas with us. We believe that you go to a very caring school where your headteacher, teachers and teaching assistants look after you very well. Your teachers prepare interesting lessons and everyone seems to enjoy them. You are trying hard to improve in English, mathematics and science and are making some improvements. We liked the way that you helped each other in lessons and enjoyed your singing in assemblies. We were very pleased to see you playing well together at playtimes. We think that your school council has good ideas to help everyone enjoy their time at the school, especially the adventure playground. Many of you are very good at sport. We have asked your teachers to help you improve your English, maths and science skills to help you catch up to the levels where most of you should be. We are also asking a few of you not to be away from school so much in term time because this makes it difficult for you to catch up in some important subjects and skills. Continue to enjoy your lessons and playing together. We wish you all well and feel sure that your school will continue to improve.