



# Riversdale Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 101018  
**Local Authority** Wandsworth  
**Inspection number** 285945  
**Inspection dates** 17–18 October 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mike Thompson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	302a Merton Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Wandsworth
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		London SW18 5JP
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	02088746904
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	203	<b>Fax number</b>	02088750368
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Allan Turpin
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Christina Piombo
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 March 2001		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Riversdale is an average size primary school which serves a culturally diverse area of social deprivation. There are high levels of pupil mobility. The proportion of minority ethnic pupils is increasing. Two thirds of all pupils are now from minority ethnic groups, which is about five times the national average. The largest of these groups, comprising about a third of the roll, is of Pakistani heritage. About a fifth of all pupils are at the early stages of learning to communicate in English, and a similar proportion of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. Some aspects of the school's provision have been adversely affected by on-going building work during the past year.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Riversdale Primary provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. The quality of teaching and learning, the curriculum and the care, support and guidance provided for pupils are all satisfactory. As a result, pupils achieve satisfactorily, and make steady progress as they move through the school.

Children are given a sound start to their education in the Nursery and Reception classes. When they begin school, their attainment is below average overall. However, most have weak knowledge and understanding of the world around them and many have limited communication in English. They make satisfactory progress, and are close to most of the goals expected of children by the time they transfer to Year 1. Pupils' achievement and progress are satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. By the end of Years 2 and 6 standards are generally below average.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. This is because the educational direction provided has not yet ensured that the pupils make good progress. The leadership has, however, created a welcoming environment for the pupils in which they all feel safe, well cared for, and valued. For this reason, the pupils enjoy coming to school. One pupil summed this up well when saying, 'I like it here, everyone is so friendly and they look after you.' However, none of the pupils interviewed expressed much interest in their work. This is because, too often, teaching does little to excite or challenge them. Teachers are not always good enough at assessing the precise learning needs of their pupils. As a result, they do not always pitch the work for pupils at the right level. Consequently, pupils sometimes get work that is too easy or too hard for them, and do not make enough progress. The weaknesses in assessment throughout the school have resulted in, for example, the over-estimation of children's capabilities in the Foundation Stage. The targets set for pupils to achieve are not sharp enough. As a result, teachers are unable to measure pupils' progress in achieving their targets with any degree of accuracy. The school is aware of the weaknesses in assessment and teaching highlighted by the inspection. However, the way in which these are being monitored and addressed is not always rigorous enough.

Although the standards of pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory, there are strengths within this. Pupils generally behave well. Most pupils get on well with one another and show good social skills.

### What the school should do to improve further

- \* Ensure that the quality of teaching is improved by raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and ensuring greater consistency in matching the work set to the abilities of the pupils.
- \* Improve the accuracy of teachers' assessments of their pupils and the ways in which they use information gathered from their assessments to plan the next steps in learning and set specific, measurable targets for their pupils to achieve.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils' rates of progress vary from year group to year group, reflecting the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching to be found within the school. Within this picture, there are also specific pockets of underachievement, most notably within a very small but significant group of younger boys whose immature behaviour sometimes affects their achievement. The more able pupils underachieve whenever they are not stretched enough by the work provided for them.

Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in developing their social skills and in learning to communicate in English. This happens because of the strong focus placed on these vital elements of their early development by the good staff team. Progress in the other areas of learning is satisfactory. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils do best in Year 6. This is the result of good teaching and the targeted help provided through, for example, 'booster sessions' to help raise attainment prior to the annual national tests. Despite this, standards are generally below average in English and science and well below in mathematics. The closure of some classrooms resulted in Year 6 pupils being educated in a local secondary school for part of the previous school year. This meant that they were unable to benefit from the extra help normally available. The impact of this disruption was seen in the much lower test results for 2005.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress. The pupils from minority ethnic groups, apart from pupils of Black Caribbean heritage, generally do better than White British pupils. The school ascribes this to the generally more positive attitudes of the minority ethnic pupils and the better levels of support they enjoy at home. It constantly works hard to improve the levels of parental involvement and thus help improve pupils' outlook towards their education.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance is close to the national average. Most pupils attend regularly and are punctual. However, the school's rigorous monitoring of attendance shows clearly that the very small minority who are persistently late or have frequent absences do not get on as well as their classmates. The school is doing all it can to remedy this situation. The pupils' response to the school's sustained efforts to promote safe practices and healthy lifestyles is satisfactory. Pupils develop a satisfactory sense of community responsibility through, for example, their school council. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education and their future as life-long learners. Their social skills are good, but they generally lack secure basic skills in numeracy and literacy.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning range from good to inadequate. Teachers usually manage their pupils well. They give clear explanations and generally relate well to their pupils. Teachers make good use of their teaching assistants to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties are given the extra help they need. However, they sometimes use photocopied worksheets too much, and work is not always pitched at different levels to reflect the range of pupils' abilities. In addition, their marking of pupils' work is not always useful in helping pupils to improve. These weaknesses occur because teachers' skills in assessing the needs of their pupils are not yet secure. A good feature of teaching and learning is the benefit pupils' gain from specialist tuition, such as in art and sports.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

Noteworthy features of the curriculum are the creative opportunities provided for pupils and the good enrichment activities such as visits to The Imperial War Museum and Tate Modern. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The school also offers specialist teaching in French and information and communication technology through its strong links with a local secondary school. A further good feature is the 'themed' weeks, where all subjects are linked to a common subject theme, such as history. In the Foundation Stage, teachers provide a good mix of activities. Some of these are directed by the adults and others give children the opportunity to make choices and to work independently.

Teachers' planning, however, lacks rigour because it does not always take enough account of information gathered about the specific needs of pupils. Where this occurs, work is not pitched at different levels to provide achievable challenges for all. Work planned for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities who are withdrawn from lessons for extra help does not always link well enough with what is being taught in class. This means that these pupils miss out on the experiences provided for their classmates.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Pupils feel secure in school and there are robust systems in place that are regularly reviewed to ensure their safety. The needs of vulnerable pupils are monitored closely. Their needs and those of pupils with learning difficulties or who have English as an additional language are satisfactorily met at an early stage.

The tracking of pupils' progress has been a focus for the school. However, this is not yet rigorous enough. Assessment is not used effectively enough to set consistently

specific, measurable and challenging targets for pupils. The targets set for pupils to achieve are not given a high enough profile. For example, the marking of pupils' work does not make specific links to their individual targets.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The school's evaluation of its own effectiveness is satisfactory. It clearly identifies the strengths to be built on and the weaknesses to be addressed. However, the judgements made are sometimes too generous and do not always give enough emphasis to the impact of weaknesses on pupils' achievement.

The school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement. It has successfully addressed most of the areas for improvement from its last inspection, and works well in partnership with a range of outside professional groups, such as social services, to sustain good standards of pastoral care for its pupils. However, academic standards remain below average. This is because the school's actions to raise standards have not yet had a sharp enough focus. The staff work well as a team and give good support to the headteacher.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and are well informed. However, there are vacancies on the governing body. This means that the responsibility for overseeing the work of the school has to be carried out by too few people. Many governors are relatively new, and lack experience.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I would like to tell you what your inspectors think about how well you are getting on and how well your school is helping you to learn. We think that your school is satisfactory overall, with some things that are good. We think that you are making reasonable progress, but your work in English, mathematics and science is not quite as good as it should be. We know that with a bit more effort, and the help of your teachers, you could do even better.

Here are some of the things we liked best about your school:

- \* Your school is a happy place to be in. Everyone is friendly and welcoming. Your behaviour is good.
- \* When you are stuck with your work, there is always someone to help you.
- \* There are lots of extra things for you to do, such as the after-school clubs or trips to interesting places that help to make learning more interesting.
- \* All of the adults in your school make sure that you are safe and are really well looked after.

Your headteacher and all of the other people who help run your school want it to be even better, so this is what we have suggested them to do next:

- \* We would like your teachers to plan their lessons so that those of you who find your work a bit easy have more difficult things to do, and to make sure that everyone has to think really hard.
- \* We would like your teachers to look really closely at how well you are getting on, and try to set you very clear targets that you will have to work hard to reach. The reason for this is that we would like to see you do even better than you already are. I'm sure that you are ready for this challenge!

Your teachers cannot help you to improve your work unless you help them, and the best way that you can do this is to make sure that you come to school on time and don't take time off when you shouldn't.

With best wishes for your future success,

Mike Thompson

Lead inspector