



Ripple Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101198
Local Authority Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number 285992
Inspection dates 21–22 September 2006
Reporting inspector Keith Williams

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Suffolk Road
School category	Community		Barking
Age range of pupils	7–11		IG11 7QS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8270 4670
Number on roll (school)	361	Fax number	020 8270 4673
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Linda Luby
		Headteacher	Mr Roger Mitchell
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average and serves a disadvantaged area. There are more pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds than in most schools but most are able to speak English. In recent years, a higher proportion of teachers have left than in most schools, but the school now has a permanent teaching complement. The headteacher was appointed in April 2006, following a period as acting headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Ripple Junior School has emerged from a period in which there was significant underachievement amongst pupils and standards were too low. The headteacher, supported by the deputy and staff, are clearly focused on raising standards and accelerating pupils' progress. As a result of improvements to teaching, learning and pupils' personal development, the school now provides a satisfactory standard of education and there is good capacity to improve further. Standards are average and, given the pupils' starting points, this represents a satisfactory level of achievement. This is reflected in the 2006 national test results for Year 6 pupils, which are markedly better than those in previous years.

While leadership and management are satisfactory overall, good leadership from the new headteacher and deputy has been instrumental in securing improvement. They have a clear and accurate picture of what needs to improve and are tackling weaknesses determinedly. A strong and successful focus on improving pupils' behaviour, attitudes and attendance means that they have established a positive climate for learning. Consequently, pupils are achieving much better, they enjoy school and their personal development is good. They behave well and their moral and social development is good. They have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe, are appropriately involved in school and local events and their improving basic skills mean they are satisfactorily prepared for the future.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory because inconsistencies in planning and expectations of pupils, which contributed to previous underachievement, are being ironed out. Teachers share high expectations of how pupils should work and behave and, as a result, lessons are invariably calm, supportive and productive. Satisfactory planning ensures that there is a firm focus on what pupils are expected to learn. Some inconsistencies remain, however, and some more able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently. Information and communication technology (ICT) is a strength of the satisfactory curriculum. The imaginative use of new technology, through the school's involvement in a national project, helps capture pupils' attention and increases their enjoyment and understanding. Pupils benefit from a good range of out-of-school activities.

New assessment arrangements are being introduced and many of the old systems are being phased out but, at present, these procedures are cumbersome. They produce copious information about pupils' performance but this is not yet used effectively to check on the progress of different groups of pupils and provide them with clear guidance about how they can improve. New arrangements for monitoring teaching and learning are evolving, but the system is not yet coherent and manageable. Examples of good practice exist, including the careful monitoring of mathematics, which have contributed to the improved performance of pupils and teachers. Good links with outside agencies ensure that pupils with learning difficulties, those at an early stage of learning English and pupils identified by the school as being vulnerable, make similar progress to their classmates.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the teachers set challenging work for the more able pupils.
- Use assessment data effectively to track different groups of pupils and give them specific guidance of how to improve.
- Devise a manageable system of monitoring teaching and learning to raise the quality of teaching to the level of the best.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is average. In recent years, results in the national tests for pupils in Year 6 have been significantly below average and too few pupils attained the highest level. This underachievement is being tackled successfully, so that standards are average, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and those in Year 6 are on track to meet their challenging targets. This is reflected in the test results for 2006, which show considerable improvement. In particular, the proportions of pupils reaching the highest level in English and mathematics have more than doubled. The starting points for this group of pupils were higher than those of previous years, however, but their results still represent a satisfactory level of achievement. There is no significant difference in the progress of pupils with learning difficulties, those new to learning English or pupils of different backgrounds. However, the progress of more able pupils slows when the teachers set them work which is too easy.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. They behave well and enjoy coming to school. This has a significant impact on their achievement and progress and is appreciated by pupils, one saying, 'I left the school, but I returned years later and behaviour was much better.' Pupils show respect for each other, value the wide diversity of cultures in school and their spiritual development has improved since the last inspection. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They participate in physical activity, understand the importance of healthy eating and contribute to the smooth running of the school. One pupil said, 'I love being in the play squad and helping children get on with each other.' Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their future economic well-being because their basic skills are improving and they have a good knowledge of how to use ICT.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Continual changes in the teaching staff and, sometimes, weak teaching in previous years contributed to pupils' underachievement. Strenuous efforts to raise the quality of teaching have had a significant impact on improving pupils' learning. As a result, pupils make satisfactory progress. They are benefiting from increasing amounts of good and, occasionally, outstanding teaching and, in these lessons, the rate of progress accelerates. Inconsistencies, particularly in the level of teachers' expectation, planning and subject knowledge are being tackled, but more remains to be done. Improved planning means there is a clearer focus on what pupils are expected to learn, but it is not always clear how the work will be adapted to take account of pupils of differing ability. Consequently, for example, the progress made by more able pupils slows when too little is expected of them. The marking of pupils' work is carried out conscientiously and is satisfactory overall. In the best examples, pupils are given a clear idea of how well they are doing and what their next steps should be.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Planning is improving, particularly in the core subjects, but does not always take sufficient account of pupils' differing capabilities. The use of ICT, by pupils and teachers, is a strength and this contributes to pupils' improved understanding and enjoyment. Pupils benefit from good links that have been established with other schools. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of out-of-school activities that promotes their personal development and helps them to develop healthy and varied lifestyles. Visits to places of interest and visitors, including theatre groups and multicultural storytellers, enrich pupils' experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The school looks after its pupils well and child protection, first aid and health and safety procedures are good. Those pupils who may cause concern or who are felt to be vulnerable are monitored carefully and receive good support, enhanced by effective communication with external support services and with parents. Procedures for tracking pupils' progress are developing, but the information is not used consistently to provide clear academic guidance to pupils. Consequently, pupils are not always sufficiently clear about how they can improve. Satisfactory support is given to pupils with learning difficulties and those whose who are at the early stages of learning English so that they make similar progress to other pupils. Pupils with challenging behaviour are learning to cope better through the

consistent expectations of staff, who make the consequences of misbehaviour very clear.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory. Good leadership from the headteacher and deputy has been instrumental in raising standards and improving teaching and learning. Consequently, after a period of underachievement, pupils now make satisfactory progress and this is evident in classrooms and the school's improved performance in the 2006 national tests. This improvement is recognised by parents, the majority of whom are supportive of the school. School leaders are not complacent, however. They recognise that there is still more to be done and, given their recent track record, they have the capacity to achieve further improvement. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses but many of the systems used to gather information, including assessment and the monitoring of teaching and learning, are new, cumbersome and are not sufficiently effective. Governance is satisfactory. The supportive governing body have rightly placed a high priority on the welfare of pupils and staff during a difficult period. Some governors visit the school regularly and a few visit classrooms.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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

Thank you for the very friendly way you welcomed us to your school during the recent inspection. Special thanks go to those of you who met with us to let us know your views. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you in lessons and you gave us a lot of helpful information.

Your school is satisfactory and we agree with you and your teachers that it is improving. Your headteacher and deputy have worked out what needs to happen to help you learn better. They have made some good changes and your teachers are making sure that you can do your best. We could see from your books and lessons that your work is getting better and one of the reasons is that you behave well and are keen to learn. We are pleased that many of you come to school more often than you used to. Keep it up, because you can only learn if you come to school regularly. Many of you told us how much you feel safe and cared for and know how to make healthy choices at lunchtime. We agree.

Your headteacher and teachers have good plans to make sure your school keeps on improving and I am sure that you will do everything you can to help them. There are three things that we have asked them to do. We think there are times when some of you could try harder work, so they are going to make sure that you get it. Although your teachers keep a check on how you are getting on, this could be done better and they need to make sure that you know your targets and understand how to improve your work. We have also asked your headteacher to keep a close check to make sure that more of your lessons are good ones.

Once again, thank you for your help during the inspection. We enjoyed being in your school and we wish you good luck for the future. We know you will work with your teachers to help your school to improve further.

Yours sincerely

Keith WilliamsLead inspector