

Rush Green Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101212
Local Authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	285995
Inspection dates	21–22 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Judith Dawson

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	364
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Martin Howse
Headteacher	Mr Jeff Barrett
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2001
School address	Dagenham Road Rush Green Romford RM7 0RL
Telephone number	020 8270 4933
Fax number	020 8270 4938

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Rush Green Junior School is larger than average. Pupils' attainment on entry is below average. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average and slightly more pupils than average come from minority ethnic groups, the largest group being Black African. Mobility is increasing and about a quarter of the pupils join or leave the school after Year 3, which is above average. There are a few pupils from traveller families. Pupil numbers vary significantly between year groups. The school has held the Healthy School Award since 2002 and gained the updated award in 2006.

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 where leaders are committed to providing a welcoming and caring environment and generating a good climate for learning. Good relationships between adults, pupils and adults and pupils ensure that the school is an orderly and happy place. Pupils are very proud of their school, behave well and care for each other and the environment. Their good attitudes to learning enable them to make good progress across the school. Good care, guidance and support give pupils confidence and ensure they feel safe. This is an inclusive school where individuals are valued and nurtured.

Standards have been rising over the last few years and were above average in English mathematics and science in the 2006 national tests. The present Year 6 pupils have maintained above average standards for English and mathematics this year, and average standards for science. This represents good achievement as standards were below average on entry to the school.

Teaching is good and the teaching of English is particularly effective. Teachers' marking gives pupils very good guidance on how to improve their English work. A few teachers give similar guidance for mathematics but several limit their marking to ticks and crosses. This misses opportunities for pupils to learn from their mistakes and take responsibility for improving their work. In lessons, teachers use questions effectively, making their pupils think. Learning support assistants give good support and teachers use the good assessment systems to identify where extra support is needed. Most teachers ensure that more able pupils have the challenges they need to enable them to make good progress, although sometimes pupils are asked to complete work that is too easy before moving on to more challenging work.

The curriculum is satisfactory with several good features. The personal, social and health education curriculum is good, contributing to pupils' good personal development and well-being. The school is beginning to adapt the Local Authority schemes for English and mathematics to meet pupils' needs. The information and communication technology (ICT) curriculum meets pupils' needs well and pupils are increasingly using ICT across the curriculum. However, more needs to be done to adapt the schemes of work for other subjects to more closely reflect pupils' interests and needs.

The school is well led and managed. Leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. There is a strong sense of teamwork amongst leaders, managers and all staff and a clear focus on raising standards and improving achievements. This provides a good climate for further improvement. The school improvement plan has as its aim 'Getting the Best out of Everyone' and clearly identifies priorities. There is scope for improvement in ensuring that subject leaders are better trained to enable them to monitor their subjects and make the schemes of work more flexible. The school has identified moving towards a more creative and relevant curriculum as a priority in order to enrich pupils' experiences.

What the school should do to improve further

- Apply the good quality marking of pupils' English work to other subjects, especially mathematics, to ensure pupils know how to improve.
- Ensure subject leaders in humanities and the arts are suitably supported in providing curricula which better meet pupils' needs and interests.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards have improved since the last inspection. Pupils achieve well from a generally below average starting point in Year 3. In the 2006 national tests, standards in English, mathematics and science were above average and pupils' achievements were well above those of pupils in most other schools, especially in English. Pupils now in Year 6 are on track to attain above average standards in English and mathematics, exceeding their challenging targets. Most are working at average levels for science. This represents continuing good achievement as this Year 6 group has fewer higher attaining pupils. Pupils achieve well because they work hard and respond well to the good teaching. Well-focused additional support enables pupils working below the expected levels for their age to make good progress and the most able pupils are given additional challenge, enabling them to attain higher levels.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils' good behaviour plays a significant part in enabling them to achieve well. They respect their teachers, saying that 'Teachers bring them up to be nice'. They know how to stay fit, healthy and safe and say they have altered their eating habits as a result. They are proud of the fact that four fifths of pupils now walk to school regularly and they understand the reasons why this is important. They feel safe in school and know to whom they should turn if they are having problems. Pupils enjoy school and attendance is satisfactory, although some families take holidays in term time. Pupils carry out their duties as school councillors, monitors and 'Playground Buddies' conscientiously and enthusiastically and wear their 'Trusted Badges' with pride. They 'look out for each other' and care for others in the community. Senior citizens are visited weekly and entertained regularly. Pupils develop the basic skills needed to support them in their future lives well, but rarely take decisions about the way they work or lead and organise their own meetings.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils are taught well. There has been a drive to improve pupils' achievements in recent years. Teachers have responded well, making good use of their knowledge of pupils' abilities to ensure they make good progress. Good relationships between adults and teachers and effective organisation provide a good climate for learning. Pupils say that 'the teachers teach us what we need to know and make it fun'. Pupils listen to their teachers and concentrate well on their work. Teaching assistants have good guidance and this ensures pupils who find learning hard make good progress.

Most lessons follow well documented plans provide by the local authority. In the best lessons teachers amend these by introducing their own ideas to make them more relevant to their pupils. Occasionally, plans are not sufficiently adapted to match pupils' abilities, especially in mathematics.

The marking of the English books is very good and gives the pupils clear guidance on how they can improve their learning but in other subjects, and in particular mathematics, there is rarely

this clear guidance. Generally pupils do not evaluate their own achievements relying on teachers' guidance. However, they do have targets for improvement in English, mathematics and science which they discuss with their teachers. These are often referred to in their English work but rarely in other subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides pupils with an appropriate range of learning activities and experiences which includes learning French and a daily fitness routine.

Teachers use local authority or national guidance to plan the curriculum. The school has worked with other professionals to adapt these to meet pupils' needs and successfully raise standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Every Friday, for example, the pupils do mathematics investigations to improve their thinking skills. Other subject plans, while covering the curriculum, do not cater for the particular needs and interests of pupils in Rush Green. Teachers are beginning to plan links between subjects.

Good use is made of local facilities to support learning, for example, the visit to Eastbury House for the Tudor topic. Children speak highly of the three annual residential visits. There is a range of additional clubs and activities which support learning and extend pupils experiences. In addition, pupils visit the local secondary school to use ICT and sport facilities. Every half-term the school has a 'Creative Friday' which enables teachers to offer activities outside the planned curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's care, guidance and support for pupils are good. Procedures for safeguarding children and for vetting staff are fully in place, and risk assessments are rigorous. The school works well with a range of other professionals to ensure pupils have access to suitable support. There is a parent support adviser who is giving good support to parents and pupils, including improvements in attendance and behaviour. Pupils receive good guidance to promote their own safety both inside and outside school. Parents say that the school cares well for their children and that they are 'proud and honoured to be part of such a lovely school.' There is good provision for personal, social and health education, catering well for pupils' physical and emotional needs.

Older pupils contribute to pupils' care. For example, pupils in Year 6 lead 'fitness time' sessions for the rest of the school. These sessions precede assemblies and give younger pupils good opportunities to keep fit. Pupils have targets to help them improve their work, which are discussed with their teachers. These are closely related to pupils' needs in English, but less so in mathematics, where often pupils have insufficient guidance to enable them to take responsibility for improving their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and senior management team have been rigorous in putting systems in place to raise standards and to promote pupils' well-being.

Staff are deployed effectively to give additional support for pupils who are not achieving as well as their peers. Good procedures for tracking pupils' progress ensure that underachievement is identified quickly. This enables most pupils to achieve well. Leaders have embraced initiatives to encourage pupils to develop healthy lifestyles and develop partnerships with business and other schools. Good use is made of external agencies to support pupils' pastoral and educational needs. The senior management team monitor teaching and learning and the outcomes inform teachers' personal targets for development. This has been successful in maintaining good teaching in spite of staff changes. Subject leadership for the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT is good. Leaders monitor teaching and learning and identify where weaknesses need to be addressed. However, other subject leaders have not had sufficient training and support to enable them to develop and refine the curriculum to fully meet pupils' aspirations and needs.

Financial planning is sound. Leaders, managers and governors ensure that they get the best value for money. A surplus in the budget has been earmarked for specific initiatives such as extending resources for ICT. Governors carry out their duties conscientiously. A core of governors, including the chair of governors, are very active in school, supporting and challenging the headteacher and staff effectively.

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.

Annex A

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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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?	2

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

2 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rush Green Junior School, Romford, RM7 0RL

Thank you very much for your friendliness and support during our visit to your school. A special thanks to the school councillors who talked to us. You are obviously very happy in school and proud to belong to it. You told us you work hard. We agree with you. You worked hard in the lessons we saw and you are making good progress, so you do well in your tests. We were impressed by your politeness and good behaviour and the way you care for each other. You appreciate your good teachers and I know they are proud of you.

Your teachers give you lots of help when they mark your English work, telling you how you can make your work better and giving you new targets to help you. We have asked them to do the same when they mark your other work, especially your mathematics. This will help you take responsibility for making your work even better. Make sure that you take their advice!

We saw some of your mathematics investigation lessons on Friday that your teachers have started to give you more challenge. Teachers have worked very hard to make sure you learn as well as you can in your English, mathematics, science and ICT lessons. We want the teachers responsible for planning other subjects to make sure you are taught things that are well-matched to your interests and experiences. We have asked your headteacher to help them do this. This will make your learning even more meaningful and fun.

Your school is led and managed well. It is very clear that everyone in school, including you, work well together to make Rush Green Junior School the good school it is. It was a pleasure to meet you all and we really enjoyed our visit.

Best wishes

Mrs J Dawson Lead Inspector