



Royal Park Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101445
Local Authority Bexley
Inspection number 286062
Inspection dates 5–6 March 2007
Reporting inspector Margaret Coussins

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Riverside Road
School category	Community		Sidcup
Age range of pupils	3–11		DA14 4PX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8300 7646
Number on roll (school)	223	Fax number	020 8309 6061
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr K Hughes
		Headteacher	Miss P L Raffill
Date of previous school inspection	10 January 2005		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 5–6 March 2007	Inspection number 286062
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a school of average size which serves learners from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and those with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average. Eleven pupils with physical disabilities are included in mainstream classes. The school was placed in the category of serious weaknesses in January 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school. The school's previous designation as having serious weaknesses no longer applies. The work of the leadership team has successfully led the school through a period of development over the last few years. Effective improvements have been made to the quality of teaching because a close check has been made on how well lessons are taught. As a result, the school has halted a history of significant underachievement and pupils are making better progress. Better teaching is ensuring that pupils continue to catch up and become more enthusiastic learners however a larger proportion of lessons still need to be good. In particular teaching and learning activities need to be more exciting.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are close to the national average. When they start school, children's attainment is below what is normally expected of three year olds. They are given a satisfactory start to their education in the Foundation Stage. They settle in well and make satisfactory progress. Activities, particularly those for the Reception children, are often restricted by the lack of sufficient and appropriate resources. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 6. However, too few reach the higher levels for their age, particularly in writing and science. Some parents share this view and as one commented, 'There is a more positive feeling (in school), I do still feel however, that there is more to do with higher achievers.'

Pupils enjoy their time at the school and parents are generally happy with what the school offers. A parent commented, 'My son has been given lots of support and has made good progress. He has gained in confidence, he is happy.' They are pleased to have been kept well informed and given opportunities to express their views about the work of the school since the last inspection.

Behaviour is satisfactory. Attendance is getting better, but despite all the school is doing, it is still below national levels and some children miss out on important learning because of this. Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory as a result of satisfactory care, guidance and support. Parents feel their children are well cared for. One said, 'Staff are very supportive, not only to my daughter but to myself as well.' However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their personal skills as they are not given enough responsibility.

The standard of pupils' personal and basic skills means they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education. One parent said, 'My children are extremely happy at Royal Park. They have progressed well and my older three are now enjoying successful secondary school careers thanks, in no small part to the secure foundation provided by the dedicated staff.'

The school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and realises that it could improve on the satisfactory education it currently offers. The school has demonstrated that it has a satisfactory capacity to secure further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in science and writing but particularly for the most able pupils.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning from satisfactory to good.
- Improve the curriculum to provide pupils with more exciting learning opportunities.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their personal skills and improve pupils' attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and by the end of Year 6 standards are close to the national average. Standards at the end of Year 2 in the 2006 national tests were just below national averages. A carefully structured programme for teaching sounds and letters has recently been introduced but it has not been in place long enough to make an impact on standards. In all years pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons. They make better progress in Year 6 because teaching is good and is particularly effective in mathematics. However, not enough pupils achieve the higher levels. This is partly because of a legacy of inadequate teaching in the past. However, the school recognises that more able pupils should be consistently challenged. Since the last inspection the school has focused on English and mathematics. Although improvements have been made in writing, it still remains weak across the school, particularly the development of extended pieces of writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported and achieve as well as their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Attendance is improving because of the work the school has done with parents and children, but it is still below the national average. Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have a reasonable awareness and understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles. They enjoy the extra sports activities available in the clubs although these are not offered to younger pupils. Activities like the school council's competition to design a poster promoting healthy eating helps to raise the profile of healthy lifestyles. Pupils know how to stay safe in school and have regard for the safety of others. They are particularly considerate of the needs of pupils with physical disabilities. Pupils enjoy school but sometimes are compliant rather than enthusiastic about their work. There is a satisfactory range of visits and visitors to school. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about a recent theatre visit to see *A Midsummer Night's Dream* which linked in well with their English work. The school does not provide many opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities in school and pupils say that they would welcome these.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The school is rightly working to raise the overall quality of teaching to good and the headteacher recognises that more learning activities need to be exciting. Since the last inspection the quality in Years 1 and 2 has improved from inadequate to satisfactory. In the main, lessons are well organised and planned so that pupils of all abilities can make satisfactory progress. There is good support for pupils with disabilities and teaching assistants contribute much to the progress of pupils. Pupils work hard on spellings, and writing skills are developing satisfactorily, but teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to extend and improve their writing. Some teachers ask good questions to help pupils to improve their speaking and explanation skills but this is inconsistent. Work in science shows that pupils are not extending their skills enough. For example, they do not explain what they find out from doing experiments. Pupils behave well in most classes and show a readiness to learn. The school has been working to improve the quality of feedback that pupils receive about their work. In some instances, work is well marked and gives pupils good ideas about how they can improve, but this is inconsistent. Even where comments are helpful, pupils are not always acting on them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum because it focuses on helping pupils to develop suitable basic skills which equip them satisfactorily for success in their future lives. The improving work on letters and sounds is beginning to have a positive impact on progress in reading and writing. Pupils commented that they like the investigational work in mathematics and this is helping standards to rise. Pupils are encouraged to think logically and explain how they solve problems. The curriculum is modified well for pupils with disabilities. Although the school is developing provision for clubs and visits satisfactorily, the curriculum is not enlivened enough to make learning exciting and fun. Since the last inspection, there have been developments in promoting competitive sport, such as netball and football and there are plans in place for a 'Keep Fit' club. There are not enough opportunities for gifted and talented pupils to widen their skills. The curriculum is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage, but due to limited adult help, the reception class is not always able to make the best use of outside learning opportunities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Parents have confidence that the school is a caring and safe place. As a result, most pupils come to school happily. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities benefit from good support which helps them to be fully involved in activities and to achieve

as well as others in the school. Well-established links with outside agencies enhance this support. The 'Dinosaur Club' is a good initiative that helps pupils to learn how to behave appropriately. Pupils learn about the dangers of drugs and alcohol and are given guidance about healthy diets. However, there are missed opportunities in promoting pupils' wider understanding of how to be safe in the world around them; for example, by extending pupils' awareness of how to deal with bullying. A small minority of parents commented that bullying is not taken seriously enough. Pupils, however, agreed that the school acts appropriately if they are concerned. Child protection procedures are satisfactory and health and safety procedures have improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory. The school makes use of information to track pupils' progress and is using this to identify how to best support pupils. Pupils know their targets for improvement and this is helping them to make satisfactory progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, deputy, senior leaders and governors have demonstrated their effectiveness by securing improvement, which means the school no longer has serious weaknesses. There is a clear view of strengths and areas for improvement because the school knows what it is doing well and where it has weaknesses. Some aspects of their monitoring work are not robust enough to have a real impact on raising standards. The school has worked productively with the local authority to help focus its work. The school is now at a stage where it needs to concentrate more sharply on the main improvements needed and pursue them rigorously to ensure a more rapid pace of improvement. There is a commitment to include all children, particularly those with learning difficulties or disabilities. Some classrooms are attractive and stimulating learning rooms, but the quality is inconsistent across the school. The corridors and central areas, like the library, are not inviting and do not make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.

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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?	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

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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	4
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

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

I would like to thank you for your help during the recent inspection of your school. My colleague and I enjoyed our visit. Thank you for talking to us about your work and telling us what you think about your school.

Royal Park is a satisfactory school. You told us that you like school and you and your parents think that everyone looks after you well. We agree with you. Your headteacher and all the staff have worked hard to improve the school and as a result you are doing better in your work.

We have asked your school to do some things to make it even better.

- Teaching could be even better so that you all learn as well as you can.
- There should be more exciting and fun opportunities for you to learn.
- You have improved your achievement in your lessons, but we think you could do even better, especially in your writing and in science.
- Help you to develop your personal skills by giving you lots more opportunities to take on responsibilities, like running your school council and making you more aware of how to stay healthy and safe in and out of school. You should come to school every day so that you do not miss out on your learning.

I am confident that with your help, the school will improve further.

Thank you again for all your help and for being so friendly and interesting to talk to.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Coussins Lead inspector