

Rawmarsh Ryecroft Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106876
Local Authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	287635
Inspection dates	27–28 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Dee Brigstock

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	147
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M Bramall
Headteacher	Mrs Linda Etchell
Date of previous school inspection	14 October 2002
School address	South Street Rawmarsh Rotherham South Yorkshire S62 5QW
Telephone number	01709 710599
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Age group	5–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Rawmarsh Ryecroft Infant School is a small school in a disadvantaged urban area with a stable population. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Nearly all children are of White British heritage with few from other cultural backgrounds and very few pupils at an early stage of learning English. About a third of children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities; this is above average. A very few children are in public care. The school has achieved the Artsmark Silver, Activemark Gold and Healthy School Awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Rawmarsh Ryecroft Infants is a good school. Pupils enjoy a good curriculum and receive good care, guidance and support. As a result, their personal development is also good.

Pupils have a good knowledge of how to stay fit and healthy, and they take on extra responsibilities willingly. Additional lessons in sports promote pupils' health effectively. Behaviour is good and pupils have a secure knowledge of the difference between right and wrong. Pupils are having an increasing say in how their school improves. For example, leaders agreed to pupils' requests to alter the science curriculum so that more investigations were included. They were also fully involved in the designs for the playground. Influence such as this, together with the establishment of a new school council, promotes pupils' personal development well.

Pupils achieve well. They enter school with below average standards and by Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are average with a strength in mathematics. There is an upward trend of improvement in standards, which has continued this year. Teaching is good overall and this is a major factor in pupils' good achievement. However, some teachers are more skilful than others in driving lessons along at a cracking pace. On occasion, teachers talk for too long so pupils do not have enough time to finish their tasks to their own satisfaction. Overall, teachers plan interesting, lively lessons and make effective links between subjects. This, together with the trips and visits that pupils make in the local area, makes an effective contribution to pupils' first hand learning and enlivens the good curriculum further. The school benefits from an excellent partnership within a behaviour improvement project which helps fund an extremely successful Nurture Group. Achievement for the pupils who take part in this, including pupils with other learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is excellent. Teachers' marking is very helpful and they set challenging targets for pupils to achieve. Pupils know what they have to do to improve even further, and how to do it. Their parents are also fully informed so that they can support their children in their learning.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has, in partnership with staff and governors, initiated changes to the school to broaden the curriculum and placed an increased focus on pupils' personal development. She has forged several excellent links with external providers to improve the school. These include a valuable partnership with a local college, which provides well attended, creative classes for parents. Parents thoroughly enjoy these courses, which help them to support their children to learn. In addition, the links with the local high school enrich the good curriculum further, for example in sport and dance. The headteacher's accurate monitoring of teaching and learning and her thorough analysis of assessments provide her with an excellent understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's provision, for example, in the variability in the quality of teaching.

Leaders have an almost wholly accurate view of the school's effectiveness. The one area with which the inspection disagreed is in the school's provision in the Foundation Stage. This is satisfactory rather than good because children do not have continuous access to a secure outdoor classroom. As a result, when they do go outside to learn, their activities are overly adult directed and this has a negative impact on their social development. Leaders' plans to develop the school further are very well constructed, and governors use their expertise effectively to support and challenge the school. The school's improvement since the last inspection is

good. This, coupled with the school's accurate identification of where it can improve further, means that its capacity to improve is good. It provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teaching so that all is as good as the best.
- Improve the quality of the outdoor provision in the Foundation Stage so that children have the maximum opportunity to develop their skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter school with below average standards. They quickly settle into school routines and make good progress particularly in writing and in their mathematical development. By the time they leave Reception, most children are close to the standards expected for their age, though fewer than usual exceed these. This is particularly clear in the development of children's social skills. The lack of an outdoor classroom inhibits their progress in this area. By Year 2 standards are average overall and more pupils than usual exceed them in mathematics. The upward trend for achievement has continued for the last two years. Pupils' good progress in writing is particularly evident in the books that follow them throughout their school life. In these, they write two pieces of work each term. The spurt of progress they make in Year 2 is significant. The school has put in several different strategies to raise standards in reading. Those pupils who previously found it difficult to read now have a lot of extra practice. As a result, standards in reading have risen this year to average. Within the Nurture Group, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, whilst having full access to the curriculum, are taught in small groups for part of each day. Adults' high level of energy and commitment, together with their excellent planning, motivates these groups extremely well, resulting in their outstanding progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is good. Older pupils make a good contribution to the school community by doing various 'jobs' around the school and pupils support a good range of charities for their age. Pupils know how to stay fit and healthy through having additional physical education and games in a good partnership with local schools. They also have a good understanding of first aid for their age. Those pupils who have a school lunch choose healthy options but several pupils still bring less healthy foods into school. Pupils enjoy coming to school as shown in their willingness to attend, even during the recent 'floods' crisis. In the Foundation Stage, children's social skills are satisfactory. They miss opportunities to improve these skills through play because, on occasion, adults guide them too closely and their access to an outdoor classroom is limited. Behaviour is good. Those pupils with behavioural difficulties are managed well by skilled staff. During lunchtimes, recent playground refurbishment, and the introduction of a wide variety of games and activities have substantially improved behaviour. However, some pupils' perception of behaviour is too negative. They sometimes describe accidental bumps and scrapes as bullying, which they are not. Despite this, pupils say they feel safe in school. The standards pupils attain, including in information and communication technology, their contribution to the school community and their good preparation for their next school, equip them well for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan work which captures pupils' interest and motivates them to learn well. They make effective learning links between different subjects. For example, pupils visited a mine, listened to part of the Planet Suite, handled some heavy ironwork, and listened to the story of the Iron Man before writing entertaining and imaginative beginnings to their own stories. Throughout the school, teachers have good classroom management skills. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers, contributing effectively to pupils' learning. This is particularly effective in the Nurture Group. Pupils' learning is excellent when the most experienced staff plan a wide variety of learning activities in lessons. As pupils move from one activity to the next the pace of their learning remains high. On occasion, when teaching and learning are satisfactory rather than good, teachers talk for too long at the beginning of lessons. As a result, pupils begin to lose interest and do not have time to finish their work. Teachers' marking is good; their use of pointers on how pupils can improve their work further is specific. This is a factor in the good progress that pupils make. Learners' success in mathematics is also due to the good emphasis teachers place on planning practical, problem solving activities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum in Key Stage 1 is good. The planned links between different subjects and the enrichment visits that pupils make in the local environment is improving pupils' writing. This is because these visits give pupils new first hand experiences to write about. The curriculum is adapted extremely well for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as shown in the excellent progress they make in the Nurture Group, both academically and socially. The progress of all pupils is carefully tracked through the school's own assessment system and evaluated against the challenging targets that are set. This includes the targets in pupils' individual education plans. Pupils benefit from very good links with outside agencies, such as other schools, which help provide extra sporting and art activities. There is a good range of clubs for a small school, including simple healthy cooking, and French is also taught. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Although teachers plan some opportunities for children to work outdoors, this aspect of their curriculum is limited because they do not have a designated, secure outdoor classroom. As a result, children's progress in acquiring skills in social education is not as good as usual because their activities outdoors are too adult directed.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The overwhelming majority of parents feel their children are well cared for and supported. Procedures for keeping children safe, including risk assessments, are in place. All children thought to be at any risk are monitored carefully and vetting procedures for staff meet requirements. The school has a good working relationship with external agencies to help protect children. Pupils say they are confident that their teachers would help them if they were in difficulty. Academic guidance is good. Pupils' progress is tracked rigorously. The assessment system is used effectively to set challenging targets for pupils to achieve. Pupils know what these are. They are confident that teachers show them how to improve their work further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leaders, including governors, have clear aspirations and plans to improve the school further. These plans are drawn from extremely accurate monitoring of pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning. The headteacher accurately identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the school's provision. She has identified the need for the best teachers to share their practice with others. The school improvement plan clearly focuses on how to raise standards further. However, how the success of initiatives are to be measured lack clarity. Despite this, standards are rising, pupils' achievement is good and the school demonstrates excellence in its provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school regularly consults with parents and pupils and acts on their suggestions for improvement. Governors use their expertise well to support and challenge the school. They regularly monitor the school's work in classrooms and report their findings to the full governing body. As a result, they have a very good knowledge of the school, its strengths and areas for development.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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	3
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	1

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	3
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?	2
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	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making me welcome this week. I really enjoyed talking with you, especially at lunchtime. Thank you too for helping me to choose what to have for my lunch.

You go to a good school and are doing well in your work. These are the best things about your school.

- You work hard and are learning well. I thought your writing about the Iron Man was splendid.
- Your teachers plan interesting lessons for you. Having a real crab, lobster and prawns to learn about in Reception was very interesting.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors have good plans on how to make your school even better.
- Those of you that go to the Nurture Group are making extremely good progress in learning and in behaving well.
- Your curriculum in Years 1 and 2 is good. The trips and visits you go on help you to learn more.
- Adults take good care of you. The targets they give you to meet are very useful in helping you learn.

I have asked your school to do two things to make your school even better.

- Make all lessons as good as the best ones.
- Find a safe space outside for Reception children to learn in throughout the day.

Keep up the good work!