

# Rettendon Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114856
<b>Local Authority</b>	ESSEX
<b>Inspection number</b>	290060
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Williams HMI

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 category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	124
School	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ray Ryde
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jaquie Barber
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 November 2001
<b>School address</b>	Main Road Rettendon Common Chelmsford Essex CM3 8DW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01268 732096
<b>Fax number</b>	01268 571753

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Rettendon Primary school caters for children aged 4 to 11 from the local village and surrounding areas. It is popular with parents and has increased in size considerably over recent years, mainly due to children transferring as 'rising fives' from the adjoining private day care and nursery. Pupils' skills on entry are typical of those normally found in this age-group. The proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals or with learning difficulties or disabilities are average, as is the number of pupils from minority ethnic groups.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Rettendon primary school has grown in recent years but retains its small school ethos, where everyone knows each other and where pupils are provided with good quality care and guidance. Parents are very supportive of the school and appreciate the values it promotes and the emphasis it gives to knowing their children well. They are right in their view that pupils look after each other well and that relationships between staff and pupils are very good. Pupils develop positive attitudes to learning because of the high priority the school places on helping them become confident and socially adept. Behaviour is good and pupils' response to the teaching is often very good.

Children begin at school attaining standards that are typical of their age-group. Good teaching in the Reception class promotes personal, social and emotional development effectively and ensures that children behave well and enjoy coming to school. As a result of this, most children are working well towards the early learning goals, and standards are at expected levels by the end of the Reception year. Standards are broadly average in Key Stages 1 and 2, though they fluctuate year on year. Overall achievement is satisfactory. Most pupils make the progress that they should and, although the more able pupils have not always achieved the higher levels, their current work indicates that they have done better this year. Those who have learning disabilities or difficulties do well. Nevertheless, areas for improvement include English, especially speaking and writing, the achievement of the more able and pupils' use of mental strategies in mathematics.

Teaching is satisfactory. The school has a number of inexperienced or unqualified staff who are developing well as teachers, but whose impact on standards is only satisfactory at the moment. The quality of pupils' learning is improving because they are supported ably by two experienced teachers and a headteacher. Pupils enjoy a well planned and broad curriculum that offers them a number of extra-curricular activities. They have opportunities to take on responsibilities and the school council, in particular, carries them out with pride. They are beginning to understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle, something the school encourages through the food that is offered and the provision of a variety of sports and other activities, including using the school's own swimming pool.

Pupils' personal development is good; they show enjoyment in their lessons and they like coming to school, though their attendance is only just satisfactory. At break times they play and exercise together well and say they feel safe and happy.

The inspector agrees with the school's view that its overall effectiveness is satisfactory. The school is being led well by the headteacher and governors, has progressed well since its last inspection and is committed to securing further improvement. Management's evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is very good and rightly judges its present capacity to improve as good, and better than for some time.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, particularly writing, and pupils' speaking skills in general.
- Ensure that the work set for the more able pupils in both key stages is challenging enough to take them to above-average levels of attainment.
- Improve pupils' ability to use a range of mental strategies in mathematics.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

In recent years, children have started school with standards that are broadly typical of this age-group. By the end of the Foundation Stage, they reach nationally expected standards in all areas of learning and do particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development. Standards in the rest of the school have generally been around the national average but dipped in 2005 in Key Stage 1 and in 2006 in Key Stage 2.

Currently, the proportion of pupils attaining or exceeding the expected levels at age 11 is better than last year and is closer to the national average. Most are reaching their targets. The end-of-year teacher assessments of pupils in Year 2 show them to be attaining at or a little above average overall, but with pupils doing better in reading and mathematics than in writing. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels is also set to improve, particularly in Key Stage 2, but remains below average throughout the school.

A significant number of pupils join during any school year, including pupils from traveller communities, some of whom have gaps in their learning. Nevertheless, many pupils in Year 6 have made good progress in the last twelve months. Their learning has improved because teaching has been good and as a result their achievement over time is satisfactory. Pupils are independent and enthusiastic learners who have sound listening skills but who are not fluent at speaking. They also struggle with a narrow range of mental mathematical strategies. However, the school caters particularly well for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, who make good progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development is good. They have positive attitudes to learning and often show great enjoyment in what they are doing. Attendance has improved recently and is now close to the national average. Although a small minority on occasions present a challenge, the vast majority of pupils behave very well and none in the last twelve months have had to be excluded, even temporarily. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as the curriculum provides many opportunities for this work. For example, in Reception, a sense of wonder was actively promoted in a lesson involving caterpillars. Pupils contribute to making their classroom rules during the 'establishment week' at the outset of the school year and this impacts positively on their sense of what is right or wrong. Parents are correct in saying that relationships are excellent between children and between adults and children. Pupils take seriously their membership of the school council and are active in community projects. Pupils' positive attitudes to their learning and their regular use of information and communication technology (ICT) are two particular features of how the school prepares them properly for their future economic well-being.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The inspection confirms the school's view that the quality of teaching is satisfactory; its impact on standards has been satisfactory to date. There is a significant proportion of unqualified or inexperienced teachers working hard to gain experience and develop into good teachers. Learning support assistants are effective because they have good skills and understand what is required of them.

In every class, learning resources are well organised and managed, and interactive whiteboards are used exceptionally well to engage and sustain pupils' interest. Teachers are clear about what pupils are expected to learn and they plan activities that are suitably matched to their needs, differentiating between different groups in the class. This has been an important factor in raising attainment, but has yet to have its full impact, particularly on the performance of more able pupils.

Some skilful questioning is used by teachers to assess pupils' understanding and extend their knowledge. This is a small school of just four classes so staff know each pupil's strengths and weaknesses well. The more formal use of tracking systems is developing well as a means of monitoring pupils' progress and to inform planning in the Foundation Stage and in the rest of the school.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum provides pupils with a well-rounded education. ICT features strongly and aids pupils learning across the whole curriculum. Literacy skills are promoted well and the use of a teaching programme aimed at strengthening pupils' reading skills in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 has impacted well on standards in reading. The Foundation Stage provides children with a good range of learning opportunities and an impressive range of outdoor facilities, though the awkward shape of the classroom restricts the scope to develop the curriculum. Links with the local secondary school are effective in supporting the learning of French. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of clubs and special events, including lots of visits that the older pupils particularly appreciate. The school is working towards an award in recognition of its work to raise pupils' awareness of healthy living.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good overall. Parents speak highly of the level of care provided and most feel that they are kept well informed. Pupils feel safe and have no concerns or worries. They say that there is very little bullying and when it happens it is mild and dealt with effectively.

The school is careful in promoting pupils' health and safety; risk assessments are undertaken regularly. There is a good level of understanding of the needs of pupils so the support for those with learning difficulties or disabilities and those that are vulnerable is particularly good. The school provides a learning mentor who has impacted significantly on pupils' well-being and on their achievements, and there are good links with a range of external agencies. Pupils are provided with sound advice about how to improve their standards and this is improving as more

are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. Their work is assessed regularly and in some cases, as in one Key Stage 2 class, marking is exemplary by sharply focusing comments to help pupils make progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher has dealt successfully with considerable staffing and financial issues and is leading the school well, providing a clear sense of direction that has identified underperformance, unified staff and led to improvement. Resources have been used prudently to secure a sound financial footing and the school is experimenting and evaluating different ways of arranging the curriculum so that it can maximise its resources. Management actively seeks to provide value for money.

The number of inexperienced staff has had a big impact on middle leadership, so much so that the headteacher has had to take on board many curriculum areas and is only now able to begin developing a subject leadership team. Coaching and team teaching are being used successfully to develop the inexperienced teaching staff and the school formally monitors performance of individual teachers, though the proforma used to record judgements is not well designed and does not help identify targets to improve teaching and standards.

Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through perceptive reports and their own monitoring. Progress from the time of the last inspection has been good. The headteacher's analysis of performance data is thorough and the school's self-evaluation is accurate and honest. Given the improvements to date, the staffing in place and the commitment by the whole school community to improve standards, the inspector agrees with the school that its capacity to improve is good.

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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>	<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?	2
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

<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>	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

<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>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<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.

## Annex A

**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	2
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	2
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	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**

27 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed meeting and talking with you.

I like the way you listen to the teachers and work and play together well. You seem to enjoy coming to school and most of you behave very well, and I know many of you have been attending much more regularly than in the past.

Mrs Barber and all the teachers and teaching assistants take good care of you. It is good to see many of you taking part in activities such as lunchtime games. The food which the school provides for you at lunchtime is good and you understand how important it is to be healthy.

I enjoyed much of the teaching in the school, particularly the part of the lessons when the teachers used the electronic whiteboard. However, more of you need to do better in speaking, writing and mental mathematics. I have asked the staff to concentrate on ways of helping you do this.

I hope you will continue to work hard and do well at Rettendon Primary School and that you enjoy your long summer holiday when it arrives.

Best wishes

John Williams Her Majesty's Inspector