



# Rolvenden Primary School

Inspection Report - Amended

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**Unique Reference Number** 118379  
**Local Authority** Kent  
**Inspection number** 291115  
**Inspection date** 20 September 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Kevin Hodge

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 address</b>	Hastings Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Rolvenden
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11		Cranbrook TN17 4LS
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01580 241444
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	106	<b>Fax number</b>	01580 241496
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Shona Brown
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Barbara Scott
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 September 2002		

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## **Amended Report Addendum**

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a small primary school which has mixed ages of children in most classes. The number of pupils who join or leave the school at other than the normal times is higher than usual. The range of childrens' attainment when they enter school is broad, but their language abilities are often below those that are typical for their age. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups. Those with learning difficulties form a quarter of the school, which is above average, although in the group of pupils who left in July, the proportion was nearer half. These pupils also had two changes of teacher during the year.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Rolvenden is a good school providing a wide range of educational experiences for its pupils. They contribute willingly to the happy, working atmosphere. Pupils' personal development and well-being is good, leading them to behave well and develop good social skills. They express their views confidently about school, which are, like those of the parents, very positive. Most accept they should eat sensibly and take exercise by being active at playtimes and in sports teams. The care shown to pupils is high and because of this they feel secure. The fact that staff value pupils' contributions and want them to succeed is key to the good progress and achievement of most pupils. The reception children make a confident start to school, but the enclosed outside activity area is uninviting and difficult to access. This limits their opportunities to develop their independence and extend their physical skills. Pupils reach average standards by the time they leave the school, although in some subjects, such as science, they reach higher standards. This is a better picture than at the last inspection when standards were below average.

Class activities are planned carefully for mixed age classes. The school focus on improving some aspects such as writing has been partly successful, but in Years 3 to 6, the improvement has been slower and standards in writing are not yet high enough. Teaching is typically good in the school and helps pupils to achieve well, particularly in science. Lessons are fun, interesting and motivate pupils to learn. Their day-to-day work is marked effectively. Some pupils however are not clear enough about how to focus their efforts to improve more quickly. Extra-curricular activities are of good quality and enrich class work. These range from basketball to musical tuition and cookery. Many pupils take part. Class work is enhanced by activities such as learning French, German and Italian. This helps them gain skills for later life. Children enthused about their mini-opera last term, which they devised and performed. One parent commented enthusiastically, 'A mind blowing production-really!'

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher and governors lead with sensitivity and the desire to improve, which has largely been effective. The school has an accurate view of its strengths and has acted upon the most significant things that need improving. The governors know the school well and positively influence the quality of what goes on. They ensure pupils are taught in a safe environment which assists them to grow in maturity and confidence. The headteacher has directed and sustained improvement effectively since the last inspection, not least in the way that pupils are helped to become willing learners and achieve well.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards of writing in Years 1 to 6 by extending pupils' abilities to write creatively and spell accurately.
- Improve opportunities for the reception children to develop independence and extend their physical skills by making their enclosed outside area more accessible and stimulating.

- Help pupils take responsibility for their own progress by giving them clearer short-term steps to improve their work.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Since the last inspection, standards have risen and are broadly average by the time pupils leave in Year 6. In speaking and listening and in science, pupils reach above average standards due to good teaching and well planned activities. By the end of the Reception Year, pupils generally reach the expected levels in their early learning goals. Pupils' achievement is good, reflected in test results over the past two years, but pupils did not reach their targets this year. This was largely caused by the unexpectedly high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties in Year 6 who, despite making good progress in their own right, unduly affected the overall result. The children in the Reception class make satisfactory, but uneven progress. Both their physical skills and ability to choose activities independently develop at a slower rate than their language and social skills, which develop quicker due to good teaching.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Children behave well and enjoy attending school. Their positive attitudes stem from the school's good provision for pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural provision. This starts from the Reception class where children relate well to each other. The members of the school council take their roles seriously and feel they influence school policies such as 'being able to talk during lunch'. Older pupils have positive views on eating sensibly and try to do so. They take exercise seriously and accepted the banning of crisps at playtime 'on the chin'. As one pupil said, 'it makes sense, although we give fruit away rather than sell it because we want children to have it.' Pupils gain good basic skills to help prepare them for later life but aspects such as their knowledge of other cultures, beliefs or occupations are not sufficiently extended. Pupils contribute to local community events such as harvest festival in church and willingly fund raise for national appeals. They enjoy their academic and sporting links with other schools.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The teaching and learning in the school are good. The teaching of the Reception Year children has improved since the last inspection and helps pupils to develop a secure start to school life. Their social and language skills are brought on well. In the remainder of the school, the teaching in some subjects such as science, languages, music and physical education is particularly strong. It makes good use of teacher's talents. The increased focus on pupils' writing is working, but is taking more time with older pupils

as they have more ground to make up. In some activities, the attention span of some pupils is overly stretched as whole class discussions are too long. Teachers give the pupils sensible help about improving and they gauge their progress accurately, but not all classes adopt simple steps in setting targets that help pupils focus their efforts. Pupils with learning difficulties and those who are higher attaining are supported well by good planning and effective small group teaching in language work and mathematics.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good and is well matched to the needs of the pupils. Changes to writing activities are increasingly improving pupils' skills. An impressive number of additional activities help broaden the pupils' understanding and stimulate their interest. The provision of foreign languages, musical activities and sporting opportunities with other schools are all helping to foster increasingly good standards. Pupils' personal and health development is also planned very carefully. In the mixed Reception and Year 1 class, activities are generally good and foster childrens social skills particularly well. Planning for the reception childrens' physical development and gaining independence is difficult due to accommodation issues. In Years 1 to 6 pupils' multicultural knowledge, although satisfactory, is weaker than their general cultural awareness.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The high priority on the health, safety and care of pupils is evident in the school's work. A good programme of personal and health education gives the pupils a sense of security and growing knowledge of health issues. Pupils and parents appreciate that members of staff respond quickly to worries. One parent said, 'teachers don't just go through the motions, they go the extra mile'. Pupils have satisfactory guidance about their academic progress, mainly through discussion and helpful marking of work. However, pupils are not clear enough about the next short steps needed to help them improve their work faster and this varies from class to class. The arrangement for Years 5 and 6 to have specific guidance to ease the transfer to secondary school is a good feature.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The caring atmosphere created within the school leads to pupils and parents feeling confident in what goes on, while being able to have a say in shaping the direction of the school. Governors challenge the school to improve further and keep their 'finger on the pulse' to alert them to possible difficulties. Their influence is largely focused on accommodation issues, rather than the curriculum, but one governor helped promote the use of laptop computers. The school correctly diagnoses its most important weaknesses to remedy and has a largely accurate view of its effectiveness. It seeks

the views of many others to enhance its self-evaluation, for example, parents asked if the range of after school clubs could be increased. The headteacher has a systematic programme of checking progress, although not all evaluations are equally rigorous, leading for example, to a slightly generous view of some aspects of the Reception class provision.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<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>	2
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>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	2

### 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>	2
<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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed my visit and even managed to use some of the basketballs at playtime to brush up on my throwing skills!

These are some of the things I found out:

- I think that you all work hard to make Rolvenden a good school.
- You reach about the standards expected for your ages and you make good progress in your speaking, listening, science, games and physical education.
- You behave well, feel safe and develop your confidence as you get older.
- The children in the Reception class settle in quickly even if they feel a bit scared at first.
- Your parents or carers agree with me that the school helps you to learn new things and know that the teachers look after you well.
- You have a good idea about what is right and wrong.
- You know lots about the local area and enjoy local events which you join in with.
- The headteacher, governors and staff do a good job in making the school a friendly place where you learn lots of different and interesting things.
- The range of extra activities is really good, especially the sporting, language and musical activities you do ( I wish I had seen the Opera you did...it sounded fun!).

I have asked the school to look at these things to improve:

- Give the reception children a better and more interesting outside area to use.
- Improve your writing some more, especially those of you in Years 3 to 6.
- Agree a way to give you clearer steps to aim at in your work each week or term.



Rolvenden Primary School  
Hastings Road  
Rolvenden  
Kent TN17 4LS

20 September 2006

Dear Children

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Yours faithfully,

Kevin Hodge

Lead Inspector