



Rushton Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121863
Local Authority Northamptonshire
Inspection number 292245
Inspection date 4 October 2006
Reporting inspector Peter Clifton

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Station Road
School category	Community		Rushton
Age range of pupils	4-11		Kettering NN14 1RL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01536 710124
Number on roll (school)	70	Fax number	01536 710 124
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Sean Marshall
		Headteacher	Sally Bingham
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2006		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is much smaller than average, and is situated in a rural village. Pupils are organised into three mixed-age classes, the first with Reception and Year 1, the second with Years 2 and 3 and the third with Years 4, 5 and 6. The majority of children come from outside the village. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average. The headteacher of the school has been in post for two years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Rushton Primary is a satisfactory school with a number of good features. One of its main strengths is the high standard of care it provides for pupils. This has been achieved through the way adults respond to the pupils, a curriculum that ensures pupils' personal and social needs are effectively developed, and the outstanding links with parents and the wider community. Parents have a very positive view of the school and especially value the high quality of care provided and the commitment of teachers. Pupils really enjoy coming to school; their attendance is excellent. The views of two parents aptly summed up the views of many when they commented, 'My son feels very positive about school and has a fantastic relationship with his teachers', and 'my children love this school'. Pupils say that the school is a very welcoming place where they feel safe, secure and happy. Pupils' behaviour is good and sometimes exemplary, such as at playtimes. Younger pupils quickly settle at school and older pupils have mature attitudes. Pupils develop important personal and social skills which equip them well for the future.

The school rightly judges that the quality of care it provides is good, and that pupils' achievement is satisfactory. However, judgments in some other areas are generous. This is mainly because aspects of teaching and in planning the curriculum have not been sufficiently sharp to ensure consistent progress in mathematics and science. The school is better at teaching English, where standards have risen steadily. Children come into school with average standards and do particularly well in developing their speaking and social skills. In Years 1 and 2, they make good progress in reading and writing, and satisfactory progress in mathematics. They reach above-average standards overall. The achievement of older pupils is satisfactory and in 2006 they reached above-average standards. These results were an improvement on those in 2005, when standards in mathematics and science were not high enough. Pupils have targets for improvement but there is limited information available for them to identify how well they are doing for themselves or to set goals for improvement.

The past two years have brought about a number of changes in the school and there are signs that these are raising standards. The headteacher has greatly improved the information available in the school about pupils' progress and identified inconsistencies in the teaching of mathematics. Her strong leadership has empowered the governors to provide a much stronger challenge to the work of the school. Currently she is leading on nearly all initiatives in the school and the work of other leaders is very limited. This has rightly been identified by both the headteacher and governors as a key area for development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the progress made in mathematics and science as pupils move through the school.
- Develop the work of the subject co-ordinators and other leaders so that the headteacher is fully supported.

- Improve the pupils' knowledge of their own learning and ensure that they have sufficient information to set themselves goals for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards vary when children start school because of the small numbers in each year group, but they are broadly average. In some years, children's mathematical and communication skills are below the level expected. Speaking and listening and social skills develop well because the learning assistant takes every opportunity to extend vocabulary. Writing skills develop satisfactorily.

In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve well in reading and writing to reach above- average standards. They make satisfactory progress in mathematics to reach average standards. The 2006 results in Year 2 show a marked improvement from those in 2005. In Year 6, the 2005 results showed that pupils were not doing well enough in mathematics and science. The 2006 results show improvement. Year 6 standards were above average in English, mathematics and science, and pupils' achievement was satisfactory. Pupils make stronger progress in English than they do in mathematics and science because teaching and curriculum planning are better.

Pupils continue to develop their personal and social skills well so that by the time they leave school they are well-rounded individuals who are confident, articulate and caring. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress at a similar rate to other pupils in the school

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Residential visits for pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6 enhance their social skills well. Pupils eagerly take up the many opportunities to take on responsibility and look after others. The school is a very harmonious community where pupils' behaviour is good and sometimes exemplary. The pupils respect each other and hold their teachers in high regard; there are very strong relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good, particularly when teachers make lessons interesting.

Pupils are proud to be members of the school council and talk enthusiastically of their role in shaping the school. They chose equipment for the lunchtime 'Huff and Puff' and identify particular charities to support. They show a keen awareness of those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils have a good understanding about healthy eating and being active. They participate well in the wide range of sporting clubs available and enjoy being active at lunchtimes. Pupils enjoy the many opportunities to be involved in the wider community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers provide good role models for pupils, always treating them with courtesy and respect. They explain ideas clearly and use language well, making sure that specific vocabulary is understood. As a result, pupils' speaking skills are well developed. Books are marked regularly and there are examples of comments to help pupils understand how to improve. However, this is not yet sufficiently consistent across different subjects.

Teaching of English is better than mathematics, leading to stronger progress. Pupils value the help provided by teaching assistants. Although there are many interesting lessons, a few are rather mundane or not well enough adapted for the needs of the pupils and, as a result, a small number of pupils do not concentrate fully. Occasionally, planning for the most able lacks sharpness and teachers miss opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge, as when problem solving in mathematics. This is limiting learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Provision for pupils' personal and social needs is good and this is helping the pupils develop mature and caring attitudes. In Reception, all areas of learning are suitably planned for and activities are stimulating, although there are limited opportunities for children to write at length independently. Throughout the school, topics are carefully planned but leaders have rightly identified the need to make better links between subjects. Planning to build knowledge and apply understanding in mathematics is inconsistent.

Opportunities for pupils to extend their learning outside of the school day are good. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the range of clubs and the numerous visits, including a residential stay. Visitors from the local community frequently come into the school. The pupils are really excited about growing links with a school in South Africa, including plans to communicate through web-cam.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care and support provided for pupils' personal development are good, with some outstanding elements. For example, there are very high expectations for pupils' behaviour and pupils respond very well. When talking to pupils they frequently comment that 'teachers really look after you' and that 'everybody is friendly'. Teachers know individual pupils well and treat them with consideration and respect; relationships are very positive. Pupils feel strongly that there is always an adult they can trust to confide in about any concerns they might have. Child protection procedures are in place.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils have individual targets for improvement and these are understood by the pupils. Although many of these are helpful, a few are superficial. Overall, pupils have limited information to enable them to judge for themselves how well they are doing and this is inhibiting their involvement in assessing their own progress or in setting themselves further targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The arrival of the new headteacher initiated a period of change within the school that was strongly supported by governors. Her strong leadership is proving beneficial and there are signs now that standards are rising. For example, the school has an effective system in place to identify the progress pupils make across the school and the information has been used to direct extra support. Inconsistencies in the teaching of mathematics have been identified and are beginning to be tackled. Governors are active in the school and provide very strong support for leaders. With the support of the headteacher they are becoming increasingly knowledgeable about their roles, especially in challenging how well the school is doing. The school clearly has the capacity to improve.

Other leaders have been successful in promoting and maintaining high quality care since the time of the previous inspection. However, they have not had a sufficiently sharp view of how well the school is doing or what action is needed to bring about academic improvement. The headteacher has rightly identified the need to develop the work of the other leaders, who currently have a very limited role, and governors understand the need to spread the responsibility for leadership and management. The school's view about its overall effectiveness has been strongly influenced by the quality of care it provides rather than the academic progress made.

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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?	1
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	2
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	1
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?	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?	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.

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

Thank you for our very warm welcome to your school. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and during your playtimes. We were very impressed with how polite and friendly you were. You gave us a lot of valuable information and this was a great help to us. The school is very good at caring for you and making sure you are safe, but could be doing more to help you make better progress in a few of your lessons.

What we most liked about your school

- Your good behaviour and very positive attitudes.
- How well you look after each other and feel safe and secure.
- The excellent links the school has with your parents and the community.
- The wide range of opportunities for you to learn through visits, trips and after school.
- Your positive attitudes to healthy exercise.

We have asked your headteacher and others to work on

- Improving the progress you make in mathematics and science.
- Helping the teachers who are in charge of each subject to help you improve your work.
- Giving you better information about how you are doing, so that you can set your own targets for improvement.

We enjoyed the visit and hope your school continues to improve.