



Rookery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 132138
Local Authority Birmingham
Inspection number 293955
Inspection dates 27–28 February 2007
Reporting inspector Paul Edwards

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Rookery Road
School category	Community		Handsworth
Age range of pupils	3–11		Birmingham B21 9PY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 4644221
Number on roll (school)	456	Fax number	0121 4644221
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Geoff Reese
		Headteacher	Tracy Stone
Date of previous school inspection	10 March 2003		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	27–28 February 2007	293955

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Rookery is a large school serving an area of significant deprivation. Just under 40% of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. Most pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and just under a quarter are at an early stage of learning English. A higher-than-average proportion of pupils enters or leaves the school partway through the year. A sports and art facility has been built since the previous inspection and is used by both the school and the community.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some significant strengths. Parents are rightly very proud of the school and talk enthusiastically about their children's enthusiasm for school as a result of the richness of its curriculum. As one parent said, 'Rookery is a vibrant school where I am confident that my daughter will be well cared for, emotionally and educationally.' The school's involvement with the community is excellent. Parents comment on how welcome they feel and how the school has helped to improve their own skills. The array of outside agencies which contributes to the life of the school is impressive and has a significant impact on the school's provision.

Children enter the Nursery classes with skill levels that are well below those expected for their age, and the majority are at an early stage of learning English. Throughout the Foundation Stage, they make good progress. There is a good emphasis on the development of basic skills and children make rapid progress in their acquisition of English because of the good support from bilingual and other staff. When considering their starting points, pupils achieve well throughout the school and attain standards that are broadly average in English and just below in science by the end of Year 6. Standards in mathematics are below average and the school rightly recognises that pupils' achievement could be better. Teaching and learning are good. The pupils do particularly well in English and science because teachers provide them with work that is interesting and well matched to their ability. Whilst there is evidence of some good use of assessment and marking in mathematics, it is not used consistently well throughout the school.

Pupils' personal and social development is outstanding. The school prepares the pupils well for the future. They work hard to put into practice their excellent understanding of what is needed to keep healthy and fit. The exemplary behaviour and the effort pupils put into their work is a reflection of their enjoyment of school. This enjoyment of school stems from the curriculum, which also is outstanding. Whilst there is a good emphasis on the development of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, the school has worked effectively to ensure the curriculum is rich, vibrant and stimulating. Parents enthused about the wide range of enrichment activities that are on offer for all of the school community. The care, guidance and support provided for the pupils are good. The pastoral support is particularly strong and pupils say they feel safe and well looked after and know who to speak to if they have a concern. The introduction of individual targets is helping pupils to improve their work but the outstanding use of targets seen in some classes is not applied consistently in all year groups.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, well supported by the senior management team, is providing exemplary leadership and has brought the school out of a difficult period to a position where it is highly regarded by parents. There is a determination to raise standards further and subject leaders have been given increased responsibility. The information recording how well pupils are attaining is detailed but it needs refining to enable staff to identify more easily if groups of pupils are underachieving.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards in mathematics.
- Ensure teachers make more consistent use of assessment information and marking to show pupils what they need to do next to improve and to identify any underachievement quickly.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils of all abilities achieve well throughout the school. Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6, although pupils do better in English than they do in mathematics. When children enter the Nursery classes, their skills, knowledge and understanding are much lower than seen nationally. They make good progress, although by the time they enter Year 1, standards are still below average. Pupil mobility is high, particularly amongst those pupils at a very early stage of learning English, and this affects the standards attained, particularly in Key Stage 1. However, good support enables most pupils to achieve well. Over the last three years there has been a gradual improvement in the standards attained in both English and mathematics at the end of Year 6. Improvement in mathematics has been inconsistent and the school recognises that all groups of pupils can do better. Throughout the school, pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language make rapid progress in their acquisition of English because of the very effective use of bilingual and other support staff. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are also well supported, enabling them to make progress in line with their peers. Pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve in line with other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' behaviour and relationships are outstanding in all parts of the school. The pupils' enjoyment of school is clearly evident in their regular attendance and in their wholehearted participation in events such as the Year 6 'Bollywood' production. They say, 'We learn well because we learn in many different ways.'

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils from a wide range of cultural backgrounds relate warmly with each other. Pupils say, 'We are a mixture and learn well together'. Racial harmony is a strength of the school. Pupils share ideas fruitfully, for example, resolving potential problems at playtimes. They strive to put into practice their excellent understanding of healthy, safe living and contribute equally effectively to the school and to local and wider communities. Pupils are proud of their links with schools in Delhi and Nairobi and of their fundraising activities. One pupil said, 'We know we are blessed so we need to help those who aren't.' Pupils undertake responsibilities very diligently, for example, on the school council or when helping other pupils as playground mentors and peer mediators. The

pupils' good academic achievement and advanced social skills prepare them well for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Throughout the school, teaching and learning are good. They are improving as pupils take more responsibility for their learning. Teaching is typified by valuing and building on pupils' ideas and by solving real-life problems. Teachers plan in detail to develop pupils' skills progressively. Learning assistants give good support, especially to pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and to those at an early stage of learning English. Teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively to extend basic literacy and numeracy skills. Learning is enriched by the warm and respectful relationships shared between adults and pupils. This is a particular feature in the Nursery and Reception groups. Pupils of all ages learn well by completing interesting tasks, for example, using role play to stimulate ideas when writing poems about the sun. Learning is less effective on occasions when teachers give too much of a lead in lessons and when they do not use marking well enough to show how pupils can improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding curriculum that promotes pupils' enjoyment of learning and personal development exceptionally well. Pupils are provided with effective skills in literacy and numeracy, although the school acknowledges that further work is needed to raise standards in mathematics. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, and those who have English as an additional language is good, as is the curriculum in the Foundation Stage. The high quality learning environment throughout the school stimulates learning and recognises achievement. The building of a Sports and Art Centre is providing excellent opportunities for the promotion of musical, dramatic and sporting activities. The school provides an excellent range of well-planned curriculum enrichment activities. High quality educational visits, visitors and out-of-school clubs foster pupils' self-confidence and teamwork very well. Effective partnerships, including those with local high schools, provide a rich source for learning. For example, a high quality assembly about art and artists, led by the Barber Institute of Fine Art, provided a memorable and enjoyable learning experience for pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There is a commitment to making every pupil feel valued and staff consistently encourage the pupils' efforts and promote their self-esteem. The procedures for child

protection and risk assessment are securely in place. Pupils say that they feel safe at school and that bullying is rare and is dealt with promptly and effectively.

The school has made significant improvements regarding the use of assessment information to monitor and track pupil progress and guide pupils' learning, but acknowledges this needs further development. Marking of work in pupils' books does not always give sufficient guidance as to how it can be improved. The safeguarding of pupils is good. Because teachers know their pupils well and relationships are good, consistent support is given to pupils as they progress through the school. This good quality support enables vulnerable children and those with additional needs to make good progress. Meetings with external agencies, for example, speech and language specialists, help to plan the support required and enable a review of the progress being made.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's excellent leadership, well supported by newly appointed assistant headteachers, is ensuring the school is building firmly on improvements seen since the last inspection. There is a very clear analysis of what the school is doing well and a determination to get even better. There is a drive to raise standards further and its successes, particularly in English, show that there is a clear capacity to improve further. Subject leaders are gradually taking on more responsibility, although the impact of their initiatives is, in some instances, still in the early stages. For example, the numeracy co-ordinator has introduced a more dynamic approach to teaching mathematics and has provided support for staff on how to make better use of assessment information. The long-term benefits of this initiative have yet to be assessed. Governors support the school well and are fully involved in all aspects of school life. There are very strong links with the community and views of parents and pupils are identified and, where appropriate, acted upon.

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?	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	2
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	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	1
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?	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 very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. It is a good school with some excellent features.

These are some of the best things about your school

- The good progress you make in your learning.
- Your excellent behaviour and enthusiasm for lessons and other activities.
- The excellent range of interesting and exciting activities in which you take part.
- The excellent relationships you have with one another.
- The good teaching and effective support you get from adults in the school.
- How well the headteacher and senior staff manage the school.

This is what the school needs to do to make it even better

- Help you to do better in mathematics.
- Make better use of information from tests and marking of your work to help you improve.

We are pleased that you enjoy school and wish you all the best for the future.

Thank you again for helping us with our work.