



Rakegate Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104304
Local Authority Wolverhampton
Inspection number 295331
Inspection dates 6–7 February 2007
Reporting inspector Ian Knight

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Renton Road
School category	Community		Oxley
Age range of pupils	3–11		Wolverhampton WV10 6UP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01902 558608
Number on roll (school)	381	Fax number	01902 558609
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Kevin Dungey
		Headteacher	S J Harris
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2006		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 6–7 February 2007	Inspection number 295331
--------------------------	----------------------------------------------	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school serves an area of considerable socio-economic disadvantage; for example, high numbers of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, although there are significant numbers who are of Indian, Caribbean or mixed heritage. An average number speak English as an additional language. The proportion identified with learning difficulties and disabilities is high. Significant numbers join or leave the school outside the normal start or finishing times. When children enter the Nursery, their levels of knowledge and skills are well below those expected.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement because sound leadership and management have enabled achievement in the school to improve to a satisfactory level over the last year and its effectiveness is now satisfactory. The school has increased the pace of improvement and now knows its strengths and weaknesses well through good evidence gathering. However, it also recognises that it is not using that evidence precisely enough to target the most important priorities for further improvement. It has a wealth of information about how well pupils are doing and has set in place sound systems for setting targets for groups of pupils. These are referred to in lessons and good marking ensures that pupils now know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. This system is still relatively new and has not yet fully impacted on pupils' achievement, and therefore currently academic guidance is satisfactory.

The school has a positive ethos which stems from the headteacher and the teamwork of the staff. The whole school cares very well for the pastoral needs of pupils but, because academic guidance is not as strong, the school's overall provision for care, guidance and support is satisfactory. Pupils behave well and enjoy school. Whilst pupils have a thorough understanding of how to keep healthy, their consumption of crisps and sweets at playtimes shows that this is not always carried over into everyday life! Nevertheless, their personal development is improving and is now good. This is a factor in the better progress they are making. Children in the Nursery do well because of the well organised and interesting activities on offer. Supportive staff ensure they make good progress. This is consolidated in the Reception classes. Despite this, children do not reach the expected standards by the end of Reception in most areas. Standards in the rest of the school have improved as the result of greater rigour in teaching and they are just about average in Year 6. This follows a period when pupils did not achieve well enough. Currently, progress in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory because of satisfactory teaching, founded on a sound curriculum that increasingly relates new learning to old in order to move pupils on. Good links with local secondary schools mean that pupils benefit from specialist teaching in subjects such as design and technology and information and communication technology.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the pupils' standards and achievement by:
- making better use of the assessment information in the school to identify pupils who are not making enough progress and to set in place actions to rectify that
- ensuring that information about the school's performance is organised and analysed more effectively so that those areas in most need of improvement can be readily identified and action taken.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage, especially in the Nursery, from very low starting points. They make especially good progress in their personal development. In spite of this good achievement, standards at the end of the Reception Year are still low in the early skills of reading and writing, and below the levels expected in mathematics. In the infants, progress is satisfactory overall, and good in mathematics. Standards in the 2006 National Curriculum assessments for pupils in Year 2 were still below average, except in mathematics which improved to being broadly average. In Year 6, standards in the 2006 National Curriculum tests were just within the average range. There had been underachievement in the school, but rigorous teaching in Year 6 has enabled these pupils to catch up and achieve satisfactorily over time. Inspection evidence, which also covers the period since those results, confirms that progress across the school is now satisfactory, with observed standards remaining just within the average range in Year 6. Test results in 2006 did seem to show that girls did better than boys, but school evidence shows this was related to that particular group; this year, with a different group, the situation is reversed. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are catered for satisfactorily in lessons and make the same satisfactory progress as their peers. Achievement is satisfactory rather than good overall in the school because, although practice is improving, the outcomes of assessments are still not used effectively enough to challenge all in the class consistently. This has a particular impact on the most capable.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' positive attitudes to school are established in the Nursery, where children make great strides in their personal development. Pupils are happy at school and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their social development is especially strong and pupils from all racial backgrounds get on well with each other. Most pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and at playtimes. Older pupils feel 'that bullying is not an issue at our school' and are confident that staff will sort out any problems. Pupils are keen to take on responsibility and the school council is proactive in putting children's views forward. As one Year 6 pupil said, 'We try our best to get what the children want, if they are sensible suggestions.' Pupils also contribute to the wider community by raising money for charities, such as the Compton Hospice. Pupils' enjoyment of school is not reflected in their attendance levels which, although improved, remain below average. This is largely because of the poor attendance of a few pupils as well the number of families who take term-time holidays. Most pupils approach work confidently, but in some classes do not use their initiative as much as they could. Pupils are developing good collaborative and team skills which will set them in good stead for later life but overall their development of basic skills, which will contribute to their future well-being, is satisfactory.

Pupils are clear about what they need to do to stay safe at school. They are conscious of the possible hazards presented by the new school's building site, for example.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching in the school as a whole is satisfactory. However, there are signs of some improvement, with some classes consistently experiencing good teaching. A challenge for the school is to use its range of monitoring activities efficiently to raise all teaching to the standard of the best. Good teaching in the Foundation Stage underpins children's good achievement, especially in the Nursery because of the very good support from staff. Staff also work well together in the Reception classes. Teaching in small group sessions is good, but staff do not always expect enough of children who are working independently.

In all classrooms, learning is promoted by the good relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves. Questions that do not have a short answer and that make pupils think carefully about their responses are often used well. However, there are occasions when teachers do not expect enough from pupils' answers, especially of the most capable. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution, leading groups, paraphrasing the teachers' words and acting as an audience for different

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum, including that for children in the Foundation Stage, is satisfactory. Although the curricular planning for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory, the school recognises the need to provide more work to challenge and interest the most capable. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is satisfactory, and they benefit from some well planned work in ability groups. The good personal, social, health and citizenship programme does much to help pupils understand the need to live healthily, take responsibility for their actions and stay safe. However, there is too little in the curriculum to help pupils prepare for the world of work. A good range of visits and visitors helps to make the curriculum interesting. There is satisfactory provision of activities after school, some of which take good advantage of the expertise and facilities of nearby secondary schools. The gymnastic club is particularly popular and enables some pupils to attain excellent standards. Residential events provide pupils with valuable opportunities to live and work together and improve their social skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care is good. Staff know the pupils and their families well and provide good personal support for pupils on a day-to-day basis. This helps pupils to approach learning

confidently. The pupils themselves feel that 'all the teachers are very helpful'. New pupils to the school are supported well and settle in very quickly. Although the school has sensible procedures in place to ensure that pupils are kept safe, these are not all formally recorded. Pupils are now well informed about what they need to do to move forward in their learning. However the procedures for this are relatively new and are only just beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Satisfactory leadership and management have enabled the school to address the underachievement evident a year ago that made the school subject to a Notice to Improve. Under the headteacher's guiding hand, staff work together as a unified team to make improvements. These are mostly marked in Key Stage 1 and in mathematics, historically a weaker area. Since the previous inspection, good procedures for gathering evidence and identifying strengths and weaknesses have been instituted, but the information gathered is not organised in a coherent way. Consequently, the school is not in a position to prioritise activities to address a few well judged areas for development. This means that the effectiveness of self-evaluation is satisfactory. Nevertheless, the improvement over the last year and the school's understanding of the need to organise and make better use of its wealth of information mean that it has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement. The supportive governing body has an improved understanding of its duties and takes them seriously. It is beginning to challenge the school more and to look more closely at its performance first hand.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------

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?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
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	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

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	3

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?	3

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 being so welcoming and polite when we visited your school. We really enjoyed seeing you work and talking to you about the school. Your school has improved since the last time inspectors visited and it is now satisfactory. Teaching and the progress you make are satisfactory and the standards you reach in Year 6 are just about average.

- Some of the best things in the school include:
- You behave well and this helps your teachers to teach.
- Everyone gets along well and you all look out for each other, for example, through the buddying system.
- Lots of your parents said how good it is that your headteacher knows every one of you by name and he is always ready to talk to them. All of the staff are working together well to make the school better.
- Children in the Nursery get a good start to school.

Everyone is pleased that the school has got better. To make sure it carries on, we have asked the headteacher and staff to do a couple of things:

- The school knows how well each of you is doing, but it is not using that information well enough to make sure that everyone has work that is hard, but not too hard. We have asked them to do this. You can help by remembering your targets and always trying hard.
- The senior teachers have also checked how well things work in the school very thoroughly, but they have not decided what the most important things are to keep it getting better.

I hope you carry on trying hard and do as well as you can.