

Rye Oak School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134903
Local Authority	Southwark
Inspection number	300248
Inspection dates	10–11 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Robert Ellis HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	332
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Firkin
Headteacher	Ms Virginia Bridge
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Whorlton Road London SE15 3PD
Telephone number	020 7639 3914
Fax number	020 7525 9231

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Rye Oak opened in April 2005 as part of the 'Fresh Start Initiative'. It replaced a school which was in Special Measures on the same site. The school serves a diverse community on the southern edge of Peckham in South London and is in an area which experiences significant social and economic deprivation. Two fifths of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Most pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and a small number of pupils are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language, although over one third of pupils do not speak English as their first language. Around half the pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including twelve who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. Most of the above proportions are high and well above national averages.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Rye Oak provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and some aspects of the school's work are good. Pupils join the school with standards that are generally below average and they achieve satisfactorily in relation to their starting points. As a result, they attain standards that are below average too. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers value the support that the school provides, particularly in relation to developing pupils' enjoyment and social skills. A typical comment was: 'Since my child has been at Rye Oak I can see a great improvement in their behaviour and work'.

Children get an excellent start in the rich and stimulating learning environment of the Nursery where they develop a real thirst for learning because of the good and often outstanding teaching they receive. They enjoy being at school and most children co-operate well with others and they have good relationships with the adults who care for them. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall and children experience an appropriately challenging mix of teacher led and self-chosen activities. There are good systems and procedures to keep children safe and children are encouraged and enabled to develop healthy lifestyles. They say that they most enjoy physical activities, games, and exploring their environment. Parents say that they are well informed about their children's progress and that the Foundation Stage is well led and managed.

Personal development and well-being are good throughout the school because of the high standard of care, guidance and support that pupils receive. Pupils enjoy learning and feel safe and well cared for. They behave well, develop good relationships with adults and other pupils and most have positive attitudes to school. This is demonstrated by improving attendance and a significant reduction in exclusions.

Pupils enjoy their learning because teaching is good and the good curriculum is designed well to meet their needs and interests. However, the assessment of pupils who do not speak English as a first language is not frequent enough and does not focus sharply on developing their fluency in English. Although the use of assessment to identify the next steps in pupils' learning is developing it is not yet sufficiently refined to ensure an exact match of tasks and activities to pupils' needs and prior attainment. Teachers are increasingly encouraging and enabling pupils to assess their own progress towards their targets but this is not consistent across all subjects.

The school is well led and managed. Those responsible for leadership and management have a clear vision for the future of the school where all pupils are valued and can achieve well. The work of the school is closely monitored and the resulting information is carefully analysed and used to inform strategic planning. The rapid pace of improvement and the positive impact of action taken demonstrate a good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Assess pupils fluency in English more regularly and ensure support for those at the early stages of learning English focuses on developing fluency in the language
- Refine the use of assessment to identify next steps for learning and enable pupils to be actively involved in assessing their own work

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

Pupils join the school with attainment that is below average overall and well below average in personal, social and emotional development. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage because of the good teaching they receive and most achieve the standards expected for five year olds by the start of Year 1. Standards at Key Stage 1 are rising but remain below average. Results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, although significantly improved, particularly in relation to the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5, remain below average.

Inspection evidence and the school's own assessment data shows that standards are rising and pupils' achievement is outstanding in the Nursery, good in Year 2 and Year 6 and satisfactory in other year groups. Because of the legacy of previous underachievement and despite their recent good progress resulting from the good teaching they now receive, many pupils have not caught up sufficiently and are still working below the level appropriate for their age. Pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities, and other groups who have additional needs, make similar progress to other pupils in the school because of the skilled identification of their needs and the appropriate levels of support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well being are good. Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and say that they enjoy school and get on well with their teachers and feel safe and secure. They understand the need to adopt healthy life-styles and the school council made changes to the lunchtime menu to actively promote healthy eating. Attendance rates are improving due to firm actions taken by the school but remain below average. The number of fixed term exclusions, which increased initially when the school introduced higher expectations for behaviour, has decreased significantly and the pupils' behaviour in lessons, when moving around the school and in the playground is generally good. Pupils are suitably prepared for future economic well being as a result of their good social and team-working skills. From the Nursery onwards, most are willing to co-operate with others and work in teams and older pupils say that they enjoy opportunities to take responsibility. Junior street leaders are working with the local council to improve the environment outside of the school. The school council were actively involved in the development of the school travel plan. They identified risk areas in the neighbourhood for pedestrians and discussed safer routes to school. Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good. They show a good understanding of right and wrong, know why they should follow school rules, and work and play well together. They recognise and respect the many different cultures within their school and make a positive contribution to their own and the wider community. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of other faiths and beliefs in religious education lessons and through assemblies but opportunities are missed in other areas of the curriculum, particularly in the celebration of religious festivals.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Overall the quality of teaching is good although it ranges from outstanding to satisfactory and this has an impact on the overall progress pupils make. To address this, phase leaders provide very good support for teachers in their teams, often modelling best practice for less experienced colleagues so that, overall, lessons are well planned and in most lessons there is a brisk pace and a good range of challenging tasks. Teaching assistants and other adults are well briefed and well deployed so that they make a good contribution to the way individuals and groups of pupils learn, especially pupils with learning difficulties.

Teachers consistently expect pupils to behave well, they manage their classes well and relationships are cordial and positive between adults and children. As one parent commented, 'the teachers I come into contact with work very hard and are always pleasant and patient'. As a consequence, almost all pupils behave well and respond quickly to teachers' instructions so that little time is wasted. Pupils participate particularly well in paired work, especially using 'talking partners'. In the very few lessons that are not quite as successful as the best, but are satisfactory overall, the management of some group tasks does not identify quickly whether pupils are having problems with their learning or when pupils are unclear about how to proceed and sometimes valuable time is lost as a result.

Marking of pupils' work in English is good. It provides pupils with clear guidance on 'next steps' linked to individual learning targets. Marking in other subjects is not of the same high quality and does not always show pupils what they need to do to improve. However, pupils are increasingly expected to evaluate their own progress towards their targets and in some classes pupils are given useful success criteria so that they can judge for themselves what they need to do to take their work to the next level.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The range of learning experiences provided for pupils across the school is good. As one pupil commented, 'I enjoy school, there are lots of activities and they are challenging.' Teaching groups based on prior attainment in 'Success for All' in English and in mathematics ensure that pupils at differing levels can make progress. The work on themes has made learning exciting and relevant as topics such as 'Heroes/Heroines' and 'Journeys' relate well to pupils' backgrounds and captivate their interest. Meaningful links between subjects and the integration of thinking skills in the themes also help to contribute to pupils' personal development. The way adults work with pupils, together with activities to raise pupils' awareness of healthy eating and the benefits of physical exercise, help pupils well to remain safe and act responsibly. The overall curriculum meets the needs of pupils who do not speak English as their first language as the majority are fluent in English. However, the small number of pupils who are just beginning to learn English are not developing their grasp of English quickly enough because of some weaknesses in the provision. The range of enrichment activities is very good with pupils benefiting from a variety of visits and visitors which bring learning alive for them. Good opportunities for residential visits in Years 5 and 6 also help to promote pupils' personal and social development well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Rigorous tracking and monitoring of attainment are used to identify and to target intervention for pupils at risk of underachieving. Parents and carers are kept well informed about their children's progress and encouraged to support their learning. Staff at all levels show a strong commitment to promoting pupils' health and well-being and arrangements for safeguarding are robust and effective. The school has developed good relationships with external agencies to ensure that pupils who are vulnerable or have additional needs are well supported.

Assessment of pupils' fluency in English as an additional language is not updated frequently enough to help identify what needs to be done to help the few pupils who are at the early stages of learning English. As a consequence some pupils do not develop their grasp of English as quickly as they might.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and her senior team have provided outstanding leadership which has enabled the school to make rapid progress in raising attainment and pupils' expectations. Their vision for the future of the school and its pupils is underpinned by a set of core values which include trust, fairness and equality and a strong commitment to being an inclusive school where all pupils are valued.

Monitoring is rigorous and the resulting data is carefully analysed so that self-evaluation accurately identifies strengths and areas for development. Actions taken to remedy any evident weaknesses are carefully planned to have maximum impact. A good example of this is the effective way that teaching has been developed through careful monitoring, coaching and good professional development opportunities for teachers and assistants. This has enabled leadership to be distributed beyond the senior leadership team and the emerging leaders are well supported and are becoming effective in their new roles.

Finances are carefully monitored and resources are used wisely.

Governors are well informed and following the training they received are now well placed to hold the school to account for the standards achieved.

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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>	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?	2
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	NA

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	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	3

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?	2
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.

Annex A

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	1
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	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

20 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rye Oak School, London, SE15 3PD

Thank you for making us feel so welcome and for helping us with our inspection. We enjoyed our two days at your school and were pleased to see how well you behave and work together in teams.

We think that some of the things that the school does are good and some things could be a bit better, so we have given the school a satisfactory grade overall.

You told us that you enjoy being at school and feel safe and well looked after. You showed us that you like eating healthy food and you said you enjoy the opportunities you get to take exercise. Most of you are keen to learn and this helps you make satisfactory progress. Some of you do even better and make good progress.

The people who have responsibility for making decisions about your school know it very well and have lots of good ideas about how it can be made even better.

We think that most of the things that the school are doing are the right ones but there are a couple of other things we would like you to work on;

- Teachers need to check more often to see how well your language skills are developing so that they can make sure that you get the right kind of help if you need it
- You need to have more opportunities to see how well you are doing so that you don't need to wait for the teacher to tell you if your work is good enough

You can help by making sure that you ask questions when you need to and check your work as you go along to see if it is as good as it can be.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Ellis Her Majesty's Inspector