

Ronald Ross Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101031
Local Authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	307569
Inspection dates	12–13 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Lynn Bappa

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	221
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M Young
Headteacher	Mrs D Hart
Date of previous school inspection	25 September 2003
School address	Castlecombe Drive Beaumont Road London SW19 6RW
Telephone number	020 8788 5233
Fax number	020 8785 9818

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Ronald Ross Primary School is a smaller than average school serving a diverse community. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is much higher than average. Nearly two-thirds are from minority ethnic backgrounds, with the largest groups being pupils from Asian heritage and a range of White backgrounds. The percentage with English as an additional language is high, with a high proportion at the early stages of learning it. Families move in and out of the area more frequently than usual and many pupils experience considerable difficulties and disruptions to their daily lives and education. A higher than average number join the school during the school year, with many arriving at Ronald Ross as the first school they have been admitted to. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is much higher than found nationally. Their needs relate mainly to behavioural, social and emotional difficulties and communication, speech and language disorders. The school had an interim headteacher from January to August 2007 and a substantive appointment was made in September 2007. The school is part of the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP), a national initiative aimed at raising standards in English and mathematics.

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 and improving school. Parents are pleased with the quality of education it offers and, in particular, with the rate of improvement since the arrival of the headteacher in September. One parent wrote, 'I am extremely impressed with Ronald Ross ever since Debbie has taken over as Head. Everything seems to be changing for the better.' The headteacher is well supported by senior leaders, other staff and governors. The school has put into place an effective series of intervention programmes and initiatives designed to raise standards and these are beginning to bear fruit.

The school has a good ethos in which all pupils feel safe, valued and included. The good pastoral care develops pupils' confidence and self-esteem and contributes effectively to their good personal development and well-being. They come to school happy and ready to learn. Although most attend regularly and thoroughly enjoy school, there are too many families who do not ensure that their children come to school every day. This is having an adverse effect on the school's attendance figures and on their children's education.

Although standards are below average, achievement is good. Children join the Nursery with very modest skills. Good teaching and enjoyable, practical activities help them to make very good progress in their learning, particularly in literacy and emotional development, their weakest areas when they begin. Standards by the end of Year 2, although below average, particularly in reading and writing, represent a good level of achievement given pupils' starting points. This good progress continues in Key Stage 2 and standards by the end of Year 6, in 2007, improved from exceptionally low overall to below average. Initiatives such as the ISP are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' progress in both English and mathematics. In mathematics, for example, pupils have improved their skills in problem solving. Pupils in Key Stage 1 build well on what they have learned in the Foundation Stage. In Years 3 to 6, they continue to make good progress overall, responding well to good teaching. The school is aware, however, that it needs to do more to raise standards further, especially in Key Stage 1, particularly in handwriting, punctuation and extended writing.

Teaching has improved. It is now good throughout the school and is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Relationships are good and teachers are making learning more interesting and relevant by using interactive technology well and by creating interesting links across subjects. Assessment has improved, although the school has rightly identified that it now needs to increase teachers' confidence in marking pupils' work against national curriculum levels and providing learners with a good understanding of the next steps for improvement. The curriculum is broad and balanced with good provision for enrichment and extra-curricular activities. During the inspection, for example, pupils showed enormous levels of enthusiasm for the visitors from the Science Museum. Recent improvements to planning in English and mathematics are beginning to be reflected in rising standards.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The Nursery is lively and exciting with much to explore. This encourages children's confidence and independence. Work in Reception builds very well on learning in the Nursery. A strong focus on speaking and listening has a notable impact on developing children's literacy. Outstanding leadership and management ensure high quality teaching and excellent curricular

provision. This high quality provision enables children to make very good progress in relation to their low starting points. Teachers and other staff have an excellent understanding of how young children learn and plan a very good variety of relevant and practical activities to stimulate young minds. This makes learning exciting, as was evident when children in Reception made sandwiches for Fathers Day. On another occasion, the teacher showed a very good understanding of what the children needed when she let them 'have a little wiggle' when they had been concentrating for a long time and were in danger of losing focus. The outdoor space is secure and attractive. Induction procedures are very good and enable children to settle quickly.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in literacy, especially in Key Stage 1, with a focus on handwriting, punctuation and extended writing.
- Work with parents to improve the attendance of the small number of pupils who do not come to school regularly.
- Enable teachers to improve their marking of pupils' work against national curriculum levels and providing the next steps for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The 2007 results showed an improvement on previous years in both key stages. The improvement was most marked in science in Year 6, where standards were average. There are signs from pupils' current work that improvements have continued this year, with a healthy rise in the number of pupils working at expected levels in English and mathematics, although standards remain below average overall. Good headway has been made in raising reading standards through an increased focus on teaching pupils to link sounds and letters, the introduction of 'The Power of Reading' programme, community reading volunteers and the opening of an exciting new library. More remains to be done, however, to ensure that pupils reach the standards of which they are capable in literacy, particularly in Key Stage 1.

Recent initiatives to iron out variations in progress have begun to bear fruit and are contributing to pupils' good progress. Pupils with statements of special educational need and those with moderate learning or behavioural difficulties make good progress, because teachers are getting better at identifying their needs promptly and ensuring that they receive effective support. Vulnerable pupils achieve well because they are settled and fully included in every aspect of school life. White British pupils, who were underachieving at the time of the last inspection, now make similar rates of progress to others in the class.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are enthusiastic about their school, polite and friendly. Behaviour has improved and is now good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils see assemblies as important community occasions in which they can celebrate the success of others. They show respect for each other's feelings, cultures and beliefs and willingly take on responsibilities such as playground buddies, librarians or school councillors. Pupils participate enthusiastically in sports and show a good understanding of how to live healthily. They particularly appreciate school lunches and enjoy the opportunity to be rewarded for good behaviour by an invitation to the top table for 'VIP' treatment. Despite the school's best efforts to improve attendance, it remains below average with a small number of families regularly keeping their children off

school. Improving standards in basic skills, coupled with their well-developed personal qualities, prepare pupils soundly for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons proceed at a brisk pace, ensuring that pupils are constantly interested. They are keen to explain that they think lessons are 'fun'. Teaching assistants are an important part of the team and work closely with teachers to support pupils who need extra help. In some instances, however, insufficient use is made of the time when pupils are withdrawn for help with reading and writing. Teachers are good at establishing positive relationships and managing behaviour. They use a good range of resources, including interactive white boards, to motivate and engage pupils. Good displays of work and other materials in classrooms and around the school enhance the learning environment well. In Year 2, for example, the 'I Am A Remarkable Reader' display motivates and encourages the pupils. Although marking has improved, teachers need more confidence in marking pupils' work against national curriculum levels and providing learners with a good understanding of the next steps for improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A good curriculum helps pupils of all abilities to enjoy their learning, although plans to better meet the needs of the gifted and talented are still young. Good use is made of the new computer suite and other technological resources. During the inspection, for example, pupils in Year 3 talked enthusiastically to inspectors about the film they had made of their work on the Vikings. The school's programme for personal, social and health education, and special events such as Black History Week and Health and Fitness Week greatly develop pupils' understanding of the wider world and help them to become committed young citizens. Pupils are enthusiastic about the good range of extra-curricular clubs and enrichment activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There are trusting relationships between pupils and staff. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Bullying is rare and pupils have confidence that, should it occur, it would be quickly dealt with. Good support for vulnerable pupils, including a learning mentor, art, drama and play therapy, ensures that they learn well. New arrivals settle quickly. Academic guidance has improved. Teachers track pupils' progress each term and are beginning to employ effective strategies to help them catch up if they are falling behind. However, some of these procedures are recent and are only just beginning to have an impact on raising standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management help pupils to achieve well and to develop good personal qualities. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. She has a real heart for her work and her clearly articulated vision is widely shared. A real strength of the school is the high

quality of teamwork that ensures that everyone, teachers, support staff and pupils, plays an integral part in moving it forward.

Self-evaluation is accurate and honest. There are many signs of real improvement and the school is in a good position to build on these. In the last year, for example, standards have begun to rise, teaching and behaviour have improved and the learning environment has developed significantly with a new computer suite, library and school offices. There has not yet been sufficient time, however, to see the full impact of all the initiatives to raise standards. Governors play an increasingly important role in evaluating the school's work and determining its priorities. They are able to question the school's leadership and show good awareness of its strengths and weaknesses. Issues from the last inspection have been tackled well.

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Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

24 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ronald Ross Primary School, London, SW19 6RW

Thank you for making us so welcome and sharing with us your thoughts about your school. We particularly enjoyed talking to the school council members and those pupils in Year 3 who brought their work on the Vikings to show us. We also liked looking at the rewards in your Token Shop and spending some time in your fantastic school library. You obviously enjoy lessons and activities, and help to make the school a good one. I really enjoyed looking at Reception children when they were making their cookies - I hope they were as delicious as they looked! Your behaviour, positive attitudes to work and play and the ways in which you care for one another are good. The headteacher and all the staff have obviously worked hard to improve the school. They certainly believe that all of you can achieve well, so it's up to you to prove them right and help the school to improve even more!

We have asked your teachers to make three improvements to make the school better. A small number of you need to come to school more often. It is important to remember that you should be in school unless you are ill, otherwise you are missing important learning. Work has begun on helping the younger pupils do better in reading and writing. We have asked the school to carry on doing this. You can play your part in this by always working as hard as you can and asking if you do not understand. The third thing we have asked your school to do is to help teachers get better at giving you levels for your work and explaining exactly what you have to do to reach the next level.

We hope that you continue to enjoy your time at school and wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Lynn Bappa

Lead Inspector