

Rise Park Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102302
Local Authority	Havering
Inspection number	307962
Inspection date	2 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	176
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Barrett
Headteacher	Miss C Dalton
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2004
School address	Annan Way Rise Park Romford RM1 4UD
Telephone number	01708 749135
Fax number	01708 742218

Age group	4-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: what the school is doing to increase the number of Level 3s (higher level for Year 2 pupils) in English; creativity in the curriculum through linking subjects together; the impact subject leaders are having on standards and achievement. The inspector gathered evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and parents' questionnaires. Discussions with staff, a governor and pupils also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This smaller-than-average-sized school is situated in a residential area. More than 90% of pupils are of White British origin, and the remainder come from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. A few pupils speak an additional language to English. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is low. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is well below average. Most of these have moderate learning difficulties. Children enter the Reception year from 21 different pre-school settings. The school has awards for promoting basic skills and healthy lifestyles, for its provision of physical education and for the way it develops its staff. It is a member of the North Romford Consortium of schools, which funds an Early Years family support worker and an Early Years attendance officer.

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 many strengths. The headteacher has a clear vision for improving standards and achievement and leads the school well. She is ably supported by the deputy head, and together they have created a strong team of staff who are committed to pupils' well being and academic progress. A parent reflected the views of many when she said, 'We have been really impressed with the standard of education provided and the fact that every child is valued'.

Pupils enter the Reception classes with a wide range of skills and abilities that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. In 2007, standards in Year 2 were exceptionally high, but current standards are not so strong, being above average, partly because the pupils have had several changes of staff in previous years. Nonetheless, the school has maintained standards at levels consistently above the national average for several years, and all pupils make good progress. The number of pupils on course to attain the higher Level 3 in writing is lower this year compared with previous years. The school has targeted higher attaining pupils and plans specific work for them. However, in some classes there are too few opportunities for pupils to extend their writing across different subjects, and the scope of tasks is sometimes too narrow to fire their imaginations. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties achieve well because they receive good support from teaching assistants and their individual education plans clearly show what they have to do to improve.

Pupils' personal development and well being, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. They behave well and have positive attitudes to learning, taking part enthusiastically in lessons. Pupils take plenty of exercise, including making good use of the swimming pool on site. They have a good understanding of how to live healthily. They say they feel safe in school and are happy to approach an adult if they have a worry. Pupils enjoy school, taking part in a good range of clubs. Attendance is in line with the national average, but there is more the school could do to meet its target. At present, staff do not routinely follow-up absences on the first day they occur. The impact of a more robust approach to term-time holidays has yet to be reflected in the figures. Pupils show a caring attitude towards one another. A pupil said, 'When someone's sad and they go to the friendship stop you play with them'. The school council say, 'We've been changing things around the school'. Members have arranged for pupils to use metal rather than plastic cutlery in the dining hall. Pupils are involved in their local community through recycling projects and supporting the elderly. Pupils also took part in a festival of language and culture with neighbouring schools. They grow in independence while at school and leave with a good set of basic skills, ready for the move to junior school.

The curriculum meets the range of pupils' needs well, with some good links across subjects in the Foundation Stage and in Year 2. The curriculum in Year 1 is less creative. Pupils have fewer opportunities to use their skills in literacy and numeracy across a range of different subjects. Higher attaining pupils, in particular, are not always challenged enough by the curriculum to excel in these classes. There is a good range of enrichment activities for pupils, including visits to places of interest such as the Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood. Pupils in both Years 1 and 2 benefit from their own clubs, such as art, choir, cheerleading and tennis. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and explain clearly what they are going to learn. A pupil commented, 'You get to learn more about things and it helps you when the teacher says it first'. There is good use of the interactive whiteboards to engage pupils, and teachers employ a variety of methods to make learning interesting. In a Year 2 class,

for example, pupils were working together to draw graphs based on their mini-beast project, with some presenting the information in different ways on computers. This led to a fruitful discussion about the types of graph they had chosen and why. Classrooms contain attractive displays of pupils' work to form a stimulating learning environment. In some classes, there is too much reliance on commercial sheets, which can inhibit how pupils set out their work.

Pupils are well cared for and the academic guidance they receive is good. The school has effective links with outside agencies to promote pupils' wellbeing. A parent said, 'All staff are very approachable and caring'. Pupils are valued as individuals and their needs are well known to staff. There are effective structures to support pupils with moderate learning difficulties, and their progress is monitored carefully. Throughout the school, pupils know what their targets are for improvement and how they can attain them. The marking of writing is effective because teachers include comments that show pupils what they can do better and how to improve, although there is less guidance in mathematics. The impact of leadership and management on the school is good, with a clear focus on driving up standards and achievement. Leaders form an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas to improve, and action plans reflect these priorities well. Subject leaders have a good understanding of their areas and have time to monitor developments. Although some of them are new to the role, they are already beginning to have an impact in shaping their subjects and offering support to colleagues. The governors take a strong strategic role in the school, and planning has improved considerably since the last inspection. There is a clear long-term vision alongside the immediate priorities for improvement. Some governors do not visit the school often enough to inform themselves about its work. Most parents are very supportive of the school, although there are some who feel their concerns are not dealt with quickly enough. Governors are finding ways to make themselves more available to parents, so that they can respond promptly to their views. The school has a good track record of improvement and demonstrates good capacity to improve further as it is well placed to continue its work effectively.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start in the Reception classes. They settle quickly and enjoy the wide variety of activities that promote their early learning skills well. The stimulating curriculum inspires the children and is planned well to develop their understanding. Teaching is good and focuses on building children's literacy and numeracy skills. Good use is made of the improved outdoor area, which is much more conducive to learning now than it was at the time of the last inspection. Staff make careful assessments of children's progress and adapt plans to suit their needs. The Foundation Stage is led and managed well, and staff work together effectively as an Early Years team, with a good shared understanding of how young children learn. Currently, the Reception classes do not benefit from interactive whiteboards or modern computers like the rest of the school, but there are plans to install them in the near future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in writing.
- Make the Year 1 curriculum more creative by linking subjects together better.
- Meet the school's target for attendance.

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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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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	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?	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

12 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rise Park Infant School, Romford, RM1 4UD

Thank you very much for making me so welcome at your school. I did enjoy my visit and agree that yours is a good school with many strengths. Here are some of them.

- The youngest children get off to a good start in the Reception classes.
- Your behaviour is good and you care for one another well.
- You reach standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You make good progress in your work because the teaching is good.
- You find lessons enjoyable and are keen to take part.
- There is a good range of clubs and visits for you to enjoy.
- The school cares for you well and shows you how you can improve your work.
- The school is led well by the headteacher and deputy head and all the staff work together to give you a good education.

I believe that it would be good for those of you who find writing easy to be given work that really makes you think. There are some very interesting activities for Reception and Year 2 pupils to do, and I have asked the school to give Year 1 pupils the same kind of experiences based around your topics. Most of you come to school regularly, but I would encourage all of you to come every day, so that you do not miss out on your learning. I have asked the school to do all it can to see that this happens.

Thank you once again for your help. My best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. N. Butt

Lead Inspector