

Rednal Hill Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103249
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	308263
Inspection date	7 May 2008
Reporting inspector	David Rzeznik HMI

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	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	174
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephanie Kemp / Sally Harvey
Headteacher	Elaine LeGros
Date of previous school inspection	26 April 2004
School address	Irwin Avenue Birmingham B45 8QY
Telephone number	01214 532636
Fax number	01214 537134

Age group	3-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

the achievement and standards of pupils, particularly in writing

the way assessment information is used to tailor work for different ability groups

the balance between child-initiated and teacher-led activities across the school

the way the school's leadership monitors and evaluates the quality of education provided.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their work, assessment data and school documentation. Parents' responses to the inspection questionnaire and interviews with staff and the chair of governors also informed the inspector's 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 the report.

Description of the school

Rednal Hill Infant School shares a site with a junior school. The number on roll has declined because of falling rolls in the local authority. The number eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is slightly above average overall, although this varies between year groups. Most pupils are of White British origin. A very small percentage are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Pupils currently attend the Nursery part-time but there are plans for some to attend full-time in September 2008. There has been a significant change in the senior leadership in the last 14 months. The headteacher was appointed in January 2008 and the deputy headteacher in March 2007. The school has achieved a Quality Mark and the Sportsmark award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good school achieves its aim to educate pupils in a safe, well-organised, lively and fun environment where every child is valued as an individual. Pupils enjoy coming to school and being part of a friendly, welcoming and caring community. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of education provided. They say their children are happy and are making good progress. They find staff very approachable and say that any concerns they have are quickly sorted out.

Pupils enter the Nursery with skills that are below those typical for three-year-olds. They make good progress and most are working within the expected levels for their age by the time they enter Year 1. Achievement is good in Years 1 and 2. Pupils make good gains in their learning because teaching is effective and the curriculum meets their individual needs well. Current standards in Year 2 are average in reading, writing and mathematics. Over the past four years, attainment in writing has generally lagged behind that seen in other subjects. Writing standards have risen from below average to average over the past two terms. Pupils' progress has accelerated because teaching methods and teachers' subject knowledge have improved and there has been greater involvement of parents in the writing process and more opportunities for pupils to write at length. Pupils' listening skills are developing well. However, a significant number have below average speaking skills and many lack confidence when talking aloud.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral and social development, is good. This is evident in the way they respect and support each other and demonstrate their good knowledge about safe and healthy living. For example, pupils can describe that you need lots of sleep, exercise, healthy food and cleanliness if you are to remain healthy. In 'Shake and Wake up' sessions, pupils are able to design healthy exercise routines. The contact with schools in Australia, Canada, Turkey and Uganda is having a very positive impact on pupils' understanding of cultural diversity.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They come to school regularly and are enthusiastic about learning. They settle quickly to tasks and are keen to give of their best. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community, for example, they have improved toilet and outdoor facilities. They have raised funds for various charities and have helped improve provision in a Ugandan school. The observed assembly about 'People who help us' gave pupils a useful insight into the world of work. The rich curriculum contains a wide range of interesting and worthwhile activities. The move to teach basic skills through themes and topics has been successful. It means that skills are taught across a range of subjects and this helps to consolidate and extend learning in different settings. Additional activities, visits and visitors make a good contribution towards enriching pupils' educational experience.

Good care, guidance and support ensure pupils are kept safe and secure. Staff vetting procedures are robust and meet government requirements. Good pastoral support helps pupils develop the necessary independent and team-working skills required for the next stage of education. Targets are set in mathematics and English but some pupils are not clear about what they are.

Lessons are characterised by excellent relationships between staff and pupils. A good ratio of adults to learners ensures that individual help is available when required. Good use is made of information and communication technology to introduce teaching points, research topics and to stimulate learning. For example, Year 1 pupils really enjoyed producing a video about dinosaurs and researched the internet for information about how, when and where they lived.

High quality displays help celebrate pupils' achievements and are used effectively to reinforce teaching points. Teachers ask pertinent questions but pupils' responses are often too brief. Staff do not model the language structures of English regularly enough or encourage pupils to use them when answering questions and speaking to others. Whilst teaching is good, there are occasions when some group activities lack challenge and although pupils consolidate their learning, they do not extend it. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, assessment information is not always used effectively to plan work that is consistently challenging. Secondly, resources are not always fit for purpose, particularly in child-initiated activities, where the lack of creative and imaginative materials restricts pupils' achievement.

Good leadership and management are improving the quality of education and raising standards, particularly in writing. The new headteacher has settled in quickly. She knows the school's main strengths and relative weaknesses because her monitoring of provision has been effective. Prompt action was taken to improve the tracking of pupils' performance so that a coherent approach for recording information was established from Nursery to Year 2. Data are used to inform intervention and to set relevant and challenging targets. However, the analysis of data is not yet sharp enough to confirm the attainment and progress made by different groups, to ensure that any pupils in danger of falling behind can be identified and supported as quickly as possible. The headteacher is ably assisted by the deputy headteacher. They are both valued and respected by pupils, parents and staff. Senior leaders work closely with governors and together they are setting a clear educational direction for the school. Sound development planning ensures that time and resources are well directed and that improvement work is effective. The induction of newly-qualified teachers is good and this means newcomers can quickly give their best. The school works well with parents, and they appreciate being involved in their child's education and enjoy working as class helpers. Governors ensure their statutory duties are met and they suitably hold the school to account. Their financial management is good. They have successfully managed the budget at a time of falling rolls and appropriate amounts of money have been set aside to develop the school grounds.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes) is good and children make good gains in their learning. The welcoming atmosphere and well-established routines ensure that each child feels valued and this helps them to develop a positive self-esteem and gain a sense of identity. There is a good mix between adult-led and child-initiated activities. Activities successfully encourage children to be independent and to show initiative. When teachers are working with small groups or individuals, they use a variety of methods to move learning along at a fast pace. Some child-initiated activities lack challenge and on occasions, the resources provided do not sufficiently stimulate learning. The outside learning environment is satisfactory, but it is an area that the school rightly wants to improve further. Leadership and management are good. Morale is high and there is a real sense of teamwork to achieve the school's aims.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' speaking, vocabulary and grammar skills by ensuring staff effectively model language structures and encourage pupils to use them at every opportunity.
- Ensure that all group activities are consistently challenging, and that resources are fit for purpose and extend pupils' learning.

- Improve the analysis of performance data to determine the attainment and achievement of different groups.

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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	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	1
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

8 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rednal Hill Infant School, Birmingham B45 8QY

Thank you for the friendly, warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed talking to you, observing your lessons and looking at your work. You go to a good school and I know that your teachers and parents agree with me.

I liked these things about your school

- You make good progress because you are well taught and you study a wide range of interesting topics. It was good to see you regularly using computers and video technology to help you learn.
- You told me that you enjoy school and that you feel safe and secure.
- You get on really well with each other and with your teachers.
- Your behaviour is excellent. It was pleasing to hear that you have raised money for various charities and that you are improving things in the school in Uganda. The pictures on the toilet walls look great. Keep giving the painters your ideas.
- The displays around the school are stunning. They celebrate your achievements and successes very well.
- Your new headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors are working well to make your school even better.
- Your parents are very pleased that you come to this school.

I have asked the headteacher and governors to improve three things

- Your speaking skills must get better. I have asked the teachers to talk to you in sentences and for you to repeat what they say. I want you to practise your speaking skills at every opportunity.
- Teachers must make sure that all the activities you do are carefully planned so that you achieve well. The equipment and materials you use must also help to move your learning forward.
- The school must keep a better check on how well you are performing.

I would like to thank the three young ones who sent me letters to the 'big boy' in the corner. I enjoyed reading them.

Best wishes

David Rzeznik Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools

Annex B

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