

Royston Parkside Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106612
Local Authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	309175
Inspection dates	30 June –1 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Philip Cole

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	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs A Wright
Headteacher	Mrs J Wild
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2004
School address	Midland Road Royston Barnsley South Yorkshire S71 4QP
Telephone number	01226 722416
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average size school that serves a village with a mixture of privately owned and rented housing close to Barnsley. More pupils than usual are entitled to free school meals. Almost all pupils are White British, although there are a small number of pupils from travelling families and other heritages. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to the national figure. Most of these pupils have either learning difficulties or concerns related to their behaviour, emotional or social development. Movement in and out of the school other than at the start and end of each year is a little above average. The school has achieved Healthy Schools and Activemark awards. It is currently part of the local authority's Intensifying Support Programme that is designed to raise standards and achievement in schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. They enjoy school, have positive attitudes to learning and behave well. Their understanding of what they need to do to keep fit and healthy and out of harm's way is good. Many make healthy choices at lunch-time and they enjoy the opportunities they have for exercise. The school council is proud of the improvements that it has helped to make to school meals and after school clubs. The attendance of most pupils is good, but some parents take their children on holiday in term time. This is a significant factor in the school's overall attendance rate being below average. Improvements in pupils' basic skills, particularly their ability to use information and communication technology and their positive and responsible attitudes, enable them to face the future with reasonable confidence.

For several years standards in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 have been well below national averages overall and pupils have often not made sufficient progress. Very few pupils have attained the higher levels in the national tests. Standards in English have often been significantly below average, mainly due to pupils' very weak writing skills. In the past, the progress made by pupils has been similar to schools nationally in mathematics and science but often significantly below average in English. Improvements in teaching, the use of assessment and an increased emphasis placed on reading and writing have started to bear fruit. Over the last year, pupils across both key stages have made faster progress in English, including writing, and in mathematics than is expected nationally and pupils' achievement is now satisfactory. The progress made by boys matches that of girls, although they still attain less well than girls overall. Despite these improvements standards remain below national averages.

The school's involvement in the local authority's Intensifying Support Programme has helped both teaching and the use of assessment to become more effective. This is now enabling pupils to make accelerated progress and to achieve satisfactorily. Teachers make clear to pupils the purpose of each lesson and match work more closely to what they need to learn. Guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work is helping them to take the next steps in their learning. However, there are inconsistencies in the implementation of these emerging strengths. These limit their overall effectiveness. For example, some lessons challenge all groups including higher attaining pupils. In other classes, teachers still pitch their lessons more at the average level for the class and, as a result, higher attaining pupils make less progress. In some classes pupils receive regular help on how to make their work better but in others this is patchier. Similarly, in some classes pupils have only year group targets to aim for, while in others, pupils are also given very helpful and effective individual targets. Where pupils get regular guidance well matched to their particular needs, they make good progress.

Appropriate action has been taken to make the curriculum more relevant to needs of pupils. This has involved the provision of well-planned and supported guided reading sessions, which are having a positive impact on improving pupils' reading skills, and modifying the content of what is taught to make it more appealing to boys. These efforts have contributed to the better progress being made in English and in boys' improved engagement with learning. The needs of particular groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those from Traveller families, are effectively identified and met and these pupils are making the same improving progress as other pupils. The school provides effective care and support for pupils and they are happy and feel safe and secure in school. The inconsistencies in the

academic guidance given to pupils, described earlier, results in this being satisfactory rather than good.

Leadership and management have also benefited from the school's involvement in the Intensifying Support Programme. Leadership is more broadly based and leaders now accurately evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses and make appropriate plans to bring about improvements. However, the effective strategies used in teaching are not consistently implemented across the school. Governors are knowledgeable and oversee the work of the school satisfactorily. Despite initial progress being slow in bringing about improvements since the last inspection, increased strength in leadership provides the school with a satisfactory capacity to improve in the future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter Nursery with skills well below those expected for their age. They make good progress across all the areas of learning and, by the end of Reception, are mostly working at levels below those expected for their age. Attainment is strong in their personal, social and emotional development, which is close to national expectations but it is weaker in writing and in calculation in mathematics. Girls achieve noticeably better than boys. Staff have introduced activities that are designed to engage boys, for example, encouraging boys to write by having clipboards available on the 'construction site'. These initiatives are having a positive effect on boys' involvement and the progress they make. Provision is balanced between well-planned and appropriate play activities that children choose and adult led activities, aimed at groups with different needs. The latter are well taught by staff, who skilfully question, guide and encourage children. Effective use is made of the outdoor area to teach across all the areas of learning. Assessment of children's progress is regular and accurate and is used appropriately to plan what is to be taught. Good leadership has been successful in improving the effectiveness of the provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by Year 6, particularly in English and for higher attaining pupils.
- Ensure that the effective strategies that have been introduced into teaching are used consistently well across all classes.
- Ensure that pupils across the school are consistently given helpful guidance on how to improve their work and on what they need to do to take the next steps in their learning.

A small proportion of the 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 enter Key Stage 1 below the levels expected for their age and, until recently, made slower progress than pupils in most other schools. As a result standards, by the end of the key stage, have been below and sometimes significantly below the national average, particularly in English. At Key Stage 2, standards overall have also been significantly below the national average, although there has been some improvement over time. The main weakness has also been in English, where progress has been slower and too few pupils have achieved the levels expected

by Year 6. In mathematics and science, satisfactory progress has resulted in standards closer to the national average, but few pupils have reached the higher levels. Boys have usually attained less well than girls and, across the school, pupils' performance in writing has been particularly weak. Over the last year improvements in teaching, a greater emphasis on developing skills in English and much more effective use of assessment to plan what pupils will learn have resulted in pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 making faster progress. Boys now achieve as well as girls. Although pupils' achievement is now satisfactory, earlier deficits in their learning have not yet been made up and standards remain below national expectations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall although their understanding of the lives of people from the different cultures found in Britain is limited. Pupils are positive about learning and behave well in class and around the school. They have good knowledge and understanding of what they need to do to keep fit, healthy and safe. Pupils in Year 6 make a positive contribution to the school community through the many responsibilities they willingly take on. There are few opportunities for younger pupils in school to contribute. Pupils' attendance and punctuality is improving as a result of the effective work of the school's parent support adviser. However, attendance remains below the national average because of holidays taken in term time and because the school is careful to keep pupils, who have left, on its roll until it is sure they are attending another school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory across both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. It is becoming more effective as strategies implemented through the Intensifying Support Programme make an increasingly positive impact. For example, some teachers are careful to make clear to pupils what they will be learning and what they should be able to do by the end of each lesson. This focuses pupils' efforts well and helps to make their learning more purposeful. Lessons are usually pitched at a challenging level, which helps to push pupils forward in their learning, but this is not consistent. Progress is less impressive when lessons are aimed at the average level in the class. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution by supporting both individuals and groups of pupils. Their help ensures that those who find learning more difficult make the same improved progress as other pupils. All pupils are now given help through the constructive comments that teachers make on their completed work. The quality of this feedback varies between classes. When it is done well and pupils are given time to respond to the comments, their work clearly shows improvement, but this is not always the case.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school now makes effective use of assessments of pupils' learning to fine tune the curriculum so that weaknesses in pupils' learning can be tackled. Successful examples that have led to improvements in pupils' attainment include activities to develop their vocabulary, which was identified as a factor holding back their progress in English. The tightly structured intensive guided reading sessions found across the school are also effective. There has been less success

in planning purposeful opportunities for writing across the curriculum. Links with the local high school have enriched opportunities for pupils' learning in science and a modern foreign language. There is a satisfactory range of well-attended clubs available for pupils in Key Stage 2, but no provision is made for younger pupils in school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

There are strengths in the care and support for pupils. All staff show concern and work hard to make pupils feel happy and secure in school. The needs of pupils, such as Traveller children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified effectively, and extra help is provided that ensures they are able to make the same progress as other pupils. The school parental support adviser has been particularly effective in supporting vulnerable pupils and their families. The school is appropriately rigorous in ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils, including their use of the Internet. The progress of pupils is carefully monitored and appropriate interventions are made to help those whose progress may have slowed. The academic guidance given to pupils is sound. However, inconsistencies in the way targets are set and used limits its overall effectiveness in helping all pupils understand what they need to do to take the next steps in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership has ensured that pupils are well cared for and that their different needs are identified and supported effectively. It has been slower in tackling weak standards and progress in learning. However, support from the local authority through the Intensifying Support Programme has assisted in making improvements. These are in the school's ability to judge for itself where its strengths lie and where it needs to improve. The programme has also helped the school to plan and implement action designed to tackle weaknesses. Teachers and senior staff are now much more fully involved in self-evaluation. This has not yet ensured that the effective strategies introduced into teaching are used consistently well across all classes. Governors have a good understanding of the school through, for example, their links with classes and they are becoming increasingly confident in asking questions that challenge leaders when this is appropriate. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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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?	3
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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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	3
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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we inspected your school. We enjoyed our discussions with you and watching what you do in school. We judged your school to be a satisfactory overall. We think it can improve because the staff know what to do to bring about the changes that are needed. We know that you enjoy coming to school and that you rightly feel that you are well looked after. We were impressed with your behaviour and with how well you get on with each other. It is good that you know how to keep fit and healthy and out of harm's way.

The children in the Nursery and Reception make good progress. In the past children in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 have not done as well as they could have done, particularly in English. We were pleased to see that your teachers have worked hard to make sure you are now making much better progress, although some of you could do even better. Improvements are clear to see in reading and writing, which has been, for many of you, your biggest area for improvement. We think that teaching is satisfactory and improving. Your teachers make clear to you what you will be learning in each lesson and they give you work that is mostly well matched to what you need to learn. In some lessons teachers could push you a bit more, particularly those of you who find learning easier. We noticed that some classes are given better help than others on how to improve their work. Also clearer and more individual targets on what you need to be able to do next will help you learn.

In order to help you all achieve as well as you can we have asked the school to:

- raise the standards, particularly in English and for those of you who find learning easier
- make sure that all your lessons provide work to challenge everyone
- make sure that you all get the best possible guidance on how you can improve your work.