

Rydon Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113243
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311172
Inspection date	8 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Martin Kerly

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	412
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	35
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Naughton
Headteacher	Neil Graham
Date of previous school inspection	14 March 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Rydon Road Kingsteignton Newton Abbot TQ12 3LP
Telephone number	01626 356420
Fax number	01626 334378

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following:

the progress being made by pupils of all abilities, especially in Years 3 to 6 following a slight dip in standards in 2008

the consistency in the quality of teaching

the care, guidance and support provided for all pupils.

Evidence was gathered from observations around the school, discussions with pupils, staff and the recent chair of governors, and analyses of the school's working documents and the questionnaires completed by parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not inspected in detail, but the inspectors 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

The school is much larger than average. Numbers are higher in Years 4 to 6, where there are three classes in each year, than in the lower year groups where there are two classes. There are two Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) classes for children of Reception age. Pupils are taught in parallel mixed-ability classes, except for mathematics, where they are taught in ability sets from Years 2 to 6. Almost all the pupils are White British and all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is a little below the national average but there are more pupils with a statement of special educational needs than expected in a school of this size. The headteacher is retiring at the end of this term. The current deputy headteacher has been appointed as permanent headteacher from January 2009.

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. It has a few features that are outstanding. The headteacher provides exceptionally clear vision and direction with a balanced commitment to academic progress and pupils' personal development. The school has maintained all its previous strengths and moved effectively to address those areas previously identified for improvement. Comprehensive systems for checking its work ensure the school has an accurate view of its performance and consequently it is well placed to improve further.

Pupils love their time in school. Their attendance is above average and they relish the stimulating activities and opportunities school offers. The care, guidance and support given to all pupils are outstanding, contributing significantly to the pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils recognise this. Parents appreciate the school's many qualities and the large majority fully endorse all its work. Comments such as, 'I am very happy with the standard of care and education my children receive', 'the school has excellent special educational needs support' and 'my son goes to school happy and returns happy' are common threads in the comments received from parents in the survey for the inspection. The school is fully aware of the concerns expressed by a small minority, particularly about variations in class sizes and lunchtime arrangements.

The achievement of pupils of all abilities is good throughout the school. Children enter the EYFS with attainment broadly as expected nationally for their age and make good progress. This good progress is maintained throughout Years 1 to 6 and standards are above average at the end of Year 6. Progress is good because the quality of teaching is consistently good for all ages in the school. Progress in reading, writing and science is good for all abilities, with the majority of pupils exceeding national expectations in most year groups. In mathematics, whilst most pupils make good progress, fewer reach the higher level for their age at the end of Year 6 than might be expected, given the standards they attained in Year 2. The school's careful analysis has identified a relative weakness in pupils' ability to use their mathematical understanding in solving problems. The school has introduced well-structured systems to improve this and is focusing support on those pupils in greatest need, but it is too soon to see the full impact of these intervention strategies. Standards in other subjects such as physical education and music are also above national expectations. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are on track to attain their end-of-year targets, maintaining above average standards, particularly in English and science.

Teachers plan carefully together in year group teams, sharing expertise under the effective guidance of unit and subject leaders. This joint planning helps ensure pupils have equal experiences and opportunities within a broad and balanced curriculum. The good curriculum is boosted by special events, such as sessions with a professional storyteller, during which pupils become inspired and totally absorbed. Pupils appreciate the wide range of club activities but a few parents would like to see even more. Teachers effectively deploy the well-trained teaching assistants, who frequently boost the learning of specific groups by providing extra guidance and support. This enables the most vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to be fully included in class activities. Teachers make good use of computers in lessons. They are very effective at helping pupils to be clear about what it is they are learning and how they can prepare themselves and improve their work. They mark pupils' work well, consistently providing clear guidance and feedback. In a very small minority of lessons, pupils

of different abilities are given similar work, slowing the learning of a few of the pupils, some of whom become a little distracted as a result.

Pupils behave well. Almost all are considerate and thoughtful towards one another. The school is vigilant in implementing procedures designed to safeguard pupils. Pupils feel safe in school. They are confident about approaching a member of staff if they have a problem and know that they would be listened to. They have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy diet and exercise. The school has received Healthy School and Activemark awards in recognition of its good work in promoting health and fitness. Many pupils conscientiously take on responsibilities around the school, such as older pupils being buddies to younger ones or helping with recycling. They also participate in community events, such as the Teignbridge civic ceremonies, helping promote local community cohesion well. Whilst pupils have an increasing understanding of global cultures they have relatively few opportunities to develop their awareness and understanding of the cultural diversity of modern Britain. Pupils collaborate very well in lessons, for example when discussing the implications of the Roman invasion of Britain, and have good skills in using computers and other technology. Pupils' skills in working with others, together with their good academic skills, prepare them well for secondary education and adult life. The school is especially effective at providing all pupils with clear academic guidance. It has excellent procedures for identifying and diagnosing the needs of those with complex learning difficulties and those who are gifted and talented. It works well with external professionals to ensure pupils' specific needs are fully met.

Within the good leadership and management there are two outstanding features. The headteacher and deputy headteacher combine extremely effectively to set the overall direction of the school. There are exceptionally clear and well-established procedures for involving the extensive team of leaders, including unit leaders and subject leaders, in working to raise standards and improve the experiences of pupils. There are detailed systems for checking and reporting on how well the school is doing, involving staff and governors. Information gained from the checks is used well to identify priorities for development and good planning procedures enable all staff and governors to be clear about their roles. The school has effective systems for tracking pupils' progress which are shared and used well to set challenging individual targets designed to raise standards. However, the school has not fully analysed the impact of pupils being taught in sets for mathematics, or sought to identify any possible differences in rates of progress between pupils in each of the upper, middle and lower sets. Governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They receive exceptionally detailed information about the school's performance and are actively involved in strategic decision making.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Very detailed and sensitive induction procedures contribute to the outstanding promotion of children's welfare and enable children to settle into school very quickly. Playtimes and lunchtimes are managed very carefully to ensure the children, although members of a very large school, are secure in their designated areas. Children's attainment on entry varies but is broadly as expected for their age. The school wastes no time in identifying children with learning difficulties or other specific needs. It swiftly sets up additional help, in partnership with parents, for children who need it. Whilst attainment on entry is broadly as expected, a significant proportion of children's early language and mathematical skills are a little below expectations. Children make good progress in all six areas of learning during their time in the EYFS, which for the younger ones is just two terms. By the end of the Reception Year, standards are at least average in all

areas and marginally above the national average in some aspects. Provision for outdoor play has improved substantially with the creation of a large and well-equipped secure area under the shelter of an all-weather canopy. The new EYFS leader has a good understanding of her role and EYFS practice, and is sensitively building on the established and effective practice of the teachers and assistants. The team plans well together, using careful observations of children's responses to previous experiences when setting up new activities. As a result, teaching meets children's learning needs well. The school is aware of the need to provide even more opportunities for children to learn through independent play.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' rate of progress in mathematics, especially in relation to problem solving, and particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to gain an understanding of Britain's cultural diversity beyond their immediate community.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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 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?	1

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 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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

Dear Children,

Inspection of Rydon Primary School, Kingsteignton TQ12 3LP

Thank you for the way you made us feel very welcome when we visited your school. We thoroughly enjoyed talking with some of you and visiting your classrooms. We are pleased you like your school so much. We were particularly impressed by the way all the staff take exceptionally good care of you. Rydon is a good school. Here are some more of the highlights we found during our visit.

- You work hard in lessons and make good progress in your work, especially in reading, writing and science.
- Nearly all of you behave well. You are thoughtful towards one another and many of you take on jobs to help out around the school and look after each other. This is important in such a big school with so many children.
- Your teachers are good at sharing ideas and planning interesting activities for you. We could see you really enjoyed the storyteller sessions on the day we were in school. The teachers make sure you are clear about what it is you are learning and they are very good at helping you to think about what you need to do to improve your work.
- Everyone who works at the school takes exceptionally good care of you, making sure you are safe and that if you have a problem someone is on hand to help you.
- Your headteacher is exceptionally good at involving all the other leaders in making sure the school is always improving.

We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to work together on two things to make the school even better.

- Find ways to help you all become good at solving problems in mathematics so that you make even better progress in this subject, especially those of you in Years 3 to 6.
- Help you to learn more about the things that are important to different communities around Britain.

We know you will want to help and will have your own ideas about how to make the school even better.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Kerly Lead Inspector