

# Rodings Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115266
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	311894
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30 June –1 July 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Manuel

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	209
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Bernard Lawrence
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Christopher Yates
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 October 2003
<b>School address</b>	Leaden Roding Great Dunmow Essex CM6 1PZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01279 876288
<b>Fax number</b>	01279 876001

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is slightly smaller than average. Pupils come from a wide area of villages and hamlets. The proportion of pupils who need extra help with their learning and those with particular medical needs is above average as is the number with a statement of need. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. When first admitted, children's academic skills vary considerably but are broadly in line with those expected nationally overall. The proportion of pupils joining the school at other than usual times is higher than average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Rodings Primary School is a good school. It has some outstanding features. In particular, the excellent levels of care and support provided for its pupils result in outstanding levels of their personal development and well-being. The school focuses extremely well on developing the whole child. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are very considerate and are always ready to recognise the rights of others and their own responsibilities. These features are greatly appreciated by parents. As one parent remarked, 'Every effort is made to enhance the education of the children in the widest sense.'

Children enter Reception with a wide range of skills which they build upon successfully. Pupils of all capabilities make good progress during their time in the school. When pupils leave at the end of Year 6, their standards over the past two years have been above average. They have done particularly well in reading and mathematics but results in writing and science have been closer to average. The school is aware of this and good strategies have been put in place to improve the situation. Pupils now use their writing skills more effectively across the curriculum. A focused cross-curricular approach is a strong component of the good curriculum. Pupils also benefit from an excellent range of extra-curricular activities and clubs, including many sports, swimming, chess, gardening and music. Another strength is the use of information and communication technology (ICT). This was above average at the time of the previous inspection and has been developed even further. This has enabled pupils by the end of Year 6 to reach well above expected levels.

Teaching is consistently good. Teachers take time to plan interesting and enjoyable lessons. They make excellent use of interactive whiteboards and a good range of other resources to capture pupils' interest. Teaching assistants are very competent and provide good support for pupils of all capabilities, particularly those needing extra help with literacy and numeracy skills and those with emotional and medical problems. Behaviour management is excellent and outstanding relationships are seen throughout the school. Assessment systems are used effectively to track pupils' progress. However, teachers' marking does not always make clear to pupils what is needed to improve.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and he has ensured good improvement since the previous inspection. He is well supported by all staff who form a strong and committed team. Their involvement in the school's development has improved since the previous inspection. Knowledgeable governors provide good support and hold the school to account well for its performance.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Attainment on entry to Reception varies from year to year and is sometimes below the expected levels, particularly in communication, personal, social and emotional skills. Good planning ensures that most children settle in happily when they start in Reception. The school's strong links between the local pre-school and families help them. Teaching and learning are good because the teacher and assistant provide a good range of enjoyable activities both indoors and outdoors. These ensure that children enjoy their early learning experiences. Children also learn how to work and play together well. Children make good progress in all areas of learning

so that by the time they enter Year 1, most achieve the early learning goals for their age and some exceed them.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in writing and science in all year groups to match levels in mathematics.
- Consistently give pupils clear written advice about how to improve their work and set sufficiently challenging targets to enable all pupils to reach the highest possible level.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils achieve well and make good progress during their time in the school. By the end of Year 2, test results in 2007 showed a drop in reading from above average to average, and in writing from above average to below average. This drop was due to the significant proportion of pupils needing extra help with their learning. The current Year 2 began in Year 1 at below expected levels and made good progress so that they are now at expected levels. By the end of Year 6, test results in 2007 were above average in English with some weaknesses in writing, above average in mathematics and average in science. The school rightly made improvements in writing and science as priorities. The current Year 6, with one third of the pupils needing extra support, have made good progress to reach above expected levels in mathematics and average levels in English and science. ICT skills are well above expected levels for this age.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral and social development, are exemplary. Throughout the school, pupils show real empathy with each other. They care for each other extremely well and older pupils delight in supporting younger classes with their reading and mathematics. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils share the many playground facilities amicably. The school council suggested growing vegetables for school lunches. Their garden is now a thriving facility and pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy eating. Pupils are very clear about how to keep safe, including when using the internet. Above all, pupils thoroughly enjoy school and attendance is good. They fully appreciate the wide range of enrichment activities provided by the school. Older pupils make an excellent contribution to the community, within school and when supporting charities. The pupils in Year 6, for example, costed and purchased school caps to sell, making a profit on each to go towards their chosen charity. Activities such as this enable pupils to develop good skills to prepare them for their future. Pupils' good singing and enjoyment of music and drama contributes well to their cultural development. However, pupils have expressed a desire to know more about the similarities and differences between their own and other cultures.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers' good planning of stimulating lessons and excellent behaviour management help to create outstanding relationships with pupils. Pupils are quick to point out how much they enjoy their learning. Pupils of all capabilities are supported well by teachers and teaching assistants and this helps them make good progress in their learning. Very good use is made of resources,

particularly in ICT, to inspire pupils and make links between subjects. Assessment systems are used effectively to track pupils' progress and pupils themselves are regularly involved in assessing their own progress. However, teachers' marking does not always make clear what is needed to reach the highest possible levels.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good and opportunities for enrichment, through the many extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors to school, are outstanding. Clubs range from glass painting to chess and from cricket to cookery. There are good links with other schools, including sport and cross-country activities and 'Fantastic Maths' events for high achieving pupils. All the subjects of the national curriculum are planned for effectively and the school continues to develop links between subjects to make learning more relevant. ICT is very well promoted across the curriculum. Teachers adapt their planning to cater for the range of needs in their class, especially for English and mathematics. Over the last year the school has taken action to develop both the writing and science curriculum in order to raise standards to the high levels seen in other subjects. The accommodation, both inside and outside, is excellent. The school has a good-sized swimming pool, an enclosed all-weather multi-sports pitch and large grounds that are well equipped with climbing apparatus and games, as well as the garden. French is also taught to pupils in Years 3 to 6.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school takes excellent care of the pupils. All requirements for safeguarding their welfare are met in full. The excellent personal, social and health education provision contributes strongly to pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. Pupils with specific learning, medical or social and emotional challenges are supported extremely well. Well-qualified and effective learning support assistants provide very good support in the classrooms. The school's good tracking systems are used effectively to identify any pupils who are underachieving and to provide flexible and focused support for them. As a result, pupils make good progress. Pupils are involved in setting their own targets and evaluating their own and each other's work. This enables pupils to take a great deal of responsibility for their day-to-day learning. Oral advice is often exemplary in lessons although the quality of written advice for academic guidance is variable.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher provides very good leadership and is well supported by a strongly committed team of staff. Together they have a clear vision for on-going school improvement. They are working hard at the current priorities and are fully aware of what action needs to be taken. The senior leadership team has been expanded since the previous inspection and all staff are now fully involved in the school's development plans and work as a highly cohesive team. Governance is good. Governors are very knowledgeable, active and supportive. The vast majority of parents are strongly supportive of the school. As one parent remarked, 'We would recommend Rodings to anyone.' Excellent use is made of the improved accommodation and the good

resources to enhance the positive learning environment. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good and the school has good capacity to improve still further.

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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?	1
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 <sup>1</sup> 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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

2 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rodings Primary School, Dunmow, CM6 1PZ.

Thank you very much for being so friendly and helpful when Mrs Dawson and I inspected your school. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing your work. We agree with you that your lessons are very enjoyable and that teachers help you a lot. We were very impressed by your excellent behaviour and how polite you were. You know just how to lead healthy lifestyles and particularly enjoy sport and swimming. Your attendance is good.

All the adults in your school care for you extremely well and provide wonderful help and support. Your teachers plan very interesting lessons and you learn lots of new things in all subjects and especially how to use computers. You are achieving well and are making good progress in learning extra skills for later life, such as making sensible decisions for yourselves and also being keen to help others. Through your school council you are doing really well with your garden and raising money for charities, which is highly commendable.

This is a good school. Your teachers and governors are trying hard to give you the best possible education. We have asked them to do a few things to improve your school still further. We would like you to keep trying hard and get even better at writing and science so that standards in these subjects become higher and match the good standards you achieve in mathematics and ICT. We have also asked your teachers to make sure that they give you clear written advice about how to improve and set challenging targets to help you reach the highest possible levels in these subjects.

We believe that you enjoy really exciting times in your school and that there are more to come. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

David Manuel

Lead inspector