

Rushey Mead Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120009
Local Authority	Leicester City
Inspection number	313478
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Rajinder Harrison

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	450
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marilyn Hall
Headteacher	Aileen Jamieson
Date of previous school inspection	2 February 2004
School address	Gipsy Lane Leicester LE4 6RB
Telephone number	01162 661114
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school. Most pupils are from a diverse range of minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest being Indian. Nearly half of the pupils are new to speaking English. Around five per cent of pupils are of White British origin. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average but few have a statement of special educational need. Nearly a quarter of the pupils leave or join the school at times other than the start or end of the year and this is higher than average. Many of the pupils who join the school during the year have little or no English and sometimes no previous schooling.

The school has faced a very high number of staffing changes in the last four years, particularly at the senior management levels, and staff recruitment is an issue.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school, with some good aspects. There is a strong sense of community and harmony amongst the school's culturally diverse population. This welcoming atmosphere helps pupils feel happy, safe and well cared for. They trust the adults who work with them and form good relationships. Most attend regularly and say they enjoy school. They behave well, work hard and show respect for others. They understand well the need to stay fit and healthy and how to stay safe. Most parents are positive about the school and all that it does do help pupils and their families.

Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory, in response to satisfactory teaching. Children start in the Nursery with knowledge and skills that are well below the levels expected at this age. Many have little or no English. Through good teaching, they achieve well. At the end of the Foundation Stage, overall standards are generally below average but weaker in literacy. Standards remain at these levels at the end of Year 2. Pupils' progress in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory. Progress is good in a few classes, mainly in Key Stage 2, but in other classes, expectations are not high enough and teachers do not match work to pupils' needs accurately to challenge all pupils sufficiently, particularly the more able. Hence, progress is not as rapid as it could be. Overall standards in Year 6 are below average and well below average in English. Excellent bilingual teaching throughout the school helps pupils understand new learning effectively but in many lessons, pupils have insufficient opportunities to practise their English. Pupils who find learning difficult receive good individual guidance to help them achieve well. In lessons where specialist support is available, pupils new to learning English achieve well. Where this expertise is not available, teachers' planning does not always ensure this level of good progress. The curriculum, while satisfactory, is not inspiring and offers pupils too few opportunities to work independently. Many out-of-class activities enhance pupils' learning well. Pastoral care is good. While the school now has good systems to check pupils' progress, teachers' assessments are not always wholly accurate and they make inadequate use of this information to help pupils understand how to achieve more.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, staff and governors have maintained the school's good standing in the community. Improvement since the last inspection, while satisfactory, has not been better because continued staff changes have hampered the rigorous checking of the school's performance. In particular, the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in each class has not been checked closely enough to ensure every pupil is challenged fully. Appropriate steps have been taken this year to arrest the decline in standards seen in 2007 and standards are rising. School leaders have satisfactory capacity to make further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good teaching helps children achieve well in all the areas of learning. Because many children enter the Nursery with little or no English, developing their language skills is given a high priority. An effective focus on 'Letters and Sounds' is helping children acquire reading and writing skills more quickly so that they are better prepared for Year 1. Well-structured and interesting activities encourage children to explore and have fun. For example, they showed immense delight in trying to manage the shaving foam to make patterns and shapes. Children learn to become independent as they choose from a wide range of activities inside and out,

particularly in the Nursery, where access to the outdoor area is easier. However, inadequate resources in this area limit children's independent play. Leadership and management are good. Staff check that children explore everything that is planned and they intervene effectively, using languages other than English where possible to guide the children. The work is planned well to match each child's needs so that children become confident and happy young learners.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching so that teachers match work to pupils' needs more accurately and have higher expectations of all pupils, particularly the more able.
- Ensure assessment information is accurate and that pupils have the guidance they need to improve their work.
- Improve monitoring and evaluation procedures so that every teacher is held to account regarding progress and that all pupils are challenged fully.

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

Children make good gains in the Foundation Stage. This level of progress is not maintained in Years 1 to 6. Teachers know how much progress is expected of pupils in each year group but a number fail to plan work to help them make these gains. Consequently, pupils achieve well in a few classes but progress elsewhere is too slow, particularly for the more able. By the end of Year 6, overall standards are below average in mathematics and science and well below average in English, where writing is particularly weak. Standards are higher in mathematics and science because pupils benefit from bilingual teaching, particularly when learning new concepts and vocabulary. Through good individual support, pupils new to learning English and those who find learning difficult achieve well in all aspects of their education. Pupils who join part way through their primary years, often with considerable gaps in their education, generally make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good. Pupils explore other cultures and beliefs and questions of right and wrong, and so grow as thoughtful and considerate young people. They are polite and friendly and willing to help others. They know how to stay safe and whom to go to if they feel worried or upset. They say that the rare incidents of bullying that arise are generally dealt with effectively. A few parents and pupils feel that behaviour in the school is unsatisfactory. Inspectors found behaviour to be good and agree with the parent who wrote 'Rushey Mead teaches children tolerance, patience and understanding.' Pupils enjoy numerous sports activities and make healthy choices at lunchtimes. Their contribution to the school and the wider community is satisfactory but underdeveloped. School council members make decisions, for example regarding playground activities, and organise charity events. Assemblies that encompass all the faiths and traditions represented in the school give pupils a very good understanding of the community in which they live. Many visits and visitors extend their awareness of the world of work and leisure. Pupils enjoy learning and persevere even when tasks are unclear or dull. Their attendance is now satisfactory because the school has

successfully encouraged parents to take fewer extended holidays in term time. The progress pupils make in their basic skills prepares them satisfactorily for their secondary education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

While some lessons are good, most are only satisfactory because teachers' expectations are not high enough. The work in pupils' books shows that pupils of all abilities often do the same work and so the more able are sometimes not challenged enough. The best lessons are well organised, hold pupils' interest and generate a real enthusiasm for learning. In these lessons, planning takes good account of pupils' needs. Presentations are stimulating, with lively discussions that encourage pupils to share ideas. The effective involvement of teaching assistants ensures pupils who need additional help participate fully. However, teaching is not good enough all of the time to help all pupils make good progress. Where teachers make insufficient reference to pupils' prior achievement, lessons lack pace and challenge. Low-level tasks, often not explained clearly enough to help pupils understand the purpose of the lesson, result in pupils making slow progress. Despite these weaknesses in individual lessons, relationships between pupils and staff are good and pupils always try their best.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The basic curriculum is structured well enough to help teachers plan what pupils need to do from year to year but it lacks excitement and challenge. Pupils have too few opportunities to work independently. Several suitable commercial schemes and intensive support programmes provide an adequate framework to develop pupils' skills and knowledge. However, the school fails to check that all teachers follow the guidance effectively to challenge all pupils fully. Developing pupils' speaking and word building skills have been priorities this year and standards in these areas are rising. Following the last inspection report, standards in writing still remain an issue. Provision to enhance pupils' investigation skills, especially through highly effective bilingual teaching, has helped to raise standards in mathematics and science. A good programme for personal, social and health education supports pupils' personal development. Visits, visitors and many out-of-school activities, for example the animation and dance clubs, add to pupils' enjoyment and give them good opportunities to develop their skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care arrangements are good. Child protection, health and safety and safeguarding procedures are all secure. Pupils say that staff will help them if they report any concerns, and problems are dealt with effectively. Pupils who have specific needs are supported sensitively and external agencies consulted where necessary. Children are supported well when they first start school and, despite their below average basic skills, pupils in Year 6 feel ready for secondary school

Academic guidance is inadequate. Achievement is tracked with increasing care and some teachers have a reasonable understanding of the progress pupils are making. However, assessments are not always accurate and teachers do not give pupils enough guidance as to how well they are doing or how they might improve their work. For example, pupils often have literacy targets

but do not always understand them. Marking guides pupils well in some classes but not in all. Parents appreciate the school's good care arrangements but a few feel they would like more information about how well their child is progressing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and her staff ensure that the school runs in an orderly manner and that pupils feel happy and secure. However, school improvement has been hampered by considerable staffing changes, particularly at management level. As a result, the headteacher has been unable to establish consistent and effective procedures to monitor and evaluate the school's performance and to take the action necessary to raise standards more quickly. For example, teachers generate a great deal of assessment data, but senior managers have not checked its accuracy carefully enough. Subject leaders review their subjects regularly but have not been rigorous in checking that all teachers challenge pupils fully through their planning. Senior managers have, this year, been more diligent in monitoring teaching and pupils' progress. Appropriate action is being taken to address the weaknesses in teaching. Overall standards are higher than those in the 2007 national tests, and improving. Sound financial management ensures that priorities such as staff training are adequately resourced. Governors see the school as an important part of the community and promote good links with other schools and organisations. While governors are very supportive, they have not done enough to monitor the school's performance and hold staff to account.

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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	No
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	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	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	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	4
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

18 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rushey Mead Primary School, Leicester LE4 6RB

I am writing to tell you what we found when we came to your school recently. Thank you for making us welcome and for being so friendly and polite. We enjoyed talking to you about school, the good friends you make and the interesting activities you do. You told us that you feel safe at school and that staff help you if you have problems. You told us that you are happy in school. It was especially interesting talking to so many of you who think that school is important because, as you said, 'We have to learn so we can get good jobs in the future.' You always try to do your best but we know you could do harder work. The school is certainly a friendly place and you work and play together sensibly. We could see that from watching you enjoy yourselves in the playground. You know how to look after yourselves and understand the need for regular exercise. I enjoyed having lunch with you and was pleased to see that so many of you eat healthy food. You look after each other and do kind things like raise money for charities. While most of you said behaviour was good, a few did feel a few children did not behave well. We think most of you behave well.

While we think that there are some good things about the school, we feel some things could be better. We think that you could achieve higher standards, so we have asked teachers to help you to make faster progress. To help with this, we want teachers to make all your lessons really interesting. We have also asked the school's leaders to check very carefully how well you are doing, so that they plan the right work for you. We have asked the headteacher to make sure all your teachers give you the help you need to improve your work and achieve the best that you can.

Once these improvements have been made, you will be able to do much better.

There are things you could do to help too; for example, you could ask for harder work if it is too easy and ask teachers to give you targets that will help you achieve more. I hope that you will all do well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Rajinder Harrison Lead Inspector