

Richmond Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120076
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	313504
Inspection dates	10–11 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Ted Wheatley

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	397
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Cramp
Headteacher	Carolyn Munton
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	Stoke Road Hinckley LE10 3EA
Telephone number	01455 637266
Fax number	01455 639929

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds, and the very small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are not in the early stages of learning English. Pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and the proportion entitled to free school meals is below average. On entry, children's skills and experiences are very poor, particularly in relation to their language and mathematical development. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average.

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 and improving school. While standards are below average, pupils' achievement is satisfactory given their starting points. Achievement is rising, following several years of being unsatisfactory. Parents are mainly pleased with the school, and a typical comment from them is: 'We are impressed with the school and the learning environment it provides'. Several pupils join the school during the school year and their parents report how happy they are with the school and how quickly their children have settled in.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and the headteacher gives clear direction for how the school should improve. Governors are very supportive and challenging. Changes in staffing, especially in management responsibilities, have slowed the pace of improvement. The school's weaknesses are readily understood and the school has rightly prioritised the improvement in standards of literacy, particularly writing. The impact of this is starting to be seen but there is still some way to go, especially in developing pupils' skills in extended writing. While achievement has improved, pockets of underachievement remain, notably the underachievement of some more able pupils.

Teaching is satisfactory, and while there are some weaknesses, it is mainly meeting the needs of pupils. There is a lack of challenge for the most able pupils on occasions. Teachers are clear about what pupils are expected to learn. Activities are well chosen to interest pupils except where work is sometimes undemanding. Feedback in class and marking do not always give pupils a clear direction of how to improve their work to meet their targets. The curriculum is satisfactory and is enriched with a good range of visits and visitors to help motivate pupils. Good links between subjects help make what pupils learn relevant to their lives. There is a wide range of out-of-school sports activities that pupils really enjoy, and a smaller number of music, drama and art activities.

Pupils enjoy school and their personal development is satisfactory. Attendance is good. Behaviour overall is satisfactory but while the majority of pupils behave well, a small minority do not. The great majority take part in the wide range of physical activities offered and they have good understanding of healthy diet and lifestyles. Pupils make a good contribution to the community. They are very supportive of the school, but show a good understanding of where things could be better, and are prepared to voice their opinions. This is a good reflection of how well the school encourages pupils to be independent and express their own ideas.

The school is safe and secure and provides satisfactory care, guidance and support for pupils. Teachers provide a good level of personal care and support. Academic guidance is satisfactory although pupils' targets for improvement are not always challenging enough. Despite the concerns of a few parents, communication between school and home is good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and children make good progress. Despite this, children's literacy and mathematical skills are below expectations when they enter Year 1. Their personal, social and emotional skills are broadly in line with expectations. Teaching is good and adults provide many opportunities for children to learn new vocabulary, to speak and to practise letter formation in their early attempts to write. This is leading to rapid improvement in reading and writing.

The approach to developing number and mathematical skills is a little less well developed than for literacy. Nevertheless, there are many opportunities for children to learn to count, and to recognise and practise numbers. Children are encouraged to work and play together, follow instructions and learn about good behaviour. This contributes effectively to the development of their personal, social and emotional skills. The curriculum is well designed to meet the needs of all children.

Teachers are knowledgeable and very patient, and well supported by other adults. The quality of care and support for children is good. Links with homes are satisfactory although the school is rightly keen to involve parents and carers more effectively in their children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- raise standards in writing by providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length
- ensure that work for all pupils, especially the most able, is challenging
- make sure that pupils know how well they are doing, are set challenging targets and understand what they need to do to improve further.

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

Standards are below average in Years 2 and 6 but are rising and achievement is satisfactory. Standards in English, especially pupils' writing, are lower than in mathematics and science. The school is tackling this successfully and standards are improving, though they remain below average. Pupils' extended writing skills, in particular, are underdeveloped. Underachievement in mathematics is being effectively tackled by working to improve pupils' basic calculation skills.

Improved accuracy in tracking pupils' progress means that teachers recognise potential underachievement quickly and provide effective support for individual pupils. The school has rightly identified that some more able pupils do not make enough progress. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress overall because support for them is effectively targeted. The small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils have positive attitudes and the great majority enjoy school. Their attendance is above average and the great majority behave well. However, a small minority do not, particularly when teaching is insufficiently demanding. Pupils are friendly, polite and helpful. In lessons, they work cooperatively in groups and with their 'talking partners'. Pupils express their opinions confidently and have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They show mature and thoughtful attitudes and a concern for safety and the local environment. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities. For example, they become school councillors and playground games leaders, and they help younger pupils and raise funds for charities they chose. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory; they have a sound, but not extensive, grasp of cultures other than their own. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles. Given broadly sound achievement and below average standards, pupils' preparation for later life is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Sound teaching and learning contribute to pupils' steady progress and to their enjoyment of school. Relationships are good and adults use praise well to motivate pupils. Pupils understand what they are aiming to learn, because the purpose of lessons is made clear at the beginning. Occasionally, more able pupils are not challenged enough and, as a result, they do not make as much progress as they should. Time is occasionally wasted because low-level chatter is not checked quickly enough or because pupils make too much fuss when changing activities. Increasingly, teachers encourage pupils' active participation in learning. For example, teachers get pupils to discuss work thoroughly with partners or through drama activities. These approaches are beginning to motivate pupils. However, there are still occasions when pupils listen passively for too long and interest flags. Feedback in class and marking are supportive, but do not provide sufficiently clear guidance to pupils on how well they have done or what they need to do to achieve their targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils adequately. However, occasionally, work is not planned to meet the needs of more able pupils or to provide enough opportunities for extended writing. Support for pupils with learning difficulties is planned carefully to meet individual needs. The special needs of a very small number of pupils have been identified only recently, but are now being pursued vigorously. The nurture group, which was set up to support vulnerable pupils, makes a good contribution to the social and emotional development of these pupils. The curriculum is increasingly flexible, with interventions from school and external staff to help pupils who arrive during the school year, or who are absent, to catch up when necessary.

The very wide range of well-attended out-of-school sporting activities promotes pupils' health and fitness. However, extra-curricular activities in other areas are more limited.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides a supportive and caring ethos in which pupils say they generally feel safe. The school deals with bullying effectively and pupils know what to do if bullying happens. The focus on social and emotional aspects of pupils' development is helping develop pupils' social skills and improve their behaviour. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils have learning targets in English and mathematics and know how well they are doing. However, these are not always sufficiently challenging, particularly for the most able pupils. The school has good transition procedures to help younger pupils settle quickly into school and ensure that older pupils feel confident to move on to secondary school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides clear direction for improvement, and her evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate. Based on this, the school has produced a comprehensive development plan to raise standards. The impact of improvements has been a little slow because of changes in senior leadership and in the leadership of some subjects, but is now starting to make a difference, especially in raising standards of literacy. Leadership and management skills vary considerably, mainly due to lack of experience, but are improving as a result of support and training. The school has addressed the issues from the previous inspection and has sound capacity to improve further.

Governors meet their statutory obligations. They are well informed about the school and provide a good level of support and challenge for the headteacher in her drive to raise standards. They have been closely involved in staff appointments and setting the school's targets for end of Year 6 national tests. They have been insistent that these targets are challenging.

Communication and relationships with parents and carers are good. Staff make themselves readily available, although a small number of parents feel that they cannot always see teachers when they would like. Links with external agencies are good and used effectively to support pupils with particular learning and social difficulties.

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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?	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	2
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	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	3
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	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	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**

12 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Richmond Primary School, Hinckley, LE10 3EA

You made our visit to your school very enjoyable. You were friendly and polite and very helpful when we needed it. We spoke to quite a few of you and you gave us a very good view of what you think about your school. That helped us to gain a clear view of your school, too. Thank you.

These are the main things we found out about your school:

- your school is satisfactory and improving
- your progress is satisfactory and it is getting better; even so, standards are below average
- the headteacher and other staff are working successfully to make sure you all do as well as you can
- teaching is satisfactory and work is organised to make sure it meets most of your needs and interests you
- most of you behave well and enjoy school; your attendance is good
- you have a good understanding about healthy living and many of you take part in physical activities
- you enjoy the extra activities and trips that the school organises
- those of you in Reception class do really well because teaching is good and all of the adults there take good care of you.

To improve things further, we have asked the school to:

- help you improve your writing by giving you more opportunities to write long pieces of work
- make sure that the most able among you always do as well as you can by giving you difficult enough work to do
- make sure you always know how well you are doing, what you need to do next, and that you understand how to do better.

With best wishes

T Wheatley Lead inspector

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With best wishes

T Wheatley
Lead inspector