

Rothwell Victoria Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121856
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	314121
Inspection dates	8–9 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	297
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Jackson
Headteacher	Christine Chittock
Date of previous school inspection	21 February 2005
School address	School Lane Rothwell Kettering NN14 6HZ
Telephone number	01536 710363
Fax number	01536 418945

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large infant school. Children's attainment on entering the Nursery varies from year to year but overall is broadly in line with children of a similar age nationally. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below that found nationally. Most pupils are of White British heritage.

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 that provides its pupils with a friendly and safe environment in which to learn and play and where they make satisfactory progress. Most parents are supportive of the school and the experiences it provides for their children. One parental comment is typical of many, 'The staff are always approachable and work hard to ensure all the children come out happy and socially integrated.'

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory as they make satisfactory progress throughout the school. By the end of Year 2, most of them attain standards that are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Children make a good start in the Nursery and quickly develop their skills in making choices for themselves. This emphasis on promoting children's independent skills is maintained in Reception, although there are times when staff do not give them enough guidance to help them complete their tasks successfully. In Years 1 and 2, teachers give pupils interesting activities and they respond positively to them. Pupils' attainment in writing is not as strong as in reading. One reason for this is the inconsistency in the quality of teaching between classes, which results in some pupils making better progress than others. This stems from some teachers not using information about pupils' progress in writing to plan work that effectively challenges them to improve their performance. In some classes, the overuse of worksheets in writing activities hinders pupils developing skills in organising and presenting their writing for themselves. Leadership and management have introduced a variety of strategies to bring about improvement. However, the monitoring and evaluation of their impact are not rigorous enough. Consequently, the school is unsure if these strategies are being successful or not.

Pupils behave well and enjoy coming to school. They are friendly, considerate to others and willing to take on responsibility, such as being a member of the school council. Pupils particularly enjoy the wide range of enrichment activities, including out-of-school clubs, which extend the curriculum. Parents are pleased with the extra experiences these activities provide, such as the opportunity for their children to learn French. However, the curriculum does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop effectively their skills in information and communication technology. As a result, pupils do not achieve the standards expected for their age in this subject by the end of Year 2.

All staff are firmly committed to the health and well-being of their pupils. They treat pupils as individuals and listen carefully to any concerns or worries they might have. The school has forged close links with outside agencies to provide extra support for individual pupils when needed. All staff with leadership and management responsibilities carry them out diligently. The work of the headteacher in the aftermath of the fire that severely damaged the nursery building in September 2005 exemplifies this. The disturbance caused over the following months by relocating children in the main school and the rebuilding work was managed well to minimise any disruption to pupils' learning. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection and leaders and managers have sound capacity to make further improvements.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. It enables children to make satisfactory progress so that most of them are working at the expected levels in all areas of learning by the

time they enter Year 1. The procedures for inducting children into the Nursery are good and enable them to settle quickly into everyday school routines. Staff encourage children to make choices for themselves and so begin their development as independent learners. In Reception, this is built on in a system in which children choose the activities in which they are to be involved. Some parents rightly express concern that in this system their children are not always given enough direction to develop their skills. The school acknowledges this is an area that requires improvement. Parents are kept fully informed about the progress that their children make. The outdoor area is used effectively to develop children's skills, especially in their social and physical development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of the information about pupils' progress to plan work that always challenges them, particularly in writing.
- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning so they are at least good throughout the school.
- Evaluate more rigorously the strategies put into place to bring about improvement and take action accordingly.
- Extend the opportunities for pupils to improve their skills in information and communication technology.

A small proportion of schools whose 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' achievement is satisfactory and by the end of Year 2 they attain average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress throughout the school is satisfactory overall but inconsistent between classes. Pupils do not achieve as well in writing as they do in reading. This is particularly the case for pupils who are more able. Boys do not achieve as well as girls. The school has taken action to improve the performance of boys, such as introducing books written specifically to capture their interest and making activities more practical. The impact of this action has not been rigorously monitored and evaluated. Consequently, the school does not know if it has been successful or not. By the end of Year 2, standards in information and communication technology are below those expected for pupils of this age. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because of the extra help they are given.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have a good awareness of the need to live a healthy lifestyle. They know which foods are healthy, which are not, and that regular physical exercise is good for them. Pupils show a good awareness of how to keep safe, such as by not talking to strangers and by their knowledge of road safety. They make a good contribution to the traditions and customs of the local community. For example, pupils take part in the annual Easter Bonnet Parade through the town. Pupils enthusiastically support local charities and participate in individual and group speaking in the Kettering Eisteddfod. Although most pupils enjoy coming to school, a small minority do not come to school regularly enough. Because of this, the attendance rate remains

average, despite the best efforts of the school. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Relationships are good and pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. Because of this, classrooms are calm and friendly places in which to work. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and so are able to ask relevant questions to move pupils' learning forward. They manage lessons well to ensure pupils behave well and maintain their concentration. However, the quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent between classes and means that some pupils make better progress than others. The main reason for this is that in some classes the work given to pupils, especially the more able, is not challenging enough, particularly in writing. Teachers do not always use marking effectively to show pupils how they might improve their work. Teaching assistants provide good support for all pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

A wide range of enrichment activities adds further interest to pupils' learning experiences and extends the curriculum effectively. Pupils are given good opportunities to go on visits to parks, historical buildings and local amenities. The range of visitors that come to the school develops pupils' skills across a variety of subjects well. This was seen when pupils in Year 2 were working with an artist in residence to produce ceramic tiles to be displayed at the entrance to the school. The daily 'Activate' programme of physical exercises for 15 minutes provides pupils with lively physical activities that are designed to motivate and prepare them for their morning and afternoon sessions. The school provides a variety of out of school sports clubs to promote pupils' awareness of the need to take regular exercise. The take up of these clubs by pupils is high. However, the curriculum does not provide pupils with enough opportunities to develop their skills in information and communication technology adequately. The good arrangements for personal, social and health education effectively support pupils' personal development and well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The pastoral care and support of pupils is strong, with the well-being and safety of each pupil a high priority. Child protection arrangements are thorough, with adults fully aware of the procedures to follow if they have any concerns about individual pupils. Risk assessments are in place for activities in and around school and for off-site visits. Pupils appreciate this and one comment typifies their thoughts, 'we feel safe and secure in our school'. Parents are very pleased about the way their children are looked after while in school. There are sound systems for checking the progress that individual pupils make. However, the information collected is not always used effectively to set targets for pupils to improve their performance. This is especially the case in writing and for the more able pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school's self-evaluation has accurately identified the areas for improvement, including raising standards in writing and improving the performance of boys. The school has introduced a variety of initiatives to develop these areas. The monitoring and evaluation of these initiatives lacks sufficient rigour and so the school is not in a position to say if they are successful or not. The school places strong emphasis on the professional development of staff, which is planned carefully to link individual needs to whole-school priorities. The role of subject leaders has improved since the previous inspection so they now have a better view of provision in their subjects. The school acknowledges the need to develop further their monitoring role so they are more proactive in bringing about improvement in their subjects. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive of the school and keen to improve their skills in asking questions of the senior leadership team about the school's performance.

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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	3
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?	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	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	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

12 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rothwell Victoria Infant School, Rothwell, NN14 6HZ

Thank you for the friendly way in which you welcomed us when we visited your school. We really enjoyed our visit. We think your school gives you a satisfactory education. Most of you make satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics and learning about different things. These are some of the things we found out about your school.

- The 'Activate' sessions are great fun and give you a good start to the school day.
- You are keen to take regular exercise and we think you are lucky to be able to attend all the clubs your school provides.
- You know what food to eat to keep you healthy.
- You go on lots of visits and this helps to make the curriculum interesting.
- All adults look after you well and help you feel safe.
- All of you behave well and like to help each other.
- Your parents think your school is a happy and friendly place in which to work and play.
- The headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to make your school better.

We have asked your headteacher and teachers to do four things to help you do even better.

- Make better use of the information about your progress to plan work that always makes you think hard.
- Make sure that all the teaching and learning are at least good.
- Check more carefully if things put into place to improve the school are successful.
- Give you more opportunities to improve your skills in information and communication technology.

From our time in school, we know you enjoy learning and will try hard to help your teachers make your progress even better.

Best wishes

Melvyn Hemmings Lead inspector

Annex B



12 November 2007

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Melvyn Hemmings
Lead inspector