

Ravenscote Community Junior School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 125061 |
| Local Authority | Surrey |
| Inspection number | 315135 |
| Inspection date | 31 January 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | George Rayner |

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

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| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 7-11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 589 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Dr M Rice |
| Headteacher | Mr G J Gregg |
| Date of previous school inspection | 7 June 2004 |
| School address | Old Bisley Road Frimley Camberley GU16 9RE |
| Telephone number | 01276 709007 |
| Fax number | 01276 709333 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following areas of its work: achievement and standards; teaching and learning; care, guidance and support; and leadership and management, including the capacity to improve. Other aspects were not inspected in detail, but the inspector 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

This school is much larger than average. Most pupils come from advantaged homes. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties has been rising in recent years and is now average. Their needs are mainly related to moderate difficulty in developing literacy skills. The great majority of pupils have White British heritage and none are at an early stage of learning to speak English.

Key for inspection grades

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| 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 is effective in its aim of developing the personal qualities of its pupils, as well as their academic progress. As a result, pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, are good. Pupils say emphatically that they enjoy school. They demonstrate this by their good attendance and enthusiastic involvement in all that the school offers. The great majority behave well, although they report that a few do not always do so, or treat each other with full consideration. Pupils feel safe though, and are confident that the adults will help them if they have a serious worry. Pupils live active lives. They say that one of the best things about their school is the wealth of opportunities for taking part in physical activity, both in lessons and in well-attended clubs. Pupils contribute willingly to school life. They are proud that the school listens to their ideas, introduced through the school council, so that these have often led to improvements. These include plans for a wildlife garden and improved queuing arrangements for school lunches. Pupils report that the Year 6 peer mediators are very diligent in helping them with any problems that they have. The mediators gain valuable skills in carrying out their roles, such as the ability to prioritise their tasks at busy times.

Good teaching and learning, supported by a good curriculum, result in good achievement for pupils. Pupils enter the school with above average standards in English, mathematics and science. In most years, following good progress, pupils' standards are well above average in all three subjects. Currently however, while above average, standards are lower in English than the other two subjects. This is because, while pupils are making good progress in reading, speaking and listening, they are making satisfactory progress in writing. While pupils become very competent in skills such as spelling and punctuation, many are more limited in their ability to develop their ideas in extended writing. This affected the English results in the 2007 national tests, which were lower than in most years. Evidence from the school's assessment records, work samples and lesson observations, indicates that, while writing remains the relatively weaker area, the school's efforts to raise standards are beginning to have an impact.

One pupil said, 'One of the best things about our school is that teachers make lessons fun.' Lesson observations confirm this. Teachers plan a good variety of interesting activities and present these enthusiastically. This helps to generate good relationships, which encourage pupils to be willing learners. Effective use of time means that activities move on with good pace, which helps pupils to maintain their concentration and effort. Teachers have responded well to the key issue from the last inspection, so that they now use assessment effectively to plan the right level of challenge for all pupils. This means for example, that the most able pupils are usually well challenged. Good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that those pupils who find it more difficult than most to develop their reading and writing skills are able to keep up with the pace of work. Consequently, the progress of these pupils matches that of their classmates. Teachers give their pupils plenty of encouragement which boosts their confidence and effort. They give them effective guidance on how to improve their work, both in class through questioning and prompting and through marking. Teachers are aware that they have not provided enough opportunities for pupils to practise extended writing. The impact of recent improvements is beginning to be felt, for example in writing in which pupils present arguments for and against changing the school's timetable.

The curriculum provides well for all of the required areas with some good enhancements. These include a choice of French or German for pupils in Years 4 to 6, supported by an effective link

with a nearby specialist language college. Plans are well in hand to improve this provision further by extending it to Year 3 in September.

Pastoral care is good. Systems for ensuring pupils' safety and welfare are well organised. Staff are well trained in carrying these out and they do so diligently. Many staff are well trained in first aid. The school has effective links with outside agencies to ensure additional help for any pupils who need this. The school teaches pupils about the main dangers that they face, so that they develop a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe. Care is satisfactory overall, because while itself satisfactory, academic guidance and support is less strong than pastoral care. The school is improving its assessment systems so that these are becoming increasingly useful for identifying pupils whose progress is falling behind that expected and providing effective help to prevent them from underachieving. These are currently strongest in English and mathematics. In these subjects booster classes are accelerating the progress of pupils invited to attend. Staff are not yet using the systems consistently well in all classes and subjects, however.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher's clear vision is shared well by staff working at all levels. Responsibilities have recently been redistributed. This is resulting in good involvement of staff, but many are still developing their skills in carrying out their new responsibilities. Subject leaders for example, are not yet sufficiently involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in their areas. Governors support the school well. They are knowledgeable about its strengths and areas for development and are willing to challenge it when necessary. The school's good self-evaluation has given it a clear awareness of its quality and performance. Since the last inspection it has used this well to maintain strengths and improve where this has been needed. Mathematics standards have improved yet further. Strengths identified then in information and communication technology (ICT) have been further enhanced. The only key issue has been addressed well and art, the only subject that was satisfactory then, is now a strength. This track record shows a good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in English by helping pupils to improve their extended writing.
- Ensure that the use of assessment information to identify and help pupils not making the expected progress is consistently good in all classes and subjects.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| 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 disabilities make progress | 2 |

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| 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 | 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

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|--|---|
| 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? | 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

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| 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 | 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

12 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ravenscote Community Junior School, Camberley, GU16 9RE

Thank you for welcoming me to your school recently. I enjoyed meeting you. I am grateful for the help you gave, by talking to me and showing me your work. I was able to see that yours is a good school.

You make good progress in almost all of your work. Your progress in mathematics is particularly good. By the time you are in Year 6, the standard of your work is much better than in most schools. You also become very good readers and are able to speak well. Some parts of your writing, such as spelling, are also good. You are not quite so good though, at explaining your ideas in writing. I have asked your teachers to give you more opportunities to do this as soon as possible.

Some of you told me that your teachers make lessons fun. I could see that this is true. They give you lots of help which you use well to improve your work. You also told me that you really enjoy all the different things that you learn, such as French and German, PE and ICT. You said that you have a very good choice of clubs and I agree.

You help your teachers a lot by coming to school regularly, joining in well and working hard. Most of you behave well. The adults look after you well and you told me that the peer mediators help them a lot in this.

The only other thing that I have asked the teachers to do is to make sure that they always quickly spot any of you who are not making as much progress as you should be, so that they can give you help to catch up. They need to do more of the good things that already happen, such as the booster classes.

Well done to you all and very best wishes for your futures.

Yours faithfully,

George Rayner

Lead Inspector