

# Rusper Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 125850          |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | West Sussex     |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 315327          |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 30 January 2008 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | David Collard   |

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>                    | Community                     |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 4-11                          |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed                         |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |                               |
| School                                    | 100                           |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body            |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Duncan Hayler                 |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Deborah Packham               |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 1 December 2003               |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Rusper<br>Horsham<br>RH12 4PR |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01293 871272                  |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01293 871135                  |

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: determining whether the achievement of pupils is good throughout the school and across subjects; establishing whether the personal development of pupils is as strong as the provision suggests in the school's self-evaluation; and establishing whether the right actions are being taken at all levels of leadership to ensure the continuing success of the school. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, interviews with the headteacher, senior leadership team and chair of governors, and discussions with pupils and staff. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but no evidence was found to suggest that the school's own self-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 is a smaller-than-average village school. Attendance is above the national average. A low proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Attainment on entry varies but is usually at least as expected for the children's ages.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is a very highly effective school with a significant number of outstanding aspects. The excellent leadership qualities of the headteacher have been central to developing the strong and very realistic self-evaluation. This has led to very focused priorities for improvement and a maintaining of the good provision from the last inspection. Consequently, all pupils achieve well, with an ever-increasing proportion making excellent progress. One comment from a parent sums up the overwhelming opinion of the rest: 'We are very fortunate as parents to have such an excellent school for our children.'

The pupils are a delight to be with and a credit to the school. They work extremely hard and thoroughly enjoy all the very many activities they are involved in both within the school and through other community events. They respond very well to the innovative curriculum and the good proportion of exciting lessons and to the varied methods that the teachers use to stimulate their interest. For example, in discussion, older pupils explained about their recent work on 'The Victorians'. They knew a wealth of facts about this era and, after having the opportunity to try climbing through a cardboard chimney, had written extensively about the difficult life of a child chimney sweep. In another class, role-play was used extremely well to help pupils develop their reporting skills of direct and indirect speech. These types of real experiences have particularly helped develop pupils' descriptive and creative writing and research skills.

Behaviour in and around the school is exemplary, described by one parent as 'second to none'. Pupils are trusted to make their own decisions and to share experiences in different classes such as in the very good links being made between the Reception, Year 1 and 2 classes. All pupils have an excellent understanding about how to stay safe, fit and healthy. The high profile school council have recently been instrumental in obtaining new playground toys. They talked about which ones would be safe to use unsupervised and how these had helped improve the outside environment. Two pupils said that they were able to help their parents choose what to put in their sandwiches and liked to have food that kept them alert in the afternoon. In a 'Milkshake Maths' lesson, where the pupils were deciding on the optimum temperature for their 'company's' drink, they demonstrated not only their good arithmetical and scientific knowledge but also an understanding of why a 'smoothie' might be more healthy. Conversely, the higher-attaining pupils had more difficulty in developing this in an abstract way when deciding how to attract the most customers.

The personal development of pupils is focused extremely well on providing excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Recently, the school recognised the difficulty in giving pupils a fuller understanding of the diverse cultural nature of our society. To help improve this, a well-conceived 'Around the World Week' enabled pupils to 'visit' 42 countries in the school, taking their passports to record the experience. Among other things and with the help of staff, parents and specialists, pupils tasted food from different countries, played African drums and learned Scottish dancing. The week culminated in a celebration assembly creating an opportunity for each class to share their learning across the school.

Pupils achieve exceptionally well and, as importantly, this is consistent through each year, with only some very slight variation. The 2007 national tests results in Year 2 and 6 were a significant improvement on the previous year, were well above average and greatly exceeded the targets set. Nearly all pupils achieved the national average levels, with good proportions exceeding this. The school has rightly identified that the proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels

could be increased even further and across a wider range of subjects. As part of this drive for excellence, a significant enrichment programme for potentially gifted and talented pupils has been initiated because teachers had not developed this aspect well enough. While still at an early stage, it is already showing signs of increasing the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels in many subjects. This will also help to improve the already good preparation for pupils' future lives.

Pupils are cared for and supported extremely well. Parents remark on the family atmosphere of the school and how their concerns or those of their children are dealt with rapidly. Academic guidance is constantly reviewed to ensure that it is both realistic and effective. Good examples of this were seen in all classes such as in one younger class where the pupils were given specific improvements that they needed to fulfil during the lesson. The school analyses data well and where relatively weaker areas in either pupils' progress or in the quality of teaching are discovered these are dealt with in an atmosphere of shared responsibility. Consequently, the self-esteem of the school community is high.

Leadership and management are of excellent quality and fully supported by a good governing body. The headteacher has focused on those things which have made the most difference and been able to raise the expectations of all staff and governors about what pupils are capable of achieving. One result of this is the greater level of consistently good lessons that have been noted both from internal and external monitoring. Inevitably, with only a small number of staff, much of this work has been undertaken by the two senior leaders and has lacked the involvement of other subject leaders. This is now the key priority being addressed through the very thorough school development plan. There is already good evidence to support the achievement of pupils in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. However, much of the evidence to support the achievement in other subjects is too disparate. While it can be used well to determine whether pupils achieve the required standard for their age, subject leaders have not been involved in a more general appraisal of how whole-school developments could raise achievement to even higher levels. This will also enable teachers to provide the highest level of challenge for all. Nevertheless, the school demonstrates an undoubted capacity to improve further. As one parent put it, 'We are delighted with Rusper School. Our children are happy and confident and eager to learn.'

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Provision in the Foundation Stage is excellent and children start Year 1 with standards at, and sometimes above, those expected for their age. The strong teaching is focused well in this mixed-age class and caters well for the needs of both the younger and older children. Work is balanced well between both direct teaching and through children being able to use play as part of their learning. Themes are used extensively, such as 'The Three Pigs'. While the obvious storytelling opportunities are offered, in one lesson the teacher used three children with masks to develop the whole-class understanding of first, second and third by asking repeated questions to which the children had to reply. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is excellent. Children are carefully monitored and given the opportunity to move into the next class when it is assessed that they have the personal and social as well as the academic acumen to do so. Another good priority is aimed at developing play opportunities with pupils in Year 1 and 2 as part of a more balanced programme as all pupils move through the school.

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

- Improve the involvement of subject leaders in the whole-school analysis of subjects to raise the proportion of pupils gaining higher levels in all subjects.

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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 |
|---|----------------|

### Overall effectiveness

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 1   |
| 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   | 1   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements   | 1   |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve?  | 1 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 1 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 1 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress                              | 1 |

### 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?          | 1 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 1 |
| 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>                                       | 1   |
| 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  | 1   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 1   |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can                     | 1   |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money  | 1   |
| 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

30 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rusper Primary School, Rusper, West Sussex RH12 4PR

Thank you for making me so welcome during my recent visit. I very much enjoyed seeing what you were doing and hearing all about the exciting activities you have. I am sure you will not be surprised to hear that I have said that your school is outstanding.

- You told me that you thought your school provided you with many highly interesting things to do. I agree. Your teachers work hard to make sure that you are taught to think hard by giving you lots of real-life experiences.
- The national test results in 2007 were some of the highest ever at your school. I think you are making extremely good progress, especially in your reading, writing and mathematics. Keep up the good work – you have a lot to live up to if you are going to do even better this year.
- I have said in my report that you are a credit to your school and I really believe it. You behave well, there are very few instances of any of you 'falling out' and you told me that when this does happen it is dealt with very quickly by adults or sensibly by your friends.
- I was pleased to see that it does not matter which class you are in because you are all taught exceptionally well. It is good to see that you can have really good discussions and I can see how excited you get about learning.
- You told me how well you are looked after and I have mentioned this in the report. I have said that I think all the adults really make sure that you are supported both in your behaviour and in your academic work.
- Your headteacher and her staff know what to do to make things even better. I have asked that teachers can be more involved in helping with developing all the subjects. This will help your school become even better.

Finally, I would like to wish you all the best for the future. You can do 'your bit' by continuing to work hard and making sensible suggestions about how things can be improved. The school council have also asked me to remind you that the new toys that they have helped order need to be looked after a little more carefully because they are worried they will need replacing too quickly.

Keep up the good work!

Best wishes

David Collard Lead Inspector

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Lead Inspector