

Rodbourne Cheney Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126275
Local Authority	Swindon
Inspection number	315469
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Jill Arnold

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	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Cooke
Headteacher	Lauren Connor
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2007
School address	Broadway Swindon SN25 3BN
Telephone number	01793 534710
Fax number	01793 534710

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This smaller than average school is federated with a neighbouring primary school and they share the same headteacher and governing body. Most pupils are White British. Children's skills are wide ranging on entry and vary from year to year, but are generally below the levels expected for their age. The proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and statements of special educational need are higher than average. At its previous inspection, the school was given a Notice to Improve as its overall effectiveness was found to be inadequate.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of this rapidly improving school is satisfactory. Since its previous inspection, the good quality of leadership has secured improvements to the curriculum and teaching which have accelerated the rate of pupils' progress and have begun to drive up standards. The school's capacity for further improvement is good. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Good teamwork and inspirational leadership by the headteacher have enabled the school to make significant strides towards raising standards. The remarkable transformation of the school is a testament to the robust procedures and initiatives that have been introduced since the federation with its partner school. The school provides a supportive, safe and stimulating environment for pupils to learn and develop. Parents who replied to the pre-inspection questionnaire voiced their appreciation for the good care and attention their children receive and felt that the school had improved greatly since the previous inspection.

Collaboration with a highly successful partner school has helped the staff to develop professionally and raise their expectations. Shared planning and activities across the federation ensures that the curriculum is tailored carefully to pupils' needs and interests. The good curriculum includes a wide range of active and imaginative experiences which strongly promote pupils' personal development and enhance their enjoyment of school. Pupils' good attendance and responsible behaviour demonstrates their motivation to learn and do their best. Pupils work and play harmoniously and contribute positively to school life and activities in the wider community. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. They are confident to express their views and well informed about their progress. The exceptional progress made by children in the Reception class is a result of the introduction of a creative curriculum and dynamic teaching which engages all children and particularly boys. This gives children a flying start to their education and a firm foundation for their future learning. By the time they leave, pupils are effectively equipped for the next stage of their education academically and socially.

Although there are pockets of good practice in the school, teaching is satisfactory overall, and improving due to the robust action by the headteacher to address weaknesses. Achievement is now satisfactory, although progress is better in some classes than others. The combination of sharply focused teaching, incisive assessment and precise feedback seen in good lessons needs to be extended to all classes to ensure all pupils achieve as well as they should. Although improving, standards in writing are a weakness across the school. Pupils are able to discuss their work and are aware of their targets for improvement. However, the opportunities for them to review and refine their work to a high standard or to tackle longer pieces of writing are limited.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The school's assessments show that children currently in Reception are making exceptional progress from a low starting point and most are expected to attain the skills expected for their age by the end of the school year. Staff have created a vibrant and creative environment which helps motivate the children to learn and develop independence. They monitor children's progress

very closely and use the information to provide an imaginative range of learning opportunities which promote children's language, personal and social development particularly well. The approach to planning activities using children's ideas is proving very successful in developing writing skills, particularly for boys. Children enjoy their learning greatly because the activities tap into their interests through focused play. Parents are very appreciative of the excellent care and attention their children receive which contributes to their outstanding personal and social development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of pupils' writing by providing more opportunities for pupils to review and refine their work and to write at length.
- Improve the quality of teaching across the school so that it is all at least good, ensuring that the focus and challenge in planning is reflected in lessons and marking.

A small proportion of 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

In 2007, most children in the Reception class reached levels in line with national expectations for their age by the time they enter Year 1. In the most recent national assessments in 2007, Year 2 results in writing showed some improvement on the previous year and were broadly average, but reading and mathematics results were below average. Year 6 national test results in 2007 were better than in the previous three years, and pupils reached above average standards in English, mathematics and science. These pupils made satisfactory progress overall since Year 2, with good teaching speeding up their progress in their final year at the school.

Current standards of work are broadly average, although writing is a weaker area. The school's assessments indicate that pupils currently in Year 6 have made remarkable progress in a relatively short time and are on course to meet the challenging targets set for 2008. Pupils with learning difficulties make similar progress to their peers. However, progress across the school is variable due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' respectful behaviour and enjoyment of school is due to the high priority that the school has given to ensuring strong personal development, including building confidence and self-esteem. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and the strong bonds that pupils have formed with the adults in the school help them to feel safe. Cultural development through art and creative activities, together with a range of visits and visitors to the school, contributes to the breadth of pupils' experiences. Pupils' motivation towards their work and enthusiasm for school contributes to the positive atmosphere in the school. Pupils make a constructive contribution to the life of school through the school council and their various responsibilities. The high uptake of physical activities and careful food choices demonstrate a good awareness of healthy lifestyles. The school is inclusive and the strong thread of personal development applies to all pupils including those who are vulnerable or need additional support.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There has been a marked improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. Positive relationships with staff motivate pupils to learn. Teachers track pupils' progress closely and use the information to plan lessons. Lessons are planned carefully to engage pupils' interests, match their abilities, and make learning meaningful. When the planning is interpreted effectively through dynamic, sharply focused teaching, learning is brisk and pupils make good progress. However, this does not occur in all classes. Lesson objectives are not always sufficiently clear to enable pupils to grasp fully what they are learning and occasionally lessons lack challenge. Although teachers' marking is consistent with the school policy, its effectiveness in helping pupils to improve their work varies. At times, targets are too imprecise and teachers do not always ensure that pupils have responded to the advice they have been given. The role of teaching assistants has developed significantly recently and the assistants provide valuable support to pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has recently been changed to ensure it is well matched to the range of pupils' abilities and interests. It places particular emphasis on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills, giving them the opportunity to clarify their thoughts in preparation for writing. The wide range of opportunities, including joint ventures with the partner school, broadens the range of pupils' experiences and greatly enhances their enjoyment of school. The curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development, particularly their confidence and ability to work independently. Pupils and parents appreciate the increased range of additional activities, including clubs and trips. The range of support programmes for pupils with learning difficulties makes a good contribution to the progress these pupils make.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There are rigorous procedures to ensure pupils' well-being. Excellent relationships between pupils and adults enable pupils to feel secure and confident that there is always someone there to look after them. The school works in effective partnership with a wide range of external agencies to support pupils who have specific learning needs and those who are vulnerable. The school works hard to ensure all pupils are included in school life and this is reflected in their good attendance. The extended range of services offered to families makes an important contribution to the welfare of pupils. Academic guidance has been improved since the previous inspection. Pupils know their learning targets and the National Curriculum levels of their work. Clearly displayed information and whole school strategies to help pupils improve their work are making a good contribution to the progress made in lessons.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership of the headteacher is exemplary. Incisive evaluation and robust action to address weaknesses have resulted in significant improvements in a relatively short time. The headteacher has forged a leadership team who shares her vision and strongly supports the initiatives that have been introduced. Despite being relatively new to their roles, the team members are having a positive impact on improving learning. There is strong teamwork and a culture of high expectation. Pupils' progress is tracked rigorously and all staff are held to account for how well they are doing. This is having a positive effect on improving achievement and raising standards. The governing body provides good support for the headteacher and staff. Governors have a good working knowledge of what happens in the school and are closely involvement in its development.

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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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	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	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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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?	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	1
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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

22 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rodbourne Cheney Primary School, Swindon SN25 3 BN

Thank you for your warm welcome when we came to inspect your school. We enjoyed listening to your views and coming to your lessons. We were impressed by your good behaviour and at how well you get on together in the playground and in lessons. I am writing to tell you what we found out.

The children in Reception are doing really well. They love coming to school and are making super progress. The people in charge have all worked hard to make sure lessons are interesting and pitched at the right level for you. They are doing a good job of making school an enjoyable and safe place to be. There are lots of exciting things for you to do in lessons and after school. All these things help you to look forward to school. You receive plenty of advice to help you improve your work, although it could be a bit clearer at times.

Although you are working hard and mostly doing as well as other boys and girls, we feel you should be doing better with your written work. We have asked the school to give closer attention to improving your writing and more time for you to produce longer, good quality pieces of work. We have also asked teachers to make sure that you are really clear about what you are learning and why, and to make sure your work isn't too easy for you. You can play your part by acting on the good advice your teachers give you, and asking if you are not sure.

Your school has improved a lot in the last year. Your parents are pleased with your school and the staff and governors are working hard to make it even better in the future.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

Jill Arnold Lead inspector

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