

Rowlands Gill Community Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 131081 |
| Local Authority | Gateshead |
| Inspection number | 315712 |
| Inspection dates | 24–25 June 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Andrew Johnson HMI |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 420 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Miss Jean McKay |
| Headteacher | Miss Hannah Martin |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Dominies Close Rowlands Gill Tyne and Wear NE39 2PP |
| Telephone number | 01207 549359 |
| Fax number | 01207 549182 |

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|--------------------------|-----------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Rowlands Gill Community Primary School is a larger than average primary school established in September 2006, as a result of the amalgamation of the existing infant and junior schools. The new school building was opened in April 2007. The school serves a community that experiences relatively low levels of socio-economic deprivation. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is low. A higher than average proportion of pupils are boys. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than the national average, although the school accommodates a mainstream support base for a small number of pupils who have special educational needs.

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: 3

This newly established school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and has many good features. There is a strong focus on improvement and some of the actions taken recently are beginning to show through in the standards pupils attain. Children enter the Foundation Stage with a variety of skills and abilities; most are at levels that are above those of children found in Gateshead but are typical of children nationally. They make good progress, which enables them to have a flying start to Key Stage 1. The standards pupils reach in core subjects at the end of Key Stage 1 are around the national average because they make satisfactory progress. Some more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged by their work and consequently they do not always make the progress of which they are capable. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils reach standards that are generally above average. In Key Stage 2 the progress pupils make varies but is satisfactory overall. Pupils try hard in lessons and are well supported to develop their skills by their parents and carers.

Pupils' personal development is good. They behave in a mature and sensible way both in lessons and around the school. This is a happy and caring school with a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. Pupils told inspectors they enjoy coming to school. Attendance levels are above average. The move to the new school building has been unsettling for some pupils but they have been well supported through the process. Teachers encourage parents from different backgrounds to get involved in lessons and assemblies and this has resulted in pupils developing a good understanding of other cultures.

Pupils are well cared for. Bullying is rare and when it does occur is dealt with very effectively by teachers. Very few pupils are excluded from the school. The mainstream support base, although relatively small, provides good support for children with special educational needs and results in them making good progress academically and socially. Teaching assistants work effectively in lessons to support pupils who need additional help. Well-developed links with local secondary schools mean that pupils receive good guidance about the next stage of their education.

Teachers work hard and lessons are well managed and orderly. Marking is done meticulously and linked to accurate tracking of pupils' progress. Most pupils say they enjoy lessons, although sometimes they feel there could be more varied and exciting activities. Some learning activities are not sufficiently differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils. On some occasions pupils spend too long listening to explanations of how activities link to targets and not enough time working independently.

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. A broad range of extra activities is offered and the children who take part in them enjoy them and develop good skills. However, rates of participation in these activities are relatively low. A variety of trips and residential activities are valuable in adding to pupils' experiences and knowledge of the wider community. Literacy and numeracy lessons take place in the morning and other aspects of the curriculum in the afternoon. In some cases there is a lack of integration between these lessons and missed opportunities for cross-curricular work.

The leadership team, including the governors, are strongly committed to making sure the school provides the best it can for the pupils. The last two years have been turbulent, with the amalgamation process, staffing restructure, the move to a new building and most recently a falling school roll. The transition to the new school has been well managed. There is effective

day-to-day management of the school. Most parents are positive about the education the school provides and there is an active parent-teacher association. However, a significant minority of parents who returned the inspection questionnaire, expressed concerns about the way in which leaders communicate key aspects of the school's work to them. The school's self-evaluation process accurately identifies the main areas for improvement but there are over-optimistic judgements of the quality of some key aspects of its work. Improvement plans do not always contain clear measurable targets and the methods used to measure the quality of the school's work are not always accurate. For example, the observation of teaching and learning is not rigorous enough and often simply describes teaching methods, rather than focus on the progress pupils are making and areas for improvement. Governors are very supportive and determined to improve the school even further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the development of personal, social and emotional skills. By the end of the Reception year they develop good communication, mathematical, language and literacy skills. They are extremely well cared for and there are good links with parents. This gives children a very firm foundation upon which to start Key Stage 1. Teaching and learning are good because activities are well thought out and ensure that children of all abilities have an enjoyable and productive time. Staff work very well as a team and have adapted resources to make sure they meet the challenges provided by the new building.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that more able pupils are challenged by their work and make better progress, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Improve communication with parents.
- Make self-evaluation and planning more rigorous.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children enter the school with a variety of capabilities, but most have fairly typical skills when compared with children nationally. They grow in confidence and make good progress in the Foundation Stage. This level of progress is not sustained in Key Stage 1 where pupils make satisfactory progress. In 2007 pupils reached standards that were above average in reading and around the national average in writing and mathematics. In 2008, school assessment data show that standards declined slightly in reading and writing and improved slightly in mathematics but are still broadly average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

In 2007, the proportion of pupils reaching Level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2 was below the national average in English and science and around the national average in mathematics. These results include pupils in the mainstream support base, who although attaining standards that were below the national average, made good progress. The proportion of pupils who achieved the higher levels in reading, mathematics and science was above the national average, although

in writing results were in line with the national average. Pupils make satisfactory progress in English and mathematics in Key Stage 2, although the progress they make in science is not as consistent as that in English and mathematics. Girls and boys make progress at broadly similar rates. School assessment data predict that test results of the current Year 6 group will be much better and be well above average in all core subjects. Examination of pupils' books indicates that most children reach at least the expected standard by the end of each key stage.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school as is demonstrated by their above average attendance. They say they feel safe and know who to tell if they feel upset or worried. Their behaviour is good in lessons and they act in a sensible way around the school. Pupils understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and explained to inspectors the importance of eating fruit, drinking water and taking part in physical exercise. Pupils welcome the opportunity to take on responsibilities such as being playground buddies or members of the school council. Pupils develop good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness through a variety of means as is demonstrated by the lack of bullying and harassment. Awareness of diversity is developed well through parental contribution to the school and links to the wider community. For example this year valuable insights have been developed into the culture of Japan, Chile and India. Young children learn to understand their feelings through circle time, and assemblies provide a good opportunity for quiet reflection and prayer.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There is variation in the effectiveness of lessons although behaviour is always good and children respond well to instructions from teachers. In the better lessons the pace is brisk, tasks are well matched to the needs of all pupils and independent learning is encouraged. Lessons are rarely inadequate, but where they are less effective, insufficient account is taken of pupils' starting points and the work is not always pitched at the right level to challenge the more able. Too much time is spent explaining activities and the criteria used to judge success to the whole group. Teaching assistants provide effective support to less able pupils but rarely work with the more able except in Year 6. Parents are encouraged to understand their children's learning and homework usually makes a valuable contribution to the standards pupils reach.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is enhanced by the useful visits to interesting local events and sites. Literacy and numeracy are taught in the mornings but there is a lack of integration between these lessons and the other subjects that are covered in the afternoons. Visitors to the school include specialist coaches, who successfully promote sporting and musical activities. There are opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in foreign languages. Several extra-curricular activities and clubs are offered although participation is relatively limited. It has been recognised that improvements are necessary to the school outdoor facilities to allow

pupils more opportunities to take part in outdoor activities and plans are in place to enhance facilities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is good as can be seen in pupils' high level of personal development, the low level of exclusions and the above average attendance. Pupils in the mainstream support base are well supported and as a result make good progress. Effective partnerships exist with external agencies to ensure good additional support for students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Transition arrangements are effective, both from the nursery to the school and from the school to local secondary school. Appropriate safeguarding policies and risk assessments are in place. Pupils are kept well informed about their academic progress through feedback from teachers. This is particularly effective in Years 2 and 6, where they are well supported to participate confidently in various assessments, tests and activities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The establishment of the new school, staff-restructure and the move into a new building provided significant challenges. This has been managed effectively to ensure children continue to develop well and reach at least satisfactory levels in all aspects of their education. Self-evaluation takes into account a wide range of evidence, although some of this evidence is not analysed thoroughly enough. For example, lesson observations lack rigour. The opinions of parents as expressed in the inspection questionnaire were significantly different from those given in response to the school's own questionnaire. Several of the school's judgements on the quality of its provision are over-generous. Most areas for development are accurately identified but sometimes not translated into clear objectives and measurable targets in the school improvement plan. New performance management regulations have been successfully implemented for teachers and support staff. Inclusion of all pupils is central to the mission of the school and this promotes acceptance, tolerance and understanding of all ethnic and faith groups. Financial management is sound. The school provides satisfactory value for money and has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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

| | |
|---|----|
| 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 | NA |
| 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? | 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? | 3 |
| 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

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| 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

26 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rowlands Gill Community Primary School, Gateshead, NE39 2PP

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school and a special thank you to all the pupils who talked to us during our visit. We think your school is satisfactory and has many good features. For example, you should be proud of your sensible behaviour and the way you work hard in lessons. You get on really well together, and there is very little bullying or name calling. Many of you told us how much you enjoy school and this shows through in the high attendance levels.

You get off to a really good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. Later on in the school we know that many of you reach high standards in your work. However, we think some of you could make even better progress, particularly in Key Stage 1. To make sure this happens the school is going to work at making some activities in lessons more challenging. They will also be improving the way in which they measure the work of the school and plan for the future.

Everyone in the school has worked very hard in the last two years to make sure that the new school has been established and they have laid firm foundations for the future. Many of your parents and carers are involved in helping the school and most are very happy with the ways things are going. However some parents mentioned in the questionnaire that they felt that communication with them could be better. We know that the school is taking these comments very seriously and the governors and leaders are considering what to do to improve.

It was a pleasure to see how well you look after each other and enjoyed the playground which we know is going to be expanded in the future to give you even more space. We were impressed by how much you know about staying safe and healthy and pleased that you have so many opportunities for visits out of school and residential trips.

We wish you all the very best for the future and congratulate you on making such a smooth transfer to your new school.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Johnson

Her Majesty's Inspector