

Rowlatts Hill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120054
Local Authority	Leicester City
Inspection number	316492
Inspection dates	31 October –1 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Paul Brooker HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	271
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Draycott
Headteacher	Jay Virk
Date of previous school inspection	11 May 2006
School address	Balderstone Close off Ambassador Road Leicester LE5 4ES
Telephone number	0116 2768812
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Age group	3-11
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

The school serves a suburban area that experiences high levels of social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is twice the national average. Over half of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest proportion of whom are from families of Indian heritage. Almost half of pupils speak English as an additional language. Many who start school are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above the national figure. There is a high level of turbulence amongst the pupil population, with significant numbers admitted to school at times other than the usual entry. When the school was last inspected it was judged to require special measures. The substantive headteacher took up post in April 2007 following a period of leadership by an interim headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. It has made rapid recent improvement and is developing clear strengths. Senior leaders recognise that it cannot be judged good until its improved provision has had time to impact more fully on pupils' attainment, but there is now a strong team of committed staff who are taking the school forward determinedly.

At the time of the last inspection, there was widespread underachievement, linked with weaknesses in teaching and ineffective leadership. The legacy of weak teaching means that standards are still lower than they ought to be. However, improvements in provision have led to significantly better outcomes for pupils. Achievement is satisfactory and pupils' personal development is good. Pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons and over time.

The quality of teaching has strengthened considerably and is satisfactory overall, with a number of strengths. Children get off to a particularly good start in the Foundation Stage, where provision is good. However, elsewhere there is not yet enough teaching that is consistently good or outstanding to make up for the pupils' low starting points. The curriculum is satisfactory with some emerging strengths, particularly in the range of extra-curricular enrichment opportunities. Parents welcome the considerable improvements that have been made over the last year and are overwhelmingly positive in their support for the school. They appreciate the high quality care, guidance and support that their children receive and recognise that pupils' personal development is a strength. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. Attendance and punctuality have improved significantly and are satisfactory. Many pupils take advantage of the good range of opportunities offered and are also keen to take responsibility, including as school councillors.

Leadership and management, including governance, have been transformed since the last inspection and are good. The headteacher's excellent leadership has galvanised staff and driven the school's development which has been guided skilfully by external consultants from the local authority. Leadership is strengthening at all levels as responsibilities are sensibly delegated and developed. School development planning engages all staff and is soundly based on accurate self-evaluation. Effective systems are in place to monitor performance and to hold staff to account. However, not all of the many developments implemented since the last inspection are fully established. Good practice that exists is not always replicated because evaluations by leaders at different levels are not always sharply analytical. Nonetheless, the school has demonstrated good capacity to sustain its recent improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and is a strength of the school. Children start in the Nursery with skills that are well below those expected, particularly in their social and communications skills. Because of good teaching and a well organised and innovative curriculum, they make at least satisfactory and often good progress. All adults work well together and make a major contribution to this progress. Teaching strikes a good balance between adult directed and child initiated activities. By the time children leave the Reception class, their attainment is still below what might be expected overall, but the gap has narrowed considerably.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards across all subjects, but particularly in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Increase the proportion of lessons that are good and outstanding by raising expectations of the quality and quantity of work that pupils with different abilities should achieve.
- Embed the recent improvements by evaluating more rigorously the impact of actions taken.

A small proportion of the 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

Achievement is satisfactory because pupils, overall, make expected rates of progress as they move up through the school.

When children start in the Foundation Stage their skills are generally well below those expected for their age. Many are at an early stage of learning English. Nonetheless, children make satisfactory progress across all areas of learning in the Reception class. Their progress in personal, social and emotional development is particularly good. Although the standards of their work are below those expected for their ages, their social skills are sufficiently well developed to enable them to make a good transition to more formal styles of learning in Year 1.

Standards of attainment remain very low in national tests and assessments at Key Stage 1 and 2, and also in most subjects across the school. However, the school's monitoring information, supported by inspection evidence, indicates that pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress over time. Target setting and monitoring are systematic and increasingly rigorous, based on accurate and regular assessments of pupils' progress. Analysis of this information is thorough and is used to identify and support those pupils that are not making enough progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. These positive outcomes are a consequence of the systematic and resourceful ways that the school promotes the pupils' well-being. Efforts to improve attendance and punctuality have been successful in getting each to a satisfactory level. The collective effort of all the adults ensures that pupils are able to develop good social skills from an early age and a strong spiritual and cultural awareness. The very good relationships between adults and pupils create a positive ethos in the school. The pupils are well behaved, show consideration for others, have positive attitudes to their learning, and enjoy the many opportunities that the school provides. They understand the importance of healthy eating and exercise, although some are reluctant to make the right choices from the appetising food on offer. An impressive number choose to participate in the varied physical activities, during and after the school day, which are fun. Pupils feel safe and secure and are confident that adults will resolve their concerns.

The burgeoning number of clubs and the school council are beginning to give pupils the opportunity to take responsibility and to make a positive contribution to their community. There is, nonetheless, scope to give pupils wider responsibility, including for their own learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

In general, lessons are well prepared and good use is made of a variety of learning resources, including interactive whiteboards, to give pupils an interesting variety of activities. Work is well directed and managed. There is positive climate for learning in lessons created by the very good relationships and the stimulating classroom environment, which promotes the pupils' learning very effectively. Pupils routinely use the bright and engaging displays to support their learning. Inadequate teaching has been eliminated and much of the teaching is good, but there is not enough that is consistently good or outstanding to make up for the pupils' previously inadequate progress or low starting points. Confident and skilled teachers use their subject expertise well to teach lively lessons at a brisk pace. In these lessons, careful assessment of the pupils' needs and abilities is used to plan activities to challenge all pupils in the group and ensure that they make accelerated progress. Lessons are less effective when work lacks such challenge and pace, particularly when short term planning does not focus sharply on what different pupils might achieve. In some lessons, teacher led sessions are slow paced and do not present sufficient challenge for different groups of pupils.

Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English is satisfactory. Teaching assistants have clear roles and responsibilities in lessons and are able to offer a good level of support for different groups of pupils and individuals.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with a number of good features that contribute positively to pupils' enjoyment of school and their personal development. Provision for personal, social, citizenship and health education makes a significant contribution, through sessions such as 'philosophy for children'. The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced and makes satisfactory provision for developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and computing skills. Although the school recognises that not enough opportunities are taken to develop these skills across different subjects. A number of enrichment opportunities are carefully planned to give pupils a broad range of experiences. These include visits and visitors, and a variety of sporting, dance and music clubs and several different lunchtime activities, such as 'green club' and ICT club.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school makes the pupils' pastoral care a very high priority and has worked very hard to engage parents in supporting their children's education. Transition arrangements for new pupils and for children moving from the Foundation Stage into Year 1 are good. The strong links with outside support agencies, alongside the school's own procedures, mean that pupils' social and emotional needs are very well supported. The establishment of a nurture room, with a learning mentor, provides a safe haven for individual pupils and has had a positive impact on behaviour across the school. The number of fixed term exclusions has been dramatically reduced. Other initiatives, such as the breakfast club, ensure that pupils are given a good start to their day. The quality of academic guidance has strengthened and is satisfactory. Marking is variable in

its effectiveness. Although teachers give helpful advice, this is not always followed up when pupils do not respond to the guidance provided.

Procedures for safeguarding pupils, child protection, risk assessment, and health and safety are properly implemented to ensure the health and safety of pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school's cultural change over the last year has been engineered by its leadership and guided by the sharply focused support from external consultants. The headteacher has shown considerable skill and tenacity in addressing the areas for improvement, but has also led developments across a wide front. Resources have been used judiciously to transform the school. Classrooms, public areas and outside spaces have been radically overhauled to create a welcoming and stimulating environment for pupils to learn and reflect the school's new vibrancy. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's future and has communicated unequivocally her high expectations to staff, pupils and parents. She has built a strong team of staff who are committed to improving the outcomes for pupils. Staff feel supported and valued as well as challenged; morale is good.

Governance has improved and is good. Governors are well informed about the work of the school and are in a strong position to hold it to account. Leadership has been strengthened at all levels. Foundation Stage and core subject leadership is critically evaluative and impacts positively on pupils' learning in classrooms. Elsewhere, leadership roles are developing well, but not all subject leaders focus sharply enough on how they can raise standards.

The school has worked very hard to develop supportive partnerships, both with parents and with outside agencies. Links with parents have improved considerably, so that many – particularly those of younger children – are able to play a positive part in supporting their children's education. School development planning engages all staff and is soundly based on accurate self-evaluation. Procedures for monitoring the school's work are systematic, but the analysis of the outcomes for pupils is not always sufficiently searching, so best practice is not fully replicated. Nonetheless the school is very well placed to consolidate and increase its recent improvement.

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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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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?	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	3
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	3
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

2 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rowlatt's Hill Primary School, Leicester LE5 4ES

Thank you for all your help during our recent visit to your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and seeing your work. You were all very helpful and polite to each other, and also to us as visitors.

As you know, your school was put into special measures in May 2006 because, at that time, it was not providing a good enough education. I have visited your school on four occasions and have seen how hard all the staff have worked to improve your the school. I have also noticed how much more you now enjoy your work and how much more happy and confident you seem to be. Now it is time to congratulate you all, Rowlatt's Hill Primary School no longer requires special measures!

We were particularly impressed with your attitudes and behaviour. You are generally very kind and look after one another well. You understand how to stay safe and healthy, particularly by getting lots of good exercise. However, some of you are not keen on trying the healthy foods that you know are good for you! Many of your lessons are fun and you make some good progress, especially in the Nursery and Reception classes.

- Standards in your school are rising, but Mrs Virk and all the staff know that you can do even better. We have asked your teachers to keep up the good work and to make sure that:
- you make good progress in your lessons
- the results in tests improve and that the standards of your work increase, particularly in reading, writing, mathematics, science and ICT.

You can help too by continuing to work hard and do your very best and by making sure you follow the helpful advice that your teachers give you when they mark your work.

I have always enjoyed visiting Rowlatt's Hill and now wish you all every future success.

Yours sincerely

Paul Brooker Her Majesty's Inspector

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