

Ravenstone Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101017
Local Authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	323390
Inspection date	24 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	448
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	98
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Alex Freaan
Headteacher	Mr Alan Millington
Date of previous school inspection	30 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Ravenstone Street Balham High Road London SW12 9SS
Telephone number	020 8673 0594
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). In addition, the following issues were investigated.

- What action is the school taking to raise standards in writing?
- Is the curriculum outstanding?
- How well are pupils' progress and achievements tracked?

Evidence was gathered from the school's analysis of pupils' progress, a scrutiny of samples of their work and observations of pupils in lessons. Discussions were held with staff, governors and pupils. In addition, the responses of 201 parents' questionnaires were analysed and their comments taken into account. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated 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

Ravenstone is a large primary school. It is two-form entry and exceptionally heavily oversubscribed. The EYFS consists of a Nursery unit which currently has 46 children on roll. In addition, there are two Reception classes. There is an independently managed after-school club.

The school serves an ethnically rich and diverse community. Currently there are 32 different first languages spoken. About a third of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. This is well above the national average. There are 38 pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. Most of these pupils have speech, language and communication difficulties or moderate learning difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ravenstone is a good school. It has some significant strengths. Good quality teaching enables the pupils to make good progress and achieve well. Progress in reading, writing and mathematics is not as strong in Years 1 and 2 as it is in Years 3 to 6. This is because many of the pupils have been relatively new to learning English and this affects work across the curriculum. However, these pupils learn English quickly and well because the support for them is of good quality. As a result, progress quickens for all pupils in the junior classes. In the past, progress in writing has not been as quick as in reading, mathematics and science. However, a thorough review of the English curriculum was undertaken. As a result, a wide range of improvements was introduced. This includes a focus on improving spelling, a range of story-telling activities, the introduction of early morning reading and writing activities involving staff, parents and volunteers who work with pupils on an individual basis, and further training for teachers. The impact of these improvements has been positive, and standards are rising. By the end of Year 6, standards in all subjects are average and improving. This marks good achievement from below average starting points. Pupils that are vulnerable or find learning hard make good progress because the provision for them is of good quality.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils enjoy lessons and they appreciate teachers' efforts to make learning fun. As one pupil said, 'I like the way that the teachers mix what we have to do. Sometimes we learn by seeing, other times by listening, but best of all we don't just do independent work. We learn in groups and this helps.' Classrooms are calm and orderly and relationships are excellent because the teachers manage pupils exceptionally well. However, teachers do not always ensure that work is sufficiently well matched to the wide range of learning needs in each class. Because work is not always challenging for pupils, this reduces progress in learning.

Parents are effusive in their comments about the school. They rightly suggest that there is an overwhelming atmosphere of support which enables pupils to thrive in their personal development. Their very many positive views are summed up by the parent who wrote: 'Our daughter has immensely enjoyed being part of the Ravenstone school community. She has excelled due to the range of activities and curriculum available, the celebration of every achievement and success and the care and nurture ever-present. We feel very lucky to have been involved in the school.' There is outstanding care and support, and all regulations for safeguarding pupils' health and safety are robust. However, even though pupils have a good understanding of their targets, particularly in literacy, academic guidance is more limited. This is because there have been recent changes to the system for tracking pupils' progress and these are bedding down well particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. However, senior staff are not yet in a position to hold teachers to account for pupils' progress because there is not, as yet, enough detailed information about their progress.

Excellent pastoral care, linked to the high quality curriculum, makes a significant contribution to the pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. Pupils are proud of their healthy school meals and they have a thorough understanding of the benefits of a healthy diet. Behaviour is excellent, pupils have very positive attitudes to school and learning and they develop very good levels of confidence and self-esteem. They are eager participants in the wide range of physical activities that the school provides and they understand the importance of regular exercise. Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and know that an adult will help if they have a problem. Pupils carry out responsibilities conscientiously and enjoy taking

on the role of school councillors. They feel that this enables them to express their views and they are keen to point out the many benefits, such as the design of the playground and the toilet refurbishments, that they have brought about. Pupils' good basic skills and excellent inter-personal skills prepare them well for their move to secondary education.

Although the school evaluates the quality of its curriculum as good, it is outstanding. It is very broad and rich and exceptionally well planned capturing and building on pupils' interests. In addition, there have been improvements in the curriculum for information and communication technology (ICT) since the previous inspection. The myriad of strengths identified at that time have been improved. Pupils have weekly dance lessons from a specialist teacher. Music continues to play a pivotal role in the curriculum and over 50 parents commented on the strength of music in the school. There is a choir, over 100 pupils play orchestral instruments, and pupils and parents delight in the reported high quality of musical and drama productions. In addition, sports play an important part and the many visits to places of interest and visiting speakers and performers to the school enrich learning.

All these things do not happen by chance! The leadership and management of the headteacher is outstanding. Supported well by the senior leadership team, he has a clear vision for the school based on promoting and celebrating success for each individual pupil. Teamwork amongst the staff is strong and morale is high.

The school makes an excellent contribution to community cohesion. It has a highly successful focus on ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils. In addition, it has responded exceptionally well to the diverse nature of the school community. There are many parenting classes including teaching English as a second language for adults. There is a community choir and good links with the local church and Mosque. The rich curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures.

There are good self-evaluation procedures in place. All staff with responsibilities make a good contribution to this and it leads to successful school improvement planning that is having a positive impact on pupils' standards.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's attainment on entry both to the Nursery and Reception varies from year to year, but is generally below that expected for their age. Very good links with parents ensure that they quickly settle into school. In both year groups, children make good progress. By the end of Reception, most children are working securely within all areas of learning. A weakness in developing children's skills in linking sounds and letters and in writing has been overcome. A programme for teaching sounds and letters has been successfully introduced and children now have more opportunities for developing early writing skills. They are becoming more familiar with well-known stories and starting to learn that writing has a structure and purpose. Children's personal development is excellent, and this contributes well to their good progress. Staff act as excellent role models, treating every child with full respect. They ensure that children are taught about safety without limiting their opportunities to explore and discover their extensive and very well equipped learning environment. Children act very responsibly and play extremely well together. A greater emphasis has recently been placed on developing children's independence by enabling them to initiate activities for themselves. This has helped them to become more confident in making choices. They are also very responsive to activities led by teachers. These are well planned, are taught enthusiastically, and follow a themed approach,

effectively linking the different areas of learning. The staff work very well as a team, ensuring that children's welfare is always paramount. The provision is very well led. Children's progress is carefully tracked and recorded and additional support provided when necessary, for example for those who are new to learning English. A new tracking system is being introduced to help staff to more readily identify the next steps in children's learning and to plan accordingly.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate pupils' learning by ensuring that teachers' consistently provide activities that challenge all groups of pupils.
- Embed the new procedures for tracking pupils' progress in both the EYFS and the rest of the school and extend them beyond reading, writing and mathematics.

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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?	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

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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 learners' needs?	2
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?	2

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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

10 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ravenstone Primary School, London, SW12 9SS

On behalf of your inspectors I would like to thank you so much for making us welcome and for talking with me when we visited your school. We enjoyed finding out about Ravenstone. We particularly enjoyed your celebration assembly and were pleased that the Reception children were confident enough to perform for us all!

We agree with you and your parents that yours is a good school. You thoroughly enjoy school and make good progress. We were impressed with the way that you work together so well in groups. We enjoyed looking at the many displays of work that helped to show the wide variety of things that you are taught. We were very impressed with the wide range of music, art and sporting activities that are available for you and that you thoroughly enjoy them. Your teachers make sure that lessons are interesting and they help you to learn well. They plan exciting activities for you, and we can understand why you all love lessons and learning.

Your behaviour is excellent, you have very positive attitudes to each other and we were very impressed how well all of you get on together. You have an excellent understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. Both you and your parents told us that they think that your headteacher does an excellent job. We agree! He is determined to make sure that your school becomes even better. To do this, we have asked your headteacher and teachers to do two things. Firstly, to make sure that teachers' plans always have activities that meet your differing learning needs. Secondly, to make sure that the new system for checking your progress is used in areas other than reading, writing and mathematics and to make sure that whichever class you are in, you make good progress.

You can help by working hard to meet your targets. Once again, thank you for your help. We know that the staff will help you to keep doing your best.

Yours sincerely

Keith Sadler

Lead Inspector