

Rushy Meadow Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102989
Local Authority	Sutton
Inspection number	323722
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Jackie Krafft HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it 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 (total)	443
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Porter
Headteacher	Miss Karen Rhodes
Date of previous school inspection	27–28 June 2006
School address	Rushy Meadow Lane Fellows Road Carshalton SM5 2SG
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 21 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation, including the school improvement plan, the tracking of pupils' progress, individual education plans and support plans of a number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and of pupils who speak English as an additional language, minutes of governors' meetings, and 96 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at:

- whether learning and the progress that pupils make have improved since the previous inspection
- the effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum in meeting the needs of all pupils across different classes and subjects, particularly low-attaining pupils, those with a statement of special education need and those who speak English as an additional language
- the rigour and accuracy of monitoring, evaluation and planning for improvement to raise standards, particularly in science and at Key Stage 1
- whether care, guidance and support are particular strengths.

Information about the school

Rushy Meadow is a large primary school with a nursery. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Few pupils speak English as an additional language, although the number has risen over the past three years. Almost a quarter of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The largest group comprises those with moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is high. Specialist provision is available at the school for up to 12 pupils with hearing impairment. The school has an Activemark award and runs a daily breakfast club.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

'My children love going to Rushy Meadow. They feel valued and well cared for.' This statement reflects the positive views expressed by both the pupils who spoke to inspectors and the overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the inspectors' questionnaire. In this welcoming, caring environment, pupils are happy and safe and make satisfactory progress in their learning. They behave appropriately and are particularly sensitive to the needs of those with hearing impairment. They have a well-developed sense of what it means to live a healthy lifestyle. This was demonstrated, for example, in the discussion with school council members who spoke with maturity about the various dangers to health, such as smoking. Good pastoral support and guidance, especially for the pupils and their families who are experiencing difficulties, makes a strong contribution to the school's good relationships with parents. Efforts to improve attendance are paying dividends but there is more to do in the Reception classes, where absence rates are too high.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are provided with a satisfactory start to their education. They are well cared for and develop appropriate skills and knowledge for their age. However, assessment procedures and monitoring of the progress they make lack rigour and there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning. For example, assessment information is not used effectively to help children make faster progress, by providing them with opportunities to make choices and develop their independence. Senior leaders are aware of these weaknesses and are taking steps to address them but the leadership skills of the Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator to drive improvement are underdeveloped.

Good relationships are evident across the school and pupils particularly enjoy learning when they are involved in practical activities. While teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, and there are examples of good practice, largely in Key Stage 2, the quality across the school is variable. This is because activities are not always closely matched to pupils' varied needs. Teachers do not ask sufficiently probing questions or provide detailed guidance or specific targets to help pupils make consistently good progress. Sometimes pupils are not actively involved in all parts of the lesson and opportunities are missed for them to develop and explain their ideas. When this happens, the pace of learning slows.

Senior leaders have developed appropriate systems to monitor the quality of teaching and to track the progress that pupils make. Information is used regularly to identify what the school does well and to plan for improvement. However, analysis is not sufficiently robust, so their evaluation is over-generous. The plan for improvement identifies most of the relevant priorities but how success and progress are to be measured and evaluated is not specified or quantified. Leaders have been successful in reducing exclusions and improving overall attendance. Steps taken to integrate pupils with hearing impairment are having a positive impact on the personal development of all pupils. Effective support helps those who speak little or no English to develop their language skills quickly. These demonstrate that the school has the necessary capacity to make the further improvements that are needed.

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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure children get off to a good, rather than satisfactory, start in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - assessing their stages of development carefully when they join and tracking their progress more precisely
 - using the information that teachers collect about the children's progress to plan activities that match their needs
 - providing them with more opportunities to make choices and develop their independence
 - providing age-appropriate incentives and working even more closely with parents to improve their attendance
 - developing the leadership skills of the coordinator to drive improvement more quickly.
- Improve the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make, particularly at Key Stage 1, so that they are consistently good, by:
 - ensuring teachers use day-to-day assessments to provide activities that are challenging and are carefully matched to the varied needs of all pupils
 - maintaining a brisk pace in lessons
 - asking probing questions in lessons which give pupils opportunities to develop and explain their ideas fully
 - setting and reviewing targets more systematically with pupils so they know what their learning goals are
 - providing them with more precise guidance on what they need to do to achieve these goals.
- Improve the impact of leaders and managers at all levels on school improvement by:
 - ensuring that tracking and monitoring information is analysed robustly
 - taking account of the long-term implications of pupil progress across different classes and subjects
 - identifying more precise priorities for improvement, including the

- development of pupils' investigative skills in science and of quantifiable measures against which to evaluate success
- including milestones against which the progress that is being made can be measured, so that plans can be adjusted, if necessary, to keep on track.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

In most lessons seen, pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, made at least satisfactory progress in their learning. Pupils behave appropriately, including those who have difficulties managing their own behaviour, and understand what is expected of them. This is because they enjoy school and have positive relationships with each other and with the adults who help them. Where teaching was good, pupils' behaviour made a strong contribution to their learning. However, progress across the school and between different subjects varies because pupils are not consistently challenged to extend their ideas or to develop their skills to learn independently. Consequently, although pupils attain standards which are broadly average overall by the end of Year 6, they are better in English than in mathematics and are below average in science. Pupils achieve less well in Key Stage 1, particularly in writing. The school's tracking information shows that its efforts to improve writing are having a positive impact.

Pupils are developing an appropriate understanding of how to be good citizens, for example by electing school council members, supporting various charities and visiting local community residents who are living in sheltered accommodation. They also have a good understanding of the needs of those with disabilities and use signing to welcome their friends who have hearing impairment. Growing their own vegetables on the nearby allotment excites pupils, who speak animatedly about tasting new flavours: 'I loved the radishes. I had four.' School council members have creative enterprise skills which they are using to help to develop the playground for younger pupils. They take their responsibilities seriously because they say that they want to make a difference. These skills are not as well developed beyond the school council.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	3
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	3
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	3
How well do pupils behave?	3
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	3
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	3

How effective is the provision?

In the most effective lessons seen, work was well matched to pupils' different needs and sufficiently challenging for all groups to make good progress. Objectives were shared so that pupils knew what they should achieve by the end of the lesson and teachers questioned pupils skilfully to extend their understanding. Pupils were actively involved, rather than listening for lengthy periods to the teacher. However, these good features are not evident in all lessons.

Developing literacy and numeracy skills is a priority in the curriculum. A good range of enrichment activities, a variety of after-school clubs and interesting resources, such as giant snails, help to make learning fun. This contributes to the pupils' enthusiasm, particularly for practical lessons. Links with other schools and the use of specialist teachers are making a useful contribution to aspects of the curriculum, such as physical education and music. Although provision for science meets requirements, it is not sufficiently developed to ensure scientific enquiry skills are taught systematically.

Pastoral support and guidance is effective and helps all pupils make similar progress, for example, through good links with specialists such as speech and language therapists and the play therapist. Specialist support for pupils with hearing impairment is a strength and there is good provision to ease pupils' transition to secondary school. However, this is not matched by the academic guidance and support provided. There is a difference in the quality of additional support given in the classroom and in small groups or for individuals outside of lessons. Where it is most effective, pupils make rapid progress, for example in acquiring English language skills. However, the quality varies because assessment information is not used effectively to share planning and teaching strategies between class teachers and other adults. Learning targets, including those in individual education plans for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are too vague and are not evaluated or adjusted well to help pupils make good progress.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The school runs smoothly and appropriate procedures are in place to safeguard pupils. Leaders at all levels are rightly focused on raising standards and improving the progress that pupils make, although the leadership of science has been disrupted, so improvements have slowed. They understand the varied needs of the school's pupils, so provide appropriate training for staff and have well-established links with other agencies to support the most vulnerable pupils. There are a growing number of links with the local community, but wider global links and the planning and evaluation of how the school promotes community cohesion are not embedded. Governors are supportive of the school and fulfil their statutory duties. They are provided with relevant information, and so understand most of the school's strengths and the areas that need further development. The challenge they provide has had an impact on some important areas of the school's work, for example in developing relationships with parents and improving attendance, but it is not yet robust enough to secure more rapid improvement in the quality of teaching and learning.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's welfare needs are met effectively in the Early Years Foundation Stage, with the result that they settle into the routines of school quickly and make satisfactory progress in their learning. They play together harmoniously and are considerate and respectful. Classrooms are attractive and welcoming. The curriculum is varied, information and communication technology is used well to interest children, and the improved outdoor area adds much to their enjoyment. A structured programme to teach early reading skills is improving children's attainment and progress but is not delivered consistently well across the different classes. While there are a range of activities linked to different areas of learning, there is an imbalance between those led by the teacher and those which children choose for themselves, which limits the development of their independence.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents are happy with their child's experience of school. They say their children enjoy school and they value the support that they are given. A very few felt that their views or concerns were not always listened to or that incidents of unacceptable behaviour were not always dealt with effectively.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rushy Meadow Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 96 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 619 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	61	32	3	0

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



24 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rushy Meadow Primary School, Carshalton, SM5 2SG

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We especially enjoyed looking at your work, seeing you in lessons, watching the class assembly that some of you put on for your parents and talking to so many of you. You were friendly and confident and told us what you thought very clearly.

Your headteacher and teachers have made your school an attractive place to learn. You and your parents told us that you like school and that it is a welcoming, caring place where you feel safe. You are respectful, polite and caring towards each other. We were impressed to see how you have learnt to use signing to welcome your friends. We were very interested to hear from the school council about their plans for the Key Stage 1 playground and about how you are growing vegetables on the allotment.

Your school is a satisfactory one, which means that there are lots of things that it does well, but also that there are some things that could be better. We have asked the staff to help you even more by making sure your lessons are all as good as the best, so that you can make even more progress. We have also asked them to help the very youngest children get off to a really good start in school by encouraging them to attend school regularly and by giving them opportunities to make more choices. We also want them to keep checking how the things they are doing to improve your school are making a difference and helping you learn as well as you can.

Thank you again for making us so welcome and we hope that you carry on working hard and enjoying being at school.

Yours faithfully

Jackie Krafft
Her Majesty's Inspector

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