

Ravensdale Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112759
Local Authority	City of Derby
Inspection number	325677
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2008
Reporting inspector	David Speakman

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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	260
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sarah Gatford-Ball
Headteacher	Mrs Caroline Adams
Date of previous school inspection	17 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Devonshire Drive Mickleover Derby Derbyshire DE3 9HE

Age group	3–7
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2008
Inspection number	325677

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large infant school is situated in Mickleover, close to the City of Derby. About a half of pupils come from out of the school's immediate area. The proportion of pupils claiming a free school meal is lower than most schools. Children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at the beginning of the term after their third birthday. They transfer into Reception in the September of the year in which they are five. Attainment on entry covers a wide range but overall it is similar to that expected for children of their age. The proportion of pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need. Identified learning difficulties mainly include speech and language; hearing, visual or multi-sensory impairments; and autism. The number of pupils coming from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds is similar to most schools and an average proportion is at the early stages of learning English.

There is a breakfast club, which is the responsibility of the school governors. It provides for children from this school and the junior school next door. There is after-school care on site, which is run independently of the school. The headteacher and most staff are new since the previous inspection. The school council has achieved the School Council Bronze Award and the school has recently gained Healthy Schools Status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Pupils achieve well to gain above average standards by the time they reach the end of Year 2. Not only does the school provide well for pupils' academic achievement, it is also effective in ensuring that all pupils, whatever their individual needs, are well cared for. As one child puts it, 'the teachers will always sort out problems for you.'

Pupils achieve well in the EYFS and at Key Stage 1. When they enter Year 1, most pupils have achieved the goals nationally expected at the end of Reception and are already working confidently at Year 1 national curriculum levels. By the end of Year 2, standards are consistently above average. They have been above average for some years in reading and writing, but in 2008, teachers' assessments and tests put standards in mathematics at broadly average. Attainment of current Year 2 pupils shows a similar picture. Pupils' numeracy skills are secure, but they are not as good at solving problems for themselves. Secure core skills in literacy and numeracy and good collaborative working skills prepare pupils well for the next stages of their education.

Because of good care that helps pupils feel safe and secure in school, they progress well in their personal development. Spiritual, moral and social development is good. Studies of different religions and cultures prepare them well for life in multicultural Britain. The school promotes a respectful, secure, family atmosphere, where pupils treat each other, adults and visitors with good manners and respect. Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel secure whilst there.

The quality of education is good. Teaching is effective in promoting good learning. Teachers know pupils well through their effective use of assessment data. This enables them to plan tasks matched well to each individual pupil's learning needs that challenge them and move them on well. A strong feature of teaching lies in its consistent good quality, enabling pupils to make good, steady progress as they move through the school. The curriculum contributes well to pupils' overall progress. The school is now linking English and mathematics to other areas of the curriculum to make learning more meaningful for pupils on a daily basis. Although this is effective in improving pupils' writing, there is insufficient opportunity for pupils to develop their problem solving skills in mathematics.

Leadership and management are good and effective in moving the school forwards. The successful implementation of a number of initiatives since the previous inspection, including target setting for pupils' work, improving the quality of teaching and learning, and effective and accurate school self-evaluation, have all contributed to the improvement since the previous inspection. The school has a good capacity for further improvement. Much of this improvement is due to the work of the senior leadership team. Many subject leaders are new to the school, and hence to their leadership and management roles in this school. Although they have the necessary skills, their role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and in developing their subject areas does not yet provide enough support for the senior leadership team in their school improvement work.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children come into the EYFS with attainment at about the expected level for their age. Their skills in solving simple problems, beginning to write and linking the sounds to letters are not as secure. They make good progress and achieve well because of the good support they receive

in their learning. Staff provide a good range of interesting and creative activities which the children can choose for themselves or benefit from the help of an adult. Children's creative work is valued and displayed proudly and their developing independence is fostered and cultivated well. For example, children serve themselves at snack time and they are encouraged to put on their coats ready for outdoor play. Children behave well. Their welfare is of paramount importance, they can access drinking water readily if they are thirsty and healthy snacks are available. Leadership and management of the EYFS are good, with a clear view of what needs to be done to improve the provision further. This includes planning to refine the use of assessment to track progress and achievement. There is a well-equipped outdoor area, but this is not easily accessible for all children. However, the staff are aware of this and strive hard to ensure all children benefit from learning outdoors. The partnership with parents and carers is valued and a good range of information provided, for example in a booklet or from open mornings when prospective parents can attend with their children. 'Fluffy' the toy bear and 'Penguin' are sent home with children and provide another link with parents, who may contribute to a diary, which is later shared with the children. There are good links with other EYFS providers in the area.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' problem solving skills to raise attainment in mathematics.
- Develop the role of subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and in curriculum development to support the senior leadership team's drive for further improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards at the end of Reception are above those nationally expected by the end of the EYFS in most areas of learning. Pupils achieve well throughout Years 1 and 2, and, by the end of Year 2, standards are consistently above average. Test results in 2008 fell to a broadly average level in mathematics. Scrutiny of pupils' work, observation of standards during lesson observations and analysis of the school's own assessment data show a similar picture again this year. Standards in mathematics are below those in reading, writing and speaking and listening because pupils demonstrate limited problem solving skills. This was seen in lessons and there is limited evidence of these opportunities in pupils' workbooks. Pupils who find work more difficult achieve well against their targets in their education plans and in lessons. Those with English as an additional language soon acquire enough English to enable them to achieve well in their lessons. Standards are good in art, much of which is displayed in common areas around the school and in classrooms to create a bright and stimulating learning environment.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school, they settle happily and adults use every opportunity to encourage good behaviour. Pupils report that 'children can be naughty sometimes'. However, inspectors observed good behaviour which was managed effectively by staff. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils speak enthusiastically about what they do in lessons and on visits to local places - 'It's exciting to do science experiments and when you go out to see things, you learn lots!' Pupils' positive self-esteem, confidence and independence are well developed and they want to learn and find out more. Pupils value the celebration of their achievements. Pupils play and work well together

and care about the environment. They contribute eagerly to the school and local communities. Older pupils especially play an active role in helping the school to run well, for example, acting as Sports and Song Leaders. This promotes their self-esteem and gives them an early understanding of the importance of citizenship. They take an active part in decision making in school through their school council, such as improvements to the playground. Pupils know how to stay healthy and regularly enjoy sporting activities, including 'Huff and Puff' and use of the 'Trim Trail'. They are aware of healthy eating and this is supported through the Breakfast Club, where children eat a healthy breakfast. They feel safe in school, say there is no bullying and are happy that 'everyone will look after you if you need it'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan interesting lessons to engage pupils' interest and enjoyment; consequently, pupils are enthusiastic learners. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used confidently by both teachers and pupils alike. Classroom technology helps to make teaching points clear so that pupils quickly grasp new ideas and skills. Pupils use it well to demonstrate and consolidate new learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' academic achievement and of their behaviour resulting in an effective learning environment in lessons. Competent teaching assistant support is targeted well, for example in focus groups. Sessions at the end of lessons are used well to revise and sometimes extend learning and for pupils to make their own simple assessments of how well they think they have done. Marking of pupils' work is an area that is not yet effective in helping pupils to improve. Although work is marked regularly, comments are often complimentary and do not give pupils enough indication of how they might improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and it supports pupils' good achievement. Links across different subjects add interest to learning and have had a positive impact on raising standards in writing for example. However, there are not enough opportunities to improve pupils' problem solving skills to raise attainment in mathematics. The curriculum is enriched with visits to places of interest, visitors who share their experiences, such as their cultures and faiths, and a variety of activities after school. Curriculum plans and displays of pupils' work in classrooms and around the school show pupils have a wide range of learning opportunities and a broad and rich curriculum. The use of new initiatives such as the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) are supporting pupils' personal development well. Opportunities are found for developing the curriculum with parents, for example, parents appreciated the reading workshop. Curriculum planning extends well into the school's local community, which is used effectively to support learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school cares for its pupils. There are effective systems in place to safeguard pupils' welfare and promote their personal development and well-being. Due attention is paid to health and safety arrangements, regular risk assessments and staff training. Pastoral support for pupils is good because staff know their pupils well and react quickly and sensitively to any issues that

may arise. Partnerships with external agencies are effective, ensuring appropriate support is given, particularly to pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils with particular talents are identified and the school is beginning to develop the curriculum to better suit their needs. The school is particularly effective in supporting pupils whose first language is not English. Academic guidance has recently improved and is now good. More use is made of assessment information to set challenging improvement targets for individuals or groups of pupils and older pupils understand what they need to do to get to the next level in English and mathematics. Teachers use tracking systems well in these subjects to ensure that their pupils are making sufficient progress and are quick to provide appropriate catch up programmes where necessary. In other subjects, teachers assess pupils' abilities appropriately, but do not collate the information to give a whole school view about pupil progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is effective in her role. She has been successful in helping the large number of new teachers to the school settle quickly and contribute to strong teamwork. She has created an effective senior leadership team that has successfully moved the school forward through accurately monitoring and evaluating the school's work. Through this knowledge, they set challenging targets for the performance of pupils. Teachers are held accountable for the progress of each individual in their class. The school is effective in creating a good level of community cohesion and a high priority is placed on establishing a strong school community. The school prides itself that it is an inclusive school and there is growing involvement of parents, even those who live some distance from the school. The school provides pupils with a secure understanding of diversity and the importance of the world as one global community. Governors work effectively with the school and know it well. They are well organised and support and challenge to good effect.

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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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
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?	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
The extent to which 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	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?	2
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	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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

3 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ravensdale Infant and Nursery school, Derby, DE3 9HE

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed very much the time we spent meeting you and your teachers, visiting lessons to watch you learn, and speaking to you to find out your thoughts about the school.

You go to a good school.. All the adults work well together to provide you with a good education. Teaching, learning opportunities and the quality of care shown for you are good. You all make good progress in lessons and reach above average standards in reading and writing, but standards in mathematics are only average.

You help by behaving well and trying hard to do your best. We were impressed by how well you respond to your teachers and try hard all the time. We were very pleased by the sensible way in which you make friends with others and care about each other. You help to make others feel safe in school. Those of you we spoke to said how much you enjoy school and find it interesting. You are well prepared to go on to your next schools.

There are many good features about your school, but there are still a few things to do to make it even better. We have asked staff and governors to look at ways of helping you to do as well in mathematics as you do in your reading and writing and to get the new teachers to help the headteacher more in improving the school.

We wish you all the best in the future.

David Speakman

Lead inspector