

# Runwell Community Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115037
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	326116
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Roger Brown

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	287
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Tim Chamberlin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Jeremy Crook
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 June 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Canewdon Gardens Runwell Wickford Essex SS11 7BJ

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 June 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	326116

**Telephone number**  
**Fax number**

01268 735329  
01268 764879

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school serves Runwell, Wickford and the surrounding area. It is larger than the average primary school. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage in the September after their fourth birthday. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds, although there are small numbers from a range of other backgrounds including around 5% from the Traveller community. A few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is smaller than average.

The school holds a number of awards. These include, Activemark, a Basic Skills award, a Healthy Schools award, an ECO Schools Green Flag and Investors in People.

There is on-site childcare provision that is not managed by the governing body. This includes a breakfast/after school and holiday club as well as a pre-school club.

## 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 and leave school as well rounded individuals, both academically and socially. They are well equipped to face the next challenges in their lives. The school enjoys very good support from parents, many of whom wrote expressing their views about the way they value the school. Pupils, too, appreciate the opportunities it offers them, especially the strong links within the local community.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The weaknesses that were identified have been tackled. The quality of teaching and learning is now good and much more consistent. There is a better level of challenge in lessons to support strong pupil progress. When children start at the school attainment is below the expected level. By the time pupils leave the school, overall standards are usually above the national average. Standards across the school are continuing to rise. Teacher assessments for the current Year 6 pupils again show above average levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science overall. Standards at the end of Year 2 have also improved over time, and although they vary from year to year, are usually above those expected in all areas except writing. Pupils' writing is also a relative weakness in English at Key Stage 2. There has been good progress in the development of writing, but this has been from a very low baseline. Staff acknowledge they still need to do more to improve pupils' writing through the newly introduced curriculum initiative of developing writing skills across different subjects.

Teaching is often lively and interesting. Pupils emphasise how much they enjoy their lessons and like being challenged to do even better. The quality of relationships in the school is a strength and there is a genuine respect between adults and pupils that helps to create a learning environment where pupils flourish. Teacher assistants bring a host of skills which enhance pupils' learning.

Staff recognise and celebrate the individuality of pupils. This is reflected in the high quality of pastoral care and pupils' good personal development. Pupils have a genuine voice in the life of the school and this is clearly important in building up their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils behave well. They show a mature awareness of right and wrong and a respect for others. Pupils know, and importantly, practise what is needed to follow fit and healthy lives. They manage risks well and their sense of social responsibility is clear. However, their cultural awareness is more restricted, for although they make outstanding contributions to their own community and much appreciated contributions to specific international communities, such as their Kenyan charity, their horizons are limited. Staff recognise that many are sheltered from a broader understanding of the wider world and are working hard to develop this further.

The good leadership and management of the school arise from the very effective partnership between the headteacher, the senior leadership team and the governors. Their focused approach gives clear direction to the work of the school. Given the significant improvement in standards and the development of the curriculum since the last inspection the school provides good value for money and has a good capacity to continue to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children's attainment when they start in Reception varies widely, but the data indicates that on average, it is below the expected levels. The greatly improved quality of provision in the

Early Years Foundation Stage gives children an effective start to their schooling. The welcoming atmosphere and good levels of care and welfare ensure children settle well. There is a good range of stimulating learning experiences provided, both indoors and in the outside environment. In both areas, children enjoy learning opportunities that arise from the activities that are provided, as well as those based on their own interests. Children behave and concentrate well and make good strides in their personal development. The teaching is good, ensuring all children, including those who need extra support, make good progress. By the time the children move into Key Stage 1, most are achieving at the level expected. Leadership and management are good. The new leader has initiated and overseen the upgrading and improvements to the quality of provision. However, she recognises that the next step needed to ensure even better progress for all children but particularly for the most able, is to develop a more rigorous and useful assessment system. The present system records outcomes, but does not readily support staff in making strategic targeted interventions that would accelerate the children's learning.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in writing by capitalising on the opportunities in the new curriculum initiative to develop writing across different subjects.
- Develop the Early Years Foundation Stage assessment system to make it more rigorous and effective.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils across the school make good progress. Standards in Key Stage 1 have risen markedly year-on-year for the last six years. This year's cohort will not attain the high levels of the previous year but pupils will still have made good progress to achieve a level that is above that expected in most respects. The results in the end of Year 6 assessments for 2008 were in line the average nationally, a small fall from the previous year. However, pupils made good progress from a low starting point. This year the school has good evidence to show that pupils will achieve levels that are above average, especially so in reading and mathematics. The aspect that is weaker at both key stages is writing, but this is because it is the area where pupils have had to make up most ground. The better quality systems now in place to record and measure pupils' achievement allow staff in Key Stages 1 and 2 to accurately target those groups and individuals who need more help. As a result, all pupils, including those who require additional support, achieve well. Pupils identified as gifted, able or talented are enthusiastic about the opportunities they are given to extend their skills, knowledge and understanding.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is good. They have a mature view of the need for rules and the consequences of not keeping them. Relationships between pupils and with the other adults in the school community are good. Pupils' enjoyment of school is outstanding. They are attentive in lessons, keen to do their best and very appreciative of the school's strengths. 'This is a friendly place,' commented one. 'The teachers make learning fun,' said another. The rate of attendance has been consistently higher than the national average and has continued to improve each year as a result of work by staff. Pupils generally have good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, although they are less clear about the culture and lifestyles of the other ethnic groups which make up our own multicultural heritage. They

have a good understanding of what is required for a healthy and a safe life and older pupils run a healthy tuck shop each day. Pupils have a significant level of involvement in the local community through work in the arts, sports and a range of learning networks. Their contribution to the school and wider community is excellent. For example, during the inspection a senior citizen who had been responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the school garden for many years received a school's citizenship certificate. Older pupils willingly take responsibility for important areas of the school's work. They have a marked impact as school councillors, play leaders and recycling monitors. Their work as ECO-council members promotes their appreciation of the importance of environmental issues well and they have a mature view of the importance of the motto, 'Reduce, Re-use, Recycle'. The progress pupils make in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills, as well as strong personal qualities, prepares them well for the next stages of their education and beyond.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers typically show good subject knowledge and lessons focus clearly on the specific learning that is intended. They manage pupils well and create very responsive working relationships so that pupils feel relaxed and ready to do their best. Lessons are taught at a brisk pace and pupils are expected to work hard. However, occasionally some of the activities are not sufficiently challenging, especially for more able pupils. Resources, including interactive whiteboards, are used well to capture and keep pupils' interest. Pupils usually discuss confidently and cooperate willingly, although sometimes opportunities to encourage short discussions with a partner in order to further develop speaking and listening skills are not taken. Teaching assistants know pupils well and support and encourage them very effectively. Those who need extra help get good support and achieve their targets. The marking of pupils' work is regular and helpful, as there is usually a good balance between celebratory comments and identification of features to improve.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

A new curriculum which emphasises links between different subjects within interesting and relevant overall themes is being developed well to help improve writing skills. This is work in progress. The curriculum is continually modified to meet the needs of pupils in the mixed age classes. There is a good focus on the provision of basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills as well as opportunities to learn French or to get extra music tuition. There are a good number and range of support groups which make the curriculum accessible for pupils who may be vulnerable, in need, or at risk of falling behind. The curriculum promotes pupils' personal development skills very effectively. There are an excellent number and range of enrichment activities with a high level of pupil take up. These include visitors to the school, and opportunities such as the 'Plato's People' philosophy group as well as developing links with a school in Kenya. There is an especially good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities which help to make pupils' learning interesting, relevant and fun.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

Pupils' safety and well-being are paramount and the school's caring attitude is fully embedded in all aspects of its work. Pupils say that rare incidents of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with swiftly and effectively. The staff leadership in the development of play and games during breaks and lunchtime is a notable strength of the school. This has led to older pupils now supporting the younger ones as 'play leaders'. As a result, everyone agrees that playtimes are now much more enjoyable social occasions. The school carries out the required checks on those who work with children and all staff have received training on child protection. Detailed risk assessments are carried out for activities both on and off the school site.

The staff in Key Stages 1 and 2 now make good use of assessment data to identify pupils who would benefit from additional support to meet any special learning needs. Pupils are given good guidance to help improve their work and are very ready to take on board the comments and advice given, although as some Year 6 pupils observed, the teachers are 'really demanding'.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher, senior leadership team and the governors carry out their roles well. They have a clear understanding of how well the school is performing, and have accurately identified what they need to do to take it forward. They have established a number of excellent partnerships with a range of schools and local organisations which promote pupils well-being and learning very effectively. Staff are consciously working to expand the pupils horizons. A community cohesion policy is in place and the success of the school's work in its local community is one of the outstanding areas of its work. However, although work is well under way to raise and heighten pupils' understanding and awareness of national and global perspectives, there is still some way for this to go before it becomes fully embedded.



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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?	1
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 <sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

12 June 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Runwell Community Primary School, Wickford SS11 7BJ

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you about your work and everything that goes on in school. We were impressed by your good behaviour in lessons and by your confidence in asking questions and joining in discussions. We could see that you care well for each other and respect what other people say. These strengths prepare you well for when you move on to your next schools.

We think that you go to a good school. We could see that you quickly got down to your tasks in lessons and the work you were doing was of high quality. We liked the way your teachers listen to your opinions and work hard to take account of your interests when planning the work that you do. I was especially pleased to hear about your enthusiasm for the new curriculum your teachers are developing and the fact that you like the special learning days. As one Year 6 pupil said to me, 'These days really make the learning stick'. When we looked at your books and your work we could see that the staff have a good understanding of what you need to do next to improve your work. I was especially pleased by those of you in Year 6 who explained about your challenging targets and how demanding your teachers are. This was because you were correct in realising that this is part of the reason why you are reaching higher standards. Well done.

However, we would like your teachers to continue to work with you to raise your standards in writing. This is because it is the one area where you are not achieving results that are better than most other schools.

We would also like staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage to develop the system they use to record and help the younger children to make the next steps in their learning. We could see that they have already done a great job at improving the learning environment in the classroom and the outdoor space, but now we would like them to be able to carry out the assessments more efficiently.

Keep up the great ECO work. You should be really proud of your Green Flag award.

Our best wishes for your future.

Yours faithfully

Roger Brown

Lead inspector