

Riders Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115909
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	326289
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Christopher Schenk

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	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	150
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	Mr Andrew Goodall
Headteacher	Mrs Janet Hayward
Date of previous school inspection	16 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Kingsclere Avenue Leigh Park Havant PO9 4RY
Telephone number	02392 475258
Fax number	02392 492127

Age group	4–7
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2009
Inspection number	326289

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Riders Infant School is a little smaller than most primary schools, and includes 54 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, who are of Reception age and are taught in a unit of two classes. Nearly all its pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much higher than in most schools and so is the proportion who have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Many of these have moderate learning difficulties, often with particular respect to their speech, language and communication skills; some also have behavioural problems and a few have physical disabilities. The school gained enhanced Healthy School status in 2006 and the Activemark in 2007 and 2008.

In the school building, there is a privately run facility, Phoenix Pre-School, that provides day care for Nursery-aged children. It was inspected separately, at the same time as this inspection.

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 that serves its pupils well and makes a strong contribution to their community. The headteacher sets a tone of openness and accessibility that brings about excellent relationships with parents. Their response to a questionnaire sent out at the time of the inspection was overwhelmingly positive. One parent's comment was typical of many: 'The school is brilliant as it always puts children first'.

When children first come to the school at around the age of four, a high proportion do not have the social or language skills normally expected for their age. They settle quickly into the Foundation Stage unit where the calm, orderly and stimulating environment helps them to make rapid progress in their social skills. The skilful teaching by all the adults in the unit helps children to make good progress in their learning. Even so, by the time that they enter Year 1, many pupils still do not reach the expectations for their age. Their progress continues to be good in Years 1 and 2 because of the lively and well-organised teaching they receive and because the diverse needs of individual pupils are carefully taken into account. Although the standards that they reach by the age of seven are below average, they represent good achievement for the pupils, given their starting points.

The pupils' personal development is good and the care, guidance and support that they are given are outstanding. The pupils thoroughly enjoy school and behave well. The school itself has a good range of support staff, including a counsellor and a home school link worker that it shares with the junior school on the same site. There are also very good links with outside agencies and with other local schools, through the Leigh Park Community Improvement Partnership and the Schools Sports Partnership Organisation. In particular, the school's close and productive working relationship with the junior school is of great benefit to staff, parents and pupils.

The school has successfully brought about improvement in the two areas identified in the last inspection report, reading and attendance, and is always seeking ways to improve further. A recent initiative, to develop a more stimulating curriculum, has already resulted in higher levels of motivation and enjoyment. It is being carefully monitored to check that the thematic approach is not having an adverse effect on the pupils' progress in their key skills. However, the school has not yet explicitly set out the way in which individual topics can contribute to the development of specific skills. The school encourages parents to play a part in their children's education, for example by producing its own DVD on letters and sounds, but is aware that there is more to do in this respect.

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher has created a common sense of purpose among all the staff, who work together very effectively for the good of the pupils. The governors make an exceptionally strong contribution and are closely involved in all aspects of school life.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children are eager to come to school and keen to learn. The start of the day is very well organised: children come in and select their name cards so that they can register themselves, and they move with confidence and independence to one of the activities that have been set out for them. Parents bring their children into the unit and have good opportunities to talk to teachers.

The two class teachers lead and manage the provision well, with support and guidance from the school's senior leaders. They have prepared very thoroughly for the new requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and have developed the unit's practice effectively, particularly in giving more emphasis to child-initiated activities and in making very good use of the outside area, which is carefully organised to provide a stimulating range of opportunities for learning. Their enthusiastic and imaginative approach meets with a good response from the children and their parents.

The other adults in the unit are well briefed and deployed, and make a very valuable contribution to the children's learning. There is a suitable balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities and the programme of work is carefully planned to cover all areas of learning. There are strong links with pre-school settings, including the Phoenix Pre-School that is next door to the unit.

Last year, a daily session on letters and sounds was introduced in which the children work in groups according to their levels of attainment. This has resulted in a marked improvement in their skills by the time that they go into Year 1. By contrast, their number skills are not so well developed, indicating that not enough focused work in this area is undertaken.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use the excellent relationships with parents to involve them further as partners in their children's education.
- Review the developments that have taken place in the curriculum and make explicit the sequence of key skills that lies behind the selection of topics.
- Building on the success of the sessions on letters and sounds, introduce into the Reception's daily routine similar opportunities for focused work on number skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

While the standards attained at the end of Year 2 remain below the national average, standards in reading and writing have improved over time. In comparison to the standards when the school was last inspected, the latest results of national assessments show a considerable improvement in reading and a small improvement in writing. In mathematics, the standards have remained much the same. The school analyses the results carefully and uses its analysis to focus improvements. For example, last year's results showed the performance of boys in reading and writing to be below that of girls by a gap that was greater than the national figures. The school has used a range of strategies to remedy the situation and the tracking of progress indicates that these strategies have been effective in raising the achievement of boys.

In 2008, a new national method of analysing Key Stage 1 results was introduced, to take account of the different contexts in which schools operate. This analysis shows that the school's results were appreciably above expectation. The progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good, because of the carefully targeted support that they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' enjoyment of school is outstanding and they have very positive attitudes to learning. They have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and are keen to take part in physical activities. These strengths are reflected in the achievement of Activemark and Healthy School

awards. A travel plan, developed in association with the juniors, has resulted in more pupils walking or cycling to school each day. There is regular teaching about the benefits of a good diet and the school is proactive in encouraging parents to provide healthy packed lunches and to involve them in activities like a family learning club called Cook and Eat, and a Ready, Steady, Cook afternoon in Reception. As a result, pupils and their families are beginning to adopt healthier lifestyles.

Pupils report that they feel safe. In a recent survey undertaken by the school, all of the Year 2 pupils said that if they were picked on, there is an adult they could tell who would do something about it. The members of the school council, who are elected by their classmates, take their responsibilities seriously. They have consulted about matters such as how to improve the playground and say, 'We write ideas down from our friends' and 'We change the school to get nice things'.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. The procedures to encourage attendance are excellent and have brought about improvement. The proportion of persistent absentees declined by a quarter between 2007 and 2008, and is now close to the national average for primary schools. Nevertheless, the overall absence rate remains above average, indicating that the school's efforts need to continue.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The teaching is lively and thorough. Lessons are well planned and proceed at a good pace, with plenty of variety to keep the pupils interested and motivated. Teaching groups are organised sensibly in different ways, sometimes in groups at similar levels of attainment and sometimes in mixed groups, according to the needs of the pupils and in line with what is being taught. Learning support assistants make a strong contribution and help to ensure that the needs of individuals are met.

The good teaching, combined with the pupils' very positive attitudes, result in good learning. As one pupil commented, 'I like the way we learn because it's fun and it's challenging'.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The teachers have worked very well together to plan and implement a curriculum that makes stronger links between subjects and gives more scope for their own and for the pupils' creativity. This is working successfully to raise levels of interest and to provide purpose for activities. For example, the Year 1 classes visited a farm museum as part of their topic on life in Victorian times and this gave them interesting experiences to write about. Year 2 pupils, learning about different types of food, had a real purpose in mind because they were charged with the task of designing and making a healthy *café*; for other pupils and for their parents. The school has identified the need to keep the new initiative under review and in particular to put in place a structure for the development of key skills through the thematic approach.

There is a good range of after school clubs, with at least one running on each day of the week, sometimes including parents in family learning workshops. There are several sports teams that compete with other local schools with some success: the Year 1 multi-skills team won a trophy last September and a Year 2 team did so at a skipping festival in January. There is a programme

of activities for gifted and talented pupils who are often involved in working with similar pupils from other local schools, for example in making a local newspaper.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school cares for its pupils very well indeed, and gives them outstanding guidance and support. The procedures for the identification and support of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very thorough and efficient. Class teachers write individual education plans for all the pupils in their class who have been identified, and these plans are regularly reviewed in consultation with parents and the special educational needs coordinator. Pupils are mainly supported by effective extra help within the classroom. There is also the possibility of withdrawal for part of the day to a nurture group that gives them the right levels of support and challenge. The small numbers of pupils who find it difficult to control their emotions are given very good support.

Child protection procedures are robust and put into practice effectively, liaising with other agencies when appropriate. The school has very good links with a range of agencies to give support to pupils and their families. In particular, the regular visits of an educational psychologist and of a speech and language therapist are of great value. There is a breakfast club, run jointly with the juniors, that gives pupils a calm start to the day, as well as a nutritious breakfast.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's outstanding leadership is crucial to the success of the school. Her management style is open and encouraging and, as a result, all members of staff are able to play a part in sharing ideas and developing them together. Self-evaluation is thorough and illuminating, identifying areas for improvement and doing something about them. There is a regular programme of lesson observations, often undertaken jointly by the headteacher and her colleague from the junior school.

The school makes a good contribution to the cohesion of the community that it serves because of its excellent relations with parents and because of the strong links that it has with other schools and agencies across Leigh Park. A new parents' room was about to be opened at the time of the inspection, giving the school a valuable opportunity to expand its programme of adult education and to involve parents further in the education of their children.

The governors are very closely involved in the work of the school: each governor is linked with a particular class and some governors have links with specific areas of the curriculum. The governing body is chaired in such a way that it enables the local community to have a voice in the running of the school and to give challenge as well as support to the school's senior leaders.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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 ¹ reached by learners	3
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	1
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	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?	1

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	1
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

01 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Riders Infant School, Havant, PO9 4RY

Thank you for welcoming me when I came to visit your school. I am particularly grateful to the members of the school council and to the six Year 2 pupils who came to see me to tell me about your school, and also to the friendly and helpful pupil who told me where to go and what to do when I came to get my school dinner.

Riders Infant is a good school. I was pleased to find that you are making good progress in your learning. You are given lots of interesting things to learn about and your teachers make sure that you really have to think and work hard. As one of you told me, 'I like the way we learn because it's fun and it's challenging'.

You enjoy coming to school, and so do your parents, who are given a warm welcome by your headteacher and the rest of the staff. Lots of your parents wrote to me to say how much they liked the school. One of them said, 'The school is brilliant as it always puts children first'.

Before I left, I met your headteacher and some other teachers and governors and I asked them to do three things to make the school even better. I would like them to continue to work with your parents so that they can help you even more with your learning. I would also like them to make sure that the exciting work you are given to do always helps you to get better in your skills. Finally, the children in Reception have got on so well with learning about letters and sounds that I would like the staff to help the children to learn about numbers in much the same way.

You can help your teachers to make the school even better by continuing to behave well, to work hard and to look after each other.

Yours faithfully

Christopher Schenk

Lead Inspector