

# The Ryde School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117313
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	326570
<b>Inspection date</b>	24 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Messer

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	237
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 Eric McLaughlin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Janet Goodard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 February 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>	Pleasant Rise Hatfield Hertfordshire AL9 5DR
<b>Telephone number</b>	01707 267333
<b>Fax number</b>	01707 258262

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Nursery and Reception classes. There is a pre-school playgroup on site that is not managed by the governing body. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds with a small minority from minority ethnic groups. A small number of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The most common difficulties involve moderate learning problems. The school has the Healthy Schools Award, the Activemark and the Silver Eco-schools Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Pupils make excellent progress and by Year 6 attain standards that are consistently high in reading, mathematics and science and are exceptionally high in writing. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and has established an ethos in which everybody strives to do their best. Teaching and learning are outstanding. Staff have high expectations of pupils' performance and the quality of work that should be produced. Teachers insist on careful presentation, neat handwriting and work which reflects pupils' best efforts. Pupils respond well and produce some excellent work. They understand how to use vibrant adjectives and powerful adverbs to enrich their writing. They share ideas and collaborate sensibly to solve mathematical problems. In science they test hypotheses, such as whether taller pupils can throw bean bags further than shorter ones, creating precise scatter grams to record their results and draw conclusions. They paint stunning pictures and work in design and technology, such as the soft toys made by pupils in Year 6, is outstanding. The attention to detail and the care taken over finishing articles to a high standard, results in exceptionally good models, such as aircraft and windmills, crafted with precision. Work produced in information and communication technology (ICT) also demonstrates that pupils have mastered a wide range of computer skills and know how to present work to high standards.

Pupils' outstanding personal development supports their learning exceptionally well. As all groups of pupils succeed so well in their learning and personal relationships, they develop great poise and self confidence. They thoroughly enjoy coming to school because lessons are interesting. Pupils report that, 'Teachers make lessons fun so that things stick in your brain.' Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and pupils are highly motivated. They are extremely keen to learn and eager to please. They have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe, look after themselves and lead healthy life styles. Attendance is above average. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are polite and sensitive to the needs of others. The older ones are trained as play leaders and enjoy helping the younger ones to organise games at playtime. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Their ability to reflect sensitively is clearly evident in their responses to literature and paintings by famous artists, such as Renoir and Van Gogh. They have a keen sense of sympathy for people who are less fortunate than themselves and understand their responsibilities to the wider community beyond the school. They raise money to support many charities, for example Marie Curie Cancer Care and the Food Aid Appeal. Pupils' excellent cultural development is promoted through subjects such as music, art and design, history, geography and religious education, where they learn about different cultures and beliefs. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously. The school council is active and pupils have learnt about democratic processes, such as accepting majority decisions about cycling to school or using the school field in winter. The school's emphasis on working together and personal development, coupled with pupils' highly developed skills in English, mathematics and ICT, prepares them outstandingly well for their future lives.

The curriculum is outstanding. Good links are made between subjects to make learning meaningful. Pupils in Year 5 designed musical instruments and used these to make carefully fashioned models. In literacy they wrote precise instructions for making the instruments and played them in a music lesson. Music features strongly in the curriculum. Specialists teach pupils to play string and brass instruments, recorders and woodwind and in some lessons staff learn alongside pupils, showing them that they too are learners.

Care for pupils' welfare and well-being lies at the heart of the school, and as a result, this aspect is outstanding. Pupils learn in a safe and secure environment where adults show a high level of commitment to promoting health and safety. In a mathematics lesson in Year 1, for example, the teacher drew pupils' attention to the reasons for not eating the sweets they used for counting, because many hands had touched them. The school's policies and procedures for risks assessment and child protection are securely in place. The school keeps very good records of the checks made on the background of the staff and other adults working in the school. There is a good range of after school games and sports available to pupils. The younger pupils in the Reception class and Year 1 are given the opportunity to learn massage by a specialist. Pupils' progress is measured meticulously and any signs of underachievement are investigated. As a result, pupils who find learning difficult receive very prompt attention and effective support tailored to their needs. Special events are organised for gifted and talented pupils so that their particular needs are also met. For example, during the inspection the school hosted a writing workshop for gifted writers from twelve local schools.

Leadership and management are excellent. Staff share a commitment to continuing to improve provision and raise standards. Classrooms are bright, colourful places in which to learn and resources are good. The school is a well run, orderly community. There are good links between the eco-committee and the local community who work with the school to improve the grounds. The school has made a good start on forging links with schools in other countries, by for example sending letters to pen pals in France. Action Aid provides links with an Indian village which gives pupils a good insight into the lives of people in other countries. These initiatives support community cohesion well. The outdoor learning environment for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not well developed but the school has good plans to improve this. Standards have been rising steadily and there has been good improvement since the last inspection. The overwhelming majority of parents appreciate the high quality of education provided for their children. One wrote, 'The teachers and assistants do a wonderful job and the school is a happy place where children blossom and flourish.' The governing body monitors the school's performance rigorously. Governors are closely associated with the school and make sure that all legal requirements are met. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and identifies the most important priorities for improvement. Very ambitious targets are set for the amount of progress that pupils are expected to make each year and they come close to meeting them. The drive and determination to maintain excellent standards demonstrates that the school has outstanding capacity to go from strength to strength.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children settle happily into the daily routines of the class as the school makes effective links with the pre-school and with parents during their initial visits. Children enter the school with skills and knowledge that are expected for their age. A strong curriculum and high quality care, within a secure environment, supports them exceptionally well and contributes strongly to their personal development, which is outstanding. Assessment is thorough and identifies children's needs accurately. Careful records are kept and these are used well to plan the next steps in learning and identify where extra, specific support might be needed. Thorough planning ensures that the children's differing needs are met well. There is a strong emphasis on teaching children the links between letters and the sounds they represent. Consequently children are exceptionally well prepared to start reading and writing. All groups make good progress towards the Early Learning Goals. Their achievement is particularly good in linking letters and sounds, writing

and calculation. From an early age children learn to count, using real objects, such as the number of carrots growing in their garden. Children learn a wide range of skills through a thematic approach. Activities woven into the theme of growth and spring time, for example, included counting carrots, singing about scarecrows, growing beans, organising a garden centre and painting carefully observed flowers. Children learn to co-operate well with each other and also to work independently, happily initiating many activities themselves, following their own interests and working with a high levels of concentration. Their curiosity is constantly stimulated and they develop excellent attitudes to learning. By the end of Foundation Stage, standards are above average in all areas of learning.

Currently, the nursery and the Reception class are in separate buildings but a shared playtime is arranged for them so that all the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage can play together. Many activities are organised in the outdoor areas but the planning and organisation of the outdoor space is not sufficiently well developed to maximise children's learning experiences, especially for children in the Nursery.

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

- Develop facilities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that more exciting, stimulating and purposeful outdoor activities are provided to extend learning.

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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?	1
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	1

**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?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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<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>	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	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	1
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?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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**

25 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Ryde School, Hatfield, AL9 5DR

We thoroughly enjoyed the day we spent in your school. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful.

You go to an outstanding school. Your headteacher is an excellent leader and the teachers and support staff do an exceptionally good job. You told us that you like the staff very much and that they make learning fun. They set high standards and encourage you to try hard and do your best in everything. You rise to the challenges set and produce work of excellent quality. The standards you reach in your written work are exceptionally high. The care that you take and the close attention to detail when painting, drawing, designing, making models and word processing, leads to top quality work. You have excellent attitudes to learning and enjoy school. You discuss issues sensibly and have a good understanding of how important it is to look after our world. Your 'walking bus' is a great idea as it keeps cars off the road, conserves energy, reduces carbon dioxide emissions and helps you to exercise and keep fit. The eco-committee does a good job and encourages recycling, self-sufficiency and protecting the environment. You are thoughtful and sensitive to the needs of others. You have a keen sense of justice and fair play. You think of good ways to raise money for charities, such as car washing. You know extremely well how to stay safe, look after yourselves and lead healthy lifestyles. You become mature, confident learners and by Year 6 are prepared extremely well to move on to the next phase of your education.

We think that there is one key thing that would help to make the school even better. The outside learning areas for the youngest children could be developed so that they provide more exciting and stimulating activities to support learning.

We wish you every success in the future and we are sure that if you continue to work hard, the school will go from strength to strength.

Yours sincerely

John Messer

Lead inspector