

Race Leys Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125616
Local Authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	328366
Inspection dates	15–16 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Anne Pitt 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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	178
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Glen Wakelin
Headteacher	Mrs Jacqui McKee
Date of previous school inspection	2–3 May 2006
School address	Hurst Road Bedworth CV12 8AD
Telephone number	0247 6312221
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out at no notice by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors visited 11 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at school documents, pupils' work and 49 questionnaires from parents.

The inspection team looked in detail at the following:

- How well the school focuses on the achievement of groups of pupils.
- The promotion of community cohesion.
- The teaching of writing and mathematics to ensure that all pupils reach their full potential.

Information about the school

Race Leys is an average sized infant school. Most pupils, but not all, are from White British backgrounds. The proportion identified by the school as having learning difficulties is broadly in line with the national average, as is the number eligible for free school meals. Children's skills on entry to the Reception class are below expected levels, especially relating to language and mathematical development. The school holds the Healthy School and Sportsmark awards.

The school has provision on its school site for children aged 0 to three. This is inspected separately.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school with outstanding features. Pupils behave well and take a real pride in their work. The school's relationship with parents is highly positive because they are kept well informed about their children's development and staff listen to and act on their views. The senior management team have fully embraced the notion of extended provision outside the normal school day. In particular the quality of out of school clubs for 4–7 year olds is outstanding.

A great deal has been achieved since the school's last inspection. For instance:

- Standards have risen so that children at the end of the Reception year now reach good levels of development and pupils at the end of Year 2 achieve above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching across the school is consistently good and challenging.
- The introduction of structured programmes to teach letter sounds means that pupils learn effectively to read and write.
- The 'setting' of pupils to enable groups of pupils to be taught according to their ability means that pupils make good progress in English and mathematics.
- There is an upward trend in attendance figures as a result of measures put in place to encourage children to come to school.

The advancements over the last three years are due to the decisive and effective action taken by a strong leadership team and committed governing body, and the determination of hardworking staff to ensure that they get the best out of pupils. All staff strive to improve, and recognise that their lessons, assessment and target setting are good but that there is still room for development. Equally, the senior management team and governors do a rigorous job in checking the work of the school in order to gain an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and plan for improvement. They acknowledge that there is more to do to refine the school's planning and monitoring procedures, and to increase pupils' awareness of other cultures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by: using open-ended questioning techniques to extend pupils' understanding; using assessment more effectively during lessons to provide even more challenge for

all pupils; and referring to targets in lessons and in the marking of work so that pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve.

- Improve the effectiveness of school improvement planning by: linking monitoring activities more closely to the key priorities in the school development plan (SDP); ensuring that the success criteria in the SDP are measurable; governors monitoring the SDP in relation to cost effectiveness and value for money.
- Develop the already good curriculum so that it helps pupils to know about and understand the way other people live, especially those from different cultures.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The quality of pupils' learning and performance in the classroom is good. In the lessons seen, pupils showed very positive attitudes, good behaviour and a keenness to achieve their best. Relationships were happy and harmonious and the pupils' enjoyment of school and their academic achievement were due to the caring, friendly atmosphere in which they learn.

Standards are rising steadily. In English, mathematics and science they are above average and the Year 2 results show that pupils are ahead by between one and two school terms in each subject. This is due to the relentless tracking of the learning of individuals and different groups of pupils (boys, girls, class groups, pupils with learning difficulties and those entitled to free school meals) and ensuring that pupils do not fall behind. Pupils who find work difficult make good progress because they are skilfully supported in small groups. Parents remarked that this works well and that pupils are not made to feel different.

Pupils learn effectively by doing. Through the school council and other responsibilities such as play leaders and class monitors, the pupils make a positive contribution to their community. Observation of the gardening club showed pupils planting hanging baskets and flower pots to support the school's entry into the Schools in Bloom competition. Their visit to local allotments helped their preparations. The pupils are alert to the need to be healthy and their 'role play' in a café that serves nutritional salads demonstrates their awareness of a good diet. Early morning games, the many extra-curricular sports and regular physical education lessons help the youngsters to keep fit.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and this is helping them prepare well for the next stage of education. The highly effective support for pupils who have particular needs assists them in building good self-esteem and the confidence to 'have a go'. Pupils' cultural development is less advanced and many have a limited understanding of people from different cultures.

The pupils' good academic development, sound but improving attendance and confident acquisition of key skills are helping secure pupils' positive future economic well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

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

How effective is the provision?

The majority of the teaching seen during the inspection was good. Lessons are typically well organised and classroom routines are effective in enabling pupils to get on with their work without fussing or wasting time. The teaching of writing and mathematics is good. Pupils are made to think hard, for instance when trying to add up 'tens and units' numbers in their heads or sound out complex words when reading and writing. Effective questioning styles are used to allow pupils to explain their ideas but this is not always consistent in all classes. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and provide pupils with clear instructions and explanations. Effective team working between teachers and classroom assistants, and the good pupil/adult ratios, ensure that pupils are well supported with work that is well matched to their ability.

All teachers carry out regular assessments of pupils' work in reading, writing and mathematics, enabling them to track pupils' progress well. They are becoming effective in assessing groups of pupils in lessons but sometimes there are missed opportunities to do this. Teachers use their assessments to set challenging targets for each child, but these are not always emphasised in lessons or referred to in the marking of work and is almost certainly why most pupils could not tell inspectors what their targets were.

The school delivers a broad and balanced curriculum. There is a variety of practical 'hands on' experiences on offer. The after-school clubs are particularly noteworthy and enable pupils to extend their sporting, creative, gardening and information and communication technology skills really well. Pupils enjoy visits from local experts, who are often good male role models, for example from Coventry Football Club and the Sports Partnership.

Parents say how much they value the care and support shown to their children. 'I find the staff are helpful, cheerful and always approachable. Staff are always willing to listen to concerns however trivial'. Well-planned personalised programmes of intervention successfully help pupils with learning difficulties, including those with statements, to make the same good progress as others. A blend of in-class support and small group withdrawal work assists pupils to learn to read and write confidently, particularly through the school's structured approach to phonics and spelling.

The school's strong emphasis on promoting pupils' emotional well-being, for example through the early morning 'Fundamentals' session and nurture groups, has significant impact on the pupils' good personal development. Lunchtimes are happy, well-supervised times when pupils enjoy playing games. Transition arrangements with the junior school help pupils to make a smooth transfer. Similarly, well-forged links with a range of educational, medical and social support agencies also support the best interests of the learners.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
The use of assessment to support learning	2

The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is determined and has an effective but unobtrusive leadership style. The ambition to move the school from satisfactory, since its last inspection, to good and beyond is well communicated so that the school's success is due to the joint effort of school staff, the senior management team, governors, parents and pupils.

Since the last inspection there have been a number of significant improvements. There is now a robust system to track pupils' progress and evaluate the achievement of cohorts, groups and individuals. Rigorous analysis of assessment data enables the school to examine their procedures and change teaching methods for the better. For example, the introduction of 'setting' pupils for mathematics and a structured approach to teaching phonics has had a positive impact on raising standards. The school has also improved the way in which it engages with parents. A wealth of initiatives such as 'Stay and Play', the 'Share' project and Family Learning Support enhance home-school links and help parents to support their children's learning.

Parents also report improvements in the way that their views are valued. For example, a survey of parents identified that children were anxious when moving from Reception to Year 1 because the work was more 'formal'. This was addressed successfully by introducing more structured work towards the end of the Reception year.

The quality of the school's self-review and improvement planning is good. Key priorities are tackled effectively. The SDP clearly identifies targets, milestones and lines of accountability, although the success criteria are not precise enough to enable the school to measure the impact and cost effectiveness of innovation accurately. There are a variety of good ways that the school checks how well it is doing but there is scope to tailor the monitoring activities more closely to the identified priorities in the SDP.

Governance is good, an improvement since the last inspection. Governors have attended training and now understand their responsibilities. They are accountable, visit the school regularly and provide effective support and challenge for the school's leadership. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are rigorous and all requirements were met at the time of the inspection. Equality and tackling discrimination is a strength of the school. All pupils are treated fairly and with respect. Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily. Pupils work well together and accept each other's differences, but have limited knowledge of cultures represented in the international community.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Reception classes so that by the time that they start Year 1 they reach standards which generally match the national expectations for young children. The staff provide high quality care in a secure environment. Well-planned and purposeful practical activities engage the interests of children well. There is a good balance between the activities children can get on with unaided and those where adults teach specific skills. Independence is encouraged. Children learn to behave and cooperate well because the staff are very positive in their approach. They support the children well but occasionally miss opportunities to intervene in play activities to promote learning. The staff are skilled at making ongoing observations of children in order to track their progress. The indoor and outdoor environment is vibrant and caters well for all areas of learning. The coordinator has great vision and has been instrumental in promoting improvement and good practice.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Responses to the questionnaire show that there is a high level of satisfaction with the school. All respondents identify that their children are happy at school, enjoy attending and that healthy lifestyles are promoted well. Nearly all think the school is well led and managed. Parents and carers are particularly appreciative of the after-school activities and the way in which they are welcome in school. A few questionnaires raised concerns but these were related to individual matters rather than general matters. The headteacher is very willing for parents to contact her about individual concerns.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Race Leys Infant 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 49 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 178 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	37	10	1	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.



17 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Race Leys Infant School, Bedworth, CV12 8AD

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team to your school and being so friendly and helpful. I particularly want to thank the pupils, especially the members of the school council, who gave up their time to talk to inspectors.

These are the best things about your school.

- You enjoy school, and do well in English, mathematics and science.
- Your parents are very welcome in the school and they are encouraged to help you with your learning.
- You get on well with each other and your behaviour is good.
- Adults take good care of you so that you feel happy and safe in school.
- Lessons are usually good.
- There are really good after-school activities.
- The headteacher, staff and governors are very keen to help your school improve.

What I have asked your school to do now.

- Make your lessons even better.
- Teach you about the way other people live, especially those from different cultures.
- Check closely how well the school helps you improve.

You are lucky that you go to such a good school where everyone gets on well. I hope that you will do your best to make it even better.

Yours faithfully

Anne Pitt
Her Majesty's Inspector

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