

# Richmond Avenue Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	133957
<b>Local Authority</b>	Southend-on-Sea
<b>Inspection number</b>	328779
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 November 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Williams HMI

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.

---

<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)	327
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 Paul Green
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Bronwyn Lister-Smith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 October 2005
<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>	Richmond Avenue Shoeburyness Southend-on-sea Essex SS3 9LG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01702 293302
<b>Fax number</b>	01702 290975

---

<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 November 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	328779

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This larger than average primary school has pupils mostly from White British backgrounds, although an increasing number come from minority ethnic groups. Only a few are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. There is an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and nursery run by the school on the same site. The number of pupils moving into the school during each year is very high in Key Stage 2, many of whom require extra support with their learning. The overall proportion of pupils in the school with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is much higher than average. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average. The school has worked hard over the years to gain a range of awards that include the Advanced Healthy School Award and Investors in People.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Richmond Avenue Primary School is a good school. There are aspects of its work, notably pupils' personal development, along with the care guidance and support they receive, which are outstanding. The school ethos is embodied in the motto on its development plan 'Richmond Avenue is an Inclusive School.' Consequently it accepts many pupils moving in to the school throughout the year and helps them progress well, often from a low starting point. Pupils make excellent progress in their personal development. They thrive whilst at the school and are extremely happy to be there, making sure that every visitor knows how much they enjoy their lessons! Parents are supportive of the school and recognise its strengths. As one put it, 'I am very proud to send my children to Richmond Avenue Primary.' The school's partnership with parents, other schools and the range of outside agencies that are needed to support the pupils is impressive. Leadership and management at all levels are good; self evaluation is very good and accurate, though the school development plan that emerges from it is too weighty and does not provide an easy way of identifying the school priorities. Nevertheless, there is a good capacity to improve even further, especially given the record of improvement under the headteacher.

The overall quality of teaching is good. All adults in the school fulfill their roles well. Teaching assistants, for example, are effective in supporting the learning of both individuals and groups of pupils. The relationships between teachers and pupils and between pupils themselves are excellent. Pupils therefore feel safe and secure. Staff provide excellent care, support and guidance and look after the welfare of the pupils very carefully. Pupils' behaviour is good, and when difficulties arise these are managed well. Pupils are extremely polite, opening doors for each other and saying 'thank you' when this happens. They have a good knowledge of how to stay safe and healthy, eat sensible food and take part in physical activity. The school has a good range of strategies to make sure they attend regularly. However, even though attendance has improved over recent years, it still does not reach national averages because the level of unauthorised absences is too high.

The curriculum to support teaching and learning is good and is enhanced well by a range of extra activities. The attainment of pupils when they begin school is well below average, but by the time they leave pupils make good progress so that they achieve more or less in line with national expectations. This is an improvement from the time of the last inspection. It does vary immensely from year to year, but pupils' achievement is good overall.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children learn and develop well in the EYFS. From starting points that are well below average, they make good progress. They start the day by leaving their parents readily and settle happily into school routines. This is as a direct result of very good induction procedures that have helped them establish independence and self-confidence. Parents recognise this, commenting on how easily their children have settled.

Teaching is good, with activities carefully planned from a curriculum based on the EYFS requirements. Children engage very well in the opportunities to explore topics through play both inside and outside the classroom. The outdoor area is used well to increase children's physical skills, with plenty of resources and activities to interest them. Teachers and teaching

assistants work effectively as a team, providing a balance of free play and organised activities that encourage the children to learn basic skills and discover new experiences. Wherever possible, links are made between areas of children's learning. For example, they are encouraged to use number skills to calculate how many children are present and they sing the register. Spare minutes during changing after physical education are channelled into opportunities for developing essential skills such as phonics. Whilst children do not reach all of the expected goals by the time they enter Year 1, they are always willing to learn and behave well. The EYFS is well managed. For example, the school's entry data is analysed carefully and checks on how well pupils are progressing are carried out systematically.

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

- Reduce the number of unauthorised absences.
- Make the school development plan a more succinct document that gives a clearer view of the schools' priorities and so helps teachers raise standards.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children get a good start to their education in the EYFS. During Key Stage 1 pupils progress well, although by the end, they attain levels that are still below the national average. Few attain at the higher levels. Progress in Key Stage 2 is good. By the end of Year 6, standards have risen to around, or just below national averages. However, there is considerable variation between year groups. The significant number of pupils who join during Key Stage 2 have the effect of lowering the school's Year 6 test results. For many of these pupils, below average attainment still represents good progress. The end of Key Stage 2 assessments in English, mathematics and science improved in 2008 and pupils met challenging targets. This followed a downward trend in previous years. The fluctuation in standards between year groups is very significant, making it difficult to accurately judge standards over time. In spite of this, pupils' progress across all subjects is good and their overall achievement is good.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who need extra support progress well. Those who are gifted and talented are carefully identified and they achieve well because of careful re-grouping and special teaching. For example, some mathematically talented Year 2 pupils are taught in a more able Year 3 class and this helps them attain good standards.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils enjoy school life tremendously. As one parent put it, 'My son enjoys school so much that he is upset when weekends come!' Pupils are polite to everybody. They open the door for one another, for visitors and for staff, always saying 'please' and 'thank you' and show responsibility, both in the way they run the school council and in the way they care for one another. Their behaviour is good and the sense of community within the school and its local area is strong. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities to help one another, such as being 'buddies'. Their spiritual, moral and social development is good. The staff have planning in place designed to develop cultural opportunities, though the impact of this on pupils' knowledge and understanding has been limited. Pupils, who each have a health target, have an excellent knowledge of what is needed for a healthy and safe lifestyle. They participate fully in the wide range of physical activities on offer and eat healthily at school. They try hard to develop the skills needed in their later lives, working very well in teams and enjoying opportunities to use

and apply their knowledge, skills and understanding, by for example, Year 6 pupils creating a small business. Bullying and racism is rare so pupils say that they feel safe. The school is working hard to promote attendance, which is now closer to the national average, but unauthorised absence is still high.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Classrooms are attractive with display and resources that are managed well. For example, interactive white boards are used effectively to engage pupils and add excitement to learning. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and this allows them to teach confidently, answer pupils' questions accurately, and move the learning in different directions from the original plan when this is appropriate. For example, a maths lesson went into an unplanned section on prime and perfect numbers because the teacher instinctively knew this was the right thing to do. Pupils therefore made good progress. Work is pitched at the right level and provides good challenge. Effective teaching of whole classes, groups and one to one, for example in an 'every child counts' session, is good. Relationships between pupils and the many adults in the classroom are outstanding and thus pupils respond well. Teaching assistants have been well trained in their role; they receive good preparation for the lessons from the class teacher. They assess which pupils are achieving the objectives and give feedback to the teacher on this. Marking and comments on pupils work are sound and sometimes provides advice on how to improve.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good because it is planned to provide a good range of varied experiences. Personal, social and health education and citizenship are taught effectively. Teachers create opportunities to build links between subjects, for example using subject material from the Second World War as a basis for diary and letter writing in literacy, writing newspaper reports based on a mathematics day or positioning toy characters from a story using co-ordinates. This is supported by the good use of information and communication technology (ICT). Work on speaking and listening is supplemented by the effective inclusion of French, Spanish and Italian, particularly as a part of class routines and social times. Visits and themed events, such as the recent multi-cultural week and a Roman Day, enrich the curriculum and are valued by pupils. There is a good range of extra activities including musical and sporting clubs and opportunities for family learning. Pupils benefit from having the chance to participate in dramatic or musical productions.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

This is an extremely caring and friendly school where staff work closely together to ensure that pupils are well cared for and kept safe. Procedures for safeguarding pupils and for child protection are robust. First aid procedures are thorough; all staff are trained to know how to keep the children safe and their knowledge is regularly updated. Very good tracking systems ensure that teachers are able to identify pupils who are not making the expected progress and this enables teachers to put in place measures to help them. Support for all pupils is outstanding, with setting arrangements used well and learning mentors providing effective guidance. The

school also supports families in helping their children to learn through a range of projects. Throughout the school, pupils evaluate their own work and are working towards evaluating each other's. They fully understand the targets they are given to help them to improve and value the information given by teachers through their marking, which they always read.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good at all levels throughout the school. The strong focus on inclusion underpins much of the work and life of the school. Governors have a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are effective. Community cohesion is promoted well both within and outside the school, though as yet the Governors have not implemented a formal strategy that they can monitor. The headteacher and senior staff, including subject leaders, monitor the work of the school carefully at strategic points in the year. They know what needs to be done to improve standards. There is a comprehensive flow of information between teachers and managers about the progress of individual pupils. Strategies are put in place, such as booster classes, one to one teaching, and extra groups to drive up standards. Classes are thus reorganised as and when necessary to maximise the use of resources, and take account of the expertise of teachers and a range of outside agencies. Finances are managed well and prudently to promote improvement that in turn has had an impact on standards. There is good strategic planning of resources so consequently the school provides good value for money.

Improvement planning is accurately linked to self-evaluation. The school's self-evaluation form (SEF) is excellent in many ways. The school's improvement plan links accurately to the SEF but it does not give a clear picture of the priorities because it is far too lengthy. That said, given the quality of education provided and the strengths of the staff, the school demonstrates good capacity to improve even further.

**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](http://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?	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?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

---

<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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	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?	1

## 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	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	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**

20 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Richmond Avenue Primary School, Shoeburyness, SS3 9LG

Thank you for making Mrs Blackman, Mr Hewitt and myself so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed looking at the work you were doing and talking to you and your teachers.

It is clear to us that you are very well cared for, you really enjoy your school, and your parents agree with this. You looked fantastic in your Roman costumes on Wednesday! We were impressed by how well behaved and friendly you were. I don't think I have ever seen so many polite pupils who open the doors to each other, and say 'please' and 'thank you'. Well done!

Richmond Avenue Primary School is a good school. You work well in lessons and enjoy taking part in the activities available to you. Mrs Lister-Smith and all the adults work very hard to make your school a good school. The teaching is good therefore many of you make good progress from the time you join the school.

To make your school even better I have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to do two things. Firstly, they need to keep encouraging you all to come to school regularly. You and your parents can play your part in this, and it will help you to achieve even better standards in your work. Secondly, the staff need to make their plans for the future clearer so that everyone knows what they can do to help you become even more successful and raise the standards you achieve to higher levels.

I hope you will continue to enjoy and do well at Richmond Avenue Primary School.

Yours sincerely

John Williams

Her Majesty's Inspector