

Rabbsfarm Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102408
Local Authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	331569
Inspection dates	19–20 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	398
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	60
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Alastair Mullins
Headteacher	Mr Mike Cassidy
Date of previous school inspection	13 March 2008
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Gordon Road Yiewsley West Drayton UB7 8AH
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Rabbsfarm is much bigger than most primary schools. It serves the immediate vicinity in the south of the borough. About half the pupils are from White British backgrounds and the others are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. A few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties is above the national average. Most of these pupils have specific learning difficulties. The school has a higher than normal turnover of pupils.

The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a 30-place Nursery, which children attend on a part-time basis. In addition, there are two Reception classes. The school has gained the Sports Activemark.

At the time of its previous inspection, the school was found to need significant improvement because its overall effectiveness was inadequate. Significant improvement was required in pupils' achievement and their attendance and in the leadership and management of the school, all of which were inadequate.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Rabbsfarm has made across-the-board improvements since its previous inspection and provides a satisfactory standard of education. The inspection confirms the school's self-evaluation that its provision and the achievement of pupils are satisfactory and there are some good features. Standards have improved and pupils are making better progress than previously. Their personal development is now good. Their positive attitudes are demonstrated by increased levels of attendance, which are now average. They behave well, enjoy school and are caring and considerate to each other. They are happy learners because the quality of teaching has improved and teachers make lessons interesting. Care, guidance and support for pupils is also good. The school has a positive and caring ethos and this supports the personal development of all pupils, whatever their circumstances. Parents are almost unanimous in their support of the school and parents commented on how the school has improved. As one parent wrote, 'Since the last inspection I've observed many positive changes in the school and my children are making good progress and enjoy school'.

There has been a strong improvement in the quality of senior leadership. It is now satisfactory. The headteacher, working in close partnership with senior staff and with the support of the local authority, has steered the school well since the last inspection. The school checks provision much more rigorously and makes far better use of the good quality tracking data identified in the previous inspection. The school recognises that there is a need to ensure that teachers with subject responsibilities become as active in checking provision and achievement in their areas as senior leaders now are. Good quality improvement projects have been put in place to arrest the underachievement found at the last inspection. For example, new arrangements for the teaching and learning of reading and writing have been introduced. This has considerably accelerated progress. In consequence, standards in English have been boosted and, although they remain below the national average, they are much higher than they were previously.

A significant factor in the school's improving achievement is the quality of teaching and learning. Although still only satisfactory overall, there is an increasing proportion of good teaching. Teachers plan lessons well and, because they now ensure that pupils are clear about what is being taught and what they have to do to meet lesson objectives, learning has strengthened. The progress that pupils are making is now good in some year groups, including Year 6. However, the school is keenly aware that teachers need to be more ambitious in their expectations for pupils that find learning easy. Too few of these pupils are on course to attain the higher levels at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, particularly in writing. Nonetheless, current Year 6 pupils are on course to attain standards that have improved considerably. Standards are now below average in English, mathematics and science, having improved from having been exceptionally low.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's skills on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage are well below those typical for their age. However, because the provision is good in the Nursery, they get off to a good start, settle quickly and achieve well. The caring and warm ethos that prevails there supports children well and they are effectively encouraged to grow in confidence and self-esteem. In both the

Nursery and Reception classes, this strong emphasis on developing children's personal and social skills is paying dividends. The quality of teaching is good in both year groups. Teachers ask many searching questions and allow children time to think and consider their answers. Activities are matched well to the children's different stages of development so that they enjoy working independently and in groups. They play purposefully both indoors and outdoors. Reception classes have recently moved their base. However, their new outdoor area is not yet developed to match the excellence of that in the Nursery. Staff work well together as a team, have high expectations of the children and have a clear understanding of how young children learn best. They continually assess how well children are achieving and make good use of this information to plan future activities. In consequence, even though only a minority reach the expected goals on entry into Year 1, most children make good progress from their starting points. Progress is excellent in their personal, social and emotional development. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. The leader's clear vision for the children's development is shared by the team and, together, they ensure that all welfare and safeguarding requirements are met in full.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further strengthen the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that teachers consistently provide activities that are challenging for all groups of pupils.
- Raise standards in writing, particularly for those pupils who find learning easy.
- Continue to develop the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that all teachers with responsibility monitor and evaluate their areas as well as senior leaders do.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' current work shows that there has been a considerable improvement in standards at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. This shows that while standards are broadly below average, pupils' achievement is at least satisfactory in all year groups and in some, such as Year 6, it is good.

When pupils start Year 1, standards are below average. Progress in Years 1 and 2 has been very slow in the past. This is no longer the case because teaching and learning are now much more focused than previously. When teaching is outstanding, such as in a Year 1 writing lesson, pupils achieve very well. In this lesson, the pupils were reaching standards expected of pupils at the end of Year 2. However, even though standards have improved from the very low levels in the 2008 national tests, standards in writing still lag behind those for reading and mathematics. Progress this year has been slow in Year 3, though it is accelerating as new improvement projects are starting to impact positively. Progress in Years 4 and 5 is at least satisfactory, though slower in mathematics than in reading and writing. In Year 6, due to a boost in provision, progress is rapid. However, even though there has been a strengthening of the number of pupils gaining the higher level at the end of Year 6, too few pupils attain these standards, particularly in English. The progress of pupils who find learning hard, and those who are at an early stage of learning English, matches that of their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

There has been a marked improvement in the pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is now good. Attendance is average and the school has been successful in reducing the number of holidays taken during term time. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school and relationships are good. Pupils are safe in school and respect the needs of others. Bullying is rare and children are clear about what to do if they have a concern. They appreciate the fact that adults respond to incidents promptly and effectively. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. For example, some pupils know why eating fruit is important, although many children choose crisps rather than fruit in their packed lunches. The school recognises that extra-curricular activities need to be extended to meet the needs of a wider range of interests and to enhance pupils' healthy lifestyles even further. Pupils' contribution to their own and the wider community is satisfactory, as seen in their involvement in fundraising for charities such as 'Red Nose Day'. Pupils are appropriately prepared for their move to secondary education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with increasing elements of good practice. Teachers are well organised and they develop strong and effective relationships with pupils. Teaching assistants provide effective support, particularly for pupils who have specific learning difficulties or who are new to learning English. In the very best lessons, teachers provide highly challenging activities and ensure that the lesson moves at a very brisk pace. Pupils respond very well to this and their enjoyment increases. 'We like really hard work', said a Year 1 boy who was proudly showing the sentences he had written. Objectives are invariably shared and this helps to provide purpose and meaning to the activities. However, these strengths are not always evident. Although all teaching is at least satisfactory, where teaching is less strong activities are not always matched appropriately to pupils' learning needs and some of the higher-attaining pupils are not challenged enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

In general, the curriculum is satisfactory and provides systematic coverage of basic skills. Many plans for improving the curriculum, for example by linking subjects together, are still at an early stage, but recent initiatives to boost achievement and standards are showing signs of positive impact. The introduction of more opportunities for investigation and problem-solving in science has strengthened pupils' progress and improved their enjoyment. Residential visits and special 'one-off' trips away from the school, such as the Year 2 visit to the Science Museum, help to broaden horizons further and increase pupils' engagement in learning. The impact of the satisfactory personal, social and health curriculum is evident in the generally positive relationships, although the school rightly recognises the need to ensure that the personal, social and health curriculum is systematically included in all classrooms.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils receive good care, guidance and support. Adults are very caring towards pupils and this helps them to feel safe. Procedures for child protection are robust and comply with statutory requirements. There are good health and safety systems, allowing pupils to work and play in a safe and secure environment. There is a successful behaviour policy and good support is given to pupils who have behavioural difficulties. Rigorous procedures to improve attendance and punctuality are having a positive effect and attendance has improved since the previous inspection, with the proportion of persistent non-attenders being considerably reduced. A good start to the day is encouraged by the well-organised breakfast club, which pupils enjoy. Systems for tracking progress are good and they are now being used effectively to identify pupils who fall behind or those who could do better. The school has good links with other agencies to provide support for pupils who have particular learning needs or difficulties or those who are at an early stage of learning English. The learning mentor is effective in her work in supporting families and pupils that have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

There have been good improvements in the quality of leadership and management since the previous inspection. It is now satisfactory and there are some good features and these advances lie at the heart of the school's improved overall effectiveness. The headteacher has successfully changed the focus of his leadership. His commitment to raising standards and improving the quality of provision is shown in the positive impact of improvement projects. The pace of change has been accelerated, expectations have been raised, staff are made accountable for their work and decisive action has been taken to eliminate inadequate performance. The senior leadership team has been reorganised and these changes have proved effective. Nonetheless, senior staff are mindful that even though improvements are clear, work remains to be done in strengthening provision even further and in fully engaging teachers with subject responsibilities in the monitoring and evaluation process. The school provides suitably for community cohesion. Leaders ensure that pupils become aware of contrasts in their own and wider communities. Effective use is made of the rich diversity within the school's own population and links with local organisations. The governing body now plays an effective role in shaping the school's direction and is starting to hold the school to account. Governors are committed to the further improvement of the school. Overall, the improvements made since the previous inspection demonstrate a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

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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?	3
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

04 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rabbsfarm Primary School, West Drayton, UB7 8AH

Thank you for helping us when we visited your classrooms and assemblies to see you at work. You were very polite and helpful and we enjoyed talking with those of you we met. Your behaviour is good and you enjoy school and learning.

Your school gives you a satisfactory education. All the adults look after you well and help you to feel safe and happy. Your school is warm and welcoming to you, your parents and also to visitors like us. Your teachers are working hard to make sure that the lessons they plan for you are interesting and enjoyable. Your headteacher and senior staff have made sure that your school has improved since the previous inspection.

Your headteacher and staff are determined that your school is going to get better, and we have asked them to make sure the following things are done to help this.

- To make lessons even more interesting for you by making sure that the activities set are really challenging because work is sometimes too easy.
- Raise standards in writing, particularly for those of you who find learning easy.
- For your teachers who have responsibility for subjects to make sure that they check how well you are doing and how carefully lessons are planned for you.

We know that you are proud of your achievements when you reach your targets, and you can help by making sure that you concentrate and reach them quickly.

We hope that you enjoy your future learning.

Yours faithfully

Keith Sadler

Lead Inspector