

Rush Green Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101212
Local Authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	335674
Inspection dates	20–21 May 2010
Reporting inspector	RUTH McFARLANE

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	324
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Martin Howse
Headteacher	Abigaile Robertson
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. 14 lessons or part lessons were observed and 14 teachers seen. Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils and governors and brief informal meetings took place with individual parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including minutes of meetings, reports, policies and records, pupil and staff surveys and 49 parent and carer questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- ? The impact of the school's work to improve assessment processes.
- ? The impact of the work to tackle the dip in attainment in writing and mathematics.
- ? How those with additional learning needs are helped to make progress.
- ? The impact of strategies to improve attendance.

Information about the school

Rush Green Junior School is larger than average. A high proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic groups, the largest group being Black African. A slightly greater proportion of pupils than usual speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities is lower than average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties or speech, language and communication difficulties. An acting headteacher took up a full-time post at the beginning of this month, having been part-time acting headteacher for the previous 12 months during the phased retirement of the previous headteacher. The school also has an acting deputy headteacher. The school has Healthy Schools status.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Rush Green Junior is a satisfactory and improving school. Pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6 is average, representing satisfactory achievement and progress. Staff moved quickly to develop an intensive programme of improvement, having spotted a decline in attainment in writing and mathematics, and in levels of attendance, last year. Inspection evidence shows that the strategies put in place are already having a positive impact on attainment. Attendance has improved significantly to above average.

Regular monitoring and a strong partnership with the local authority have led to improvements in aspects of teaching and assessment. Pupils are gaining from improved guidance that shows them exactly what they need to do next in their learning. More teachers are using assessment well in the classroom, for instance, by regularly checking pupils' understanding as lessons unfold. This was a feature of good lessons seen during the inspection, of which there are an increasing number. However, some inconsistencies remain that are keeping the overall quality of teaching satisfactory. The pace of learning in some lessons is too slow. Sometimes work is not matched closely enough to pupils' different capabilities, especially to challenge the able. Planning in some subjects relies too heavily on published materials which have not been tailored to meet pupils' needs.

Pupils' personal skills are well developed. They are eager to come to school and enjoy a developing vibrancy in the curriculum. The work to achieve Healthy Schools status has meant that pupils have a good understanding of how and why they need to adopt healthy lifestyles. They have a good understanding of safe practices, including safe use of the internet. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils make a good contribution to the community. In school they are keen to take on responsibility, particularly as school councillors or 'playground pals'. They take part in many events and visits in the local area such as to the community senior citizens' home. They learn to care about each other and those less fortunate than themselves. This is evident in the way they raise funds, for example, for a variety of charities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Rush Green is currently experiencing unsettled leadership because it is operating with an acting headteacher. Many initiatives are just beginning to reap reward in pupil outcomes, for instance the good partnerships with other schools and organisations, for sports, for science, and for after-school activities. The governing body provides good support for the school and its acting headteacher, and monitors the school's work to promote pupils' progress diligently. However, it has not checked the implementation of some policies and procedures rigorously enough. For instance, although procedures for safeguarding children are satisfactory overall, at the time of the inspection some

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mandatory retraining had been overlooked. Some policies lack clarity. Development priorities are appropriate but plans do not take full account of the costs or identify strategic routes for longer term success. However, the acting leaders and the other experienced and able managers are working well as a team and show that they have the capacity to move the school forward. This is because they have a realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have developed the right strategies for success. Monitoring is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. Teachers have shown that they are eager to take on board suggestions. Leaders appreciate, however, that it is early days and that they have yet to demonstrate a sustained track record of improvement to match their shared aspirations.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- ? Improve the quality of teaching so that at least 80% of lessons are good by May 2011 by:
 - ? ensuring that the pace is suitably brisk and pupils are more involved in their own learning ?
 - ensuring that work is matched to pupils' abilities, especially for the more able.
- ? Strengthen leadership and management by: ?
 - urgently undertaking recruitment processes and appointing a substantive headteacher ?
 - ensuring that statutory policies are checked for clarity and implemented more rigorously ?
 - ensuring that the development plan takes a longer term view and is fully costed.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils say the fitness session that starts each day makes for a lively start to learning. Themed days, such as the creative day which occurred during the inspection, inspire their interest. Features like these enable pupils to enjoy learning. Pupils make steady progress throughout the school as a result of satisfactory teaching over time. Teachers provide suitable assistance for those who are at an early stage of learning English, which enables them to make equivalent progress to their peers. However, rates of progress for all pupils vary. They increase when pupils experience good teaching. In a literacy lesson observed in Year 6, the activities were challenging and the teacher's questioning extended pupils' understanding so they were able to use their thinking skills to explain the features and language used to express feelings in poetry. In Year 3 the room buzzed with 'brainstorming' in a design and technology lesson as pupils cooperated very well together to design a solution to everyday problems such as getting up on time in the morning. Pupils who have additional learning needs, such as moderate learning difficulties or speech, language and communication difficulties, make progress in line with that of their peers because they are well supported. In Year 6 this work is

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especially successful, because these pupils enjoy learning in a separate group for literacy and numeracy lessons, joining their peers for the rest of the day.

Pupils say that they are confident to report any concerns that they might have to staff in the knowledge that these are sorted out quickly and effectively. They say that bullying is rare. As a result, pupils feel safe. They play a positive and active role within the local community and are encouraged to take a keen interest in events and activities in the wider world. Their average attainment means that the extent to which they develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being is also satisfactory. Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, an improvement since the last inspection; moral and social are the stronger elements, as demonstrated by pupils' good behaviour and the way they cooperate with each other and with their teachers. As a result of their work in religious education, they show a thoughtful appreciation of other beliefs.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Where teaching is good, the activities are well matched to pupils' learning needs and the

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

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pace of teaching and learning is brisk. In such lessons the more able pupils are challenged by more demanding tasks that require higher skill levels. For example, in a Year 4 literacy lesson, pupils were asked to describe a character and the more able were challenged to show a good degree of logical thinking and appreciation of the needs of the reader. In good lessons like this, planning is detailed and teachers use effective questioning to extend pupils' thinking skills and to promote effective speaking and listening. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively by teachers who share their planning with them. In the satisfactory lessons the pace of learning is slower and activities are not well matched to pupils' learning needs. There is insufficient challenge for the more able pupils. Pupils are not as attentive as they are in the good lessons, as a result of the slower pace and lower levels of challenge.

The curriculum is under development currently. The good features evident during the inspection are not fully embedded or resulting in improved academic outcomes because the cross-curricular links between topics and subjects are not consistently well developed throughout the school. Pupils take part in extra-curricular activities after school, such as 'street dance', which they say they enjoy. Visits out of school, including residential visits to an activity centre, enrich pupils' experiences.

Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are well cared for in the school's warm and welcoming environment. Relationships are good between staff and pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language receive well-targeted support that helps them participate fully in school life. The school works closely with relevant external agencies to ensure that these pupils' needs are met effectively. One of the most significant improvements has been in pupils' attendance, thanks to a range of strategies, including fast response to absence, the use of outside agencies to help with support, and the very popular attendance competition. Pupils enthused about the scheme whereby all are encouraged weekly to achieve 100% attendance, and the names of all those with 100% attendance for the whole school year are put into a draw for a significant prize which last year was a bicycle. These elements all make a good contribution to the support provided, but it is no more than satisfactory overall because some policies and procedures are not well organised. For instance, some policies lead to a paper trail to several different documents to locate required information. This demonstrates a lack of clarity in the way that procedures should be implemented, for instance to pinpoint when mandatory retraining is due.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

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How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher, leadership team, staff and governing body are all ambitious for the school and its pupils to be doing better. Leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses and they have correctly diagnosed where improvements are needed. The school is a very harmonious community where boys and girls from different backgrounds mix very well together. Although equal opportunities are otherwise promoted well, not enough is done to extend more able pupils in some lessons. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily, especially in the local area, and has begun to assess the impact of its work. There are satisfactory arrangements for ensuring pupils' safety and for checking on the suitability of adults working in the school. Inspection evidence shows that staff knowledge and understanding of the procedures to keep pupils safe is adequate. A strength of the school is the partnerships that have developed, especially with the local authority, to pupils' benefit.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

Although few parents and carers responded to the parental questionnaire, those who did were highly supportive of the school. They expressed complete confidence that the school keeps their child safe, helps them to have a healthy lifestyle, and meets their child's needs. They fully agree that their child enjoys school. They regard teaching as good. Of the few who disagreed with some of the statements, no particular pattern emerged. A few parents and carers raised concerns over behaviour and bullying, but

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inspectors found behaviour to be consistently good in lessons and around the school. Pupils confirm that any incidents of unkindness are rare and are dealt with quickly.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rush Green Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 49 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 347 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	69	15	31	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	63	18	37	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	25	51	22	42	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	51	23	47	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	55	22	45	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	55	21	43	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	35	32	65	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	16	33	29	59	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	41	27	55	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	37	28	57	3	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	29	33	67	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	22	45	26	53	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	59	18	37	1	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



24 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rush Green Junior School, Romford, RM7 0RL

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited recently. You go to a satisfactory and improving school. Rush Green is helping you to make sound progress and you are doing as well in your work as most children of your age. Staff look after you well, and that is one of the reasons that you feel happy and safe at school. Your parents and carers agree. We noticed how well behaved you all are and how well everyone gets on together. Well done for the great improvement in your attendance.

Although there are lots of good things about your school, your acting headteacher and all the staff are keen for you to do better in your work and so we are suggesting some ways to help you make faster progress.

We have asked the school's governing body and staff to make more of your lessons as good as the best, with plenty to do to challenge you and keep you actively involved. We have also asked them to make sure all the policies and training that are needed are kept bang up to date and working well. We have suggested that plans for the future of the school are thought about a bit further ahead and the costs planned in.

Most importantly, we have asked the governing body to start the process of appointing a permanent headteacher, so that things feel more settled as soon as possible.

These tasks are to help the school run smoothly and most importantly to help you to do even better in your learning. You can help by working as hard as you can. □

Thank you again for being so friendly and helpful on our visit.

Yours sincerely

Ruth McFarlane Lead inspector

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