

Royal Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101445
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	335718
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Ann Sydney

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	189
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cathy Whiting
Headteacher	Joanne Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors spent more than 60% of their time evaluating pupils' learning. They visited 16 lessons as well as clubs and activities before and after school. They held meetings with governors, staff, pupils, parents and carers, and school improvement personnel. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at its policies and assessment data. The inspection team received questionnaires from 68 parents and carers, 31 staff and 102 pupils.

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

- the quality of teaching to improve attainment and accelerate progress, in lessons and intervention groups
- how well teachers assess pupils' learning and how well they communicate their findings
- whether leaders and managers at all levels have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have appropriate improvement plans
- how well the curriculum meets the needs of all groups, including those with physical disabilities
- how successfully the school engages parents and carers and improved attendance and punctuality.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than average, with a large variation in the numbers of pupils in each year group. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is double the national average. Most of these pupils have learning difficulties or medical needs. The school is fully accessible and currently has six pupils who use wheelchairs or walking frames. The school provides a breakfast club for up to 12 pupils and has the Healthy Schools award.

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

2

Main findings

Pupils' attainment has been well below the national average for several years. It has taken the tremendous energy and high expectations of the headteacher to drive improvement, so that pupils' progress is accelerating. Royal Park is now a satisfactory school with many good, and some outstanding, aspects. Parents and carers correctly talk about an 'exciting buzz' in Royal Park. The school demonstrates good capacity to improve because of the effective actions so far. The roll is beginning to rise as its reputation spreads locally. The school provides a stimulating learning environment, an exciting curriculum and a high level of care. Pupils with physical disabilities have excellent provision and their independence and inclusion is fully encouraged.

In the year since the headteacher was appointed, she has led a relentless drive on raising attainment through improving the quality of teaching and learning. Where there is good teaching, pupils are now showing good, and sometimes outstanding, progress but there is still a small proportion of inadequate teaching. The school has had excellent support from an outstanding partner school but has been slower to use the considerable expertise among Royal Park staff. As a result of improved teaching and learning, an improved curriculum and better tracking and target-setting, pupils in Year 6 are attaining at much higher levels in mathematics, science and English than has been the case in previous years. Pupils' progress has been slower in Key Stage 1 where teaching is weaker.

The school is now very rich in data, and the accuracy of assessment has improved. Data are used well by leaders to focus on areas of weakness and improve planning at every level. However, pupils in many classes do not know how well they are doing and what they could do to improve further, and their progress is not communicated to their parents and carers often enough.

Despite all the improvements to the school, attendance stubbornly remains below the national average despite the school's competitions, rewards and the appointment of a parent support adviser. Some of this is due to the high level of serious medical needs. However, it is improving under the new leadership and punctuality is also better because of changes to the timetable and more exciting activities on offer.

For the first time in several years, the Reception class is full, and very recently there has been a sudden growth in numbers in the Nursery class. Children arrive with generally poor skills in personal development and early literacy and numeracy. They make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but attainment at the end of Reception is below average.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Use the good teaching models in the school to achieve consistently good or better learning in all classes by July 2010 and raise attainment, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Improve the use of assessment to show pupils how well they are doing and exactly what they need to do to make improvements.
- Communicate pupils' progress to parents and carers regularly and have this system in place before July 2010.
- Raise attendance to the national average by December 2010.
- By July 2010, improve outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in literacy and numeracy, by:
 - quickly identifying and addressing the needs of children when they enter school
 - ensuring high quality differentiated learning opportunities
 - accurate assessment and frequent tracking of progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Outcomes are on the rise. After several years of very poor performance, attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2009 was much improved to average in mathematics and above average in science. Current data and observations show that pupils' progress is accelerating in Key Stage 2, especially in Years 3 and 6 where accurate assessment and good teaching combine to produce at least good learning. Progress is not as fast in Key Stage 1 where the teaching is not as strong. A consistent approach to teaching writing has been introduced across the school and this has led to an improvement in writing in most classes. However, there is a long history of weak writing skills, so that pupils are still below the national average. No group is performing significantly worse or better than another. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same progress as other groups.

Pupils' personal development has improved since the previous inspection. Behaviour is good and pupils are keen to take on responsibility. Some are enterprising, for example setting up their own clubs at lunchtime. Parents and carers point out how their children have recently grown in confidence and independence. They enthusiastically take part in high quality school productions, sports and extra curricular activities. They are sociable and caring with an excellent understanding of the world beyond school. Even the youngest pupils have a good understanding of health and safety. Punctuality is excellent but attendance remains well below average despite an improving picture.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
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	1
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	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There are examples of consistently good, and sometimes outstanding, teaching in Key Stage 2, in intervention groups and by the specialist teachers of music, physical education, performing arts and French. However, there are classes where basic skills are not taught well enough to ensure pupils achieve as well as they should. Pupils are keen to learn and behaviour is good, although they become restless when teaching is weak. In about half of lessons, the pace is brisk, the content is well matched to the pupils' interests and ability, and good questioning is used to assess the progress of different groups. In a minority of lessons, the pace is slow and the lesson plan does not provide enough challenge for different groups of pupils. Marking is inconsistent and does not show pupils enough about how to make improvements and this restricts their progress.

The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection, when it was satisfactory. One pupil described Royal Park as 'a joyful school'. The curriculum is creative and exciting with a wealth of well-attended clubs and activities led by teaching and administrative staff and specialists from outside the school. Pupils turn up an hour before school for effective booster classes in spelling, writing and mathematics with teachers and teaching assistants. There are opportunities for older pupils to attend residential trips and younger pupils talked animatedly of their trip to London to learn about the Great Fire. Sport and health have a high priority, and all pupils use the school's swimming pool. Staff plan the curriculum together in detail so that it is easy to see how each year's work links together, and new topics are evaluated and changed if necessary. Sometimes, however, opportunities to practise writing are missed in

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everyday activities. The curriculum for pupils with physical disabilities is excellent. When the rest of the class have dance, they have conductive therapy with a Peto Institute-trained therapist, who also directs the teaching assistants.

This is a very caring school, not just for pupils but also their families. There are good links with a wide range of services. All parents and carers who returned the questionnaire are confident that their child is safe. Vulnerable pupils are looked after very well so that their needs are well met. The transition to secondary school is handled sensitively. An on-site charity prepares small groups of pupils for transfer, and offers counselling for individuals.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Parents and carers describe the headteacher as 'a breath of fresh air' and 'driven', though one parent just said, 'She's blindin'.' They appreciate the dramatic changes that have taken place. 'In just one year the school has been transformed into a vibrant, welcoming place to learn,' one parent rightly said. The headteacher has a very clear vision to enrich pupils' lives, improve their independence and raise their aspirations, and she has successfully shared this with the governing body, staff, parents and carers, and pupils. Much work has gone into gaining the trust of parents and carers and it has been repaid with strong expressions of loyalty. Many of the improvements are the direct result of the analysis of data to determine where there might be underachievement or inequality, for example improving girls' attainment in science. The school is particularly effective in ensuring that all pupils have equality of opportunity in the experiences available and that there is no discrimination. Governors now receive data in a clear and understandable form and this empowers them to ask the right questions. With the help of their partner primary school, middle leaders have improved their management and assessment skills as many of them are new in post. Self-evaluation is accurate, and the development plan focuses correctly on improving the quality of teaching and learning, and raising attainment.

The school promotes community cohesion outstandingly well. There are very strong beneficial links with the local church, and further afield with schools and organisations in other parts of the world. Staff and pupils work in an environment where safeguarding is very effective and has a high priority, and pupils are happy.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children come directly into Reception class with some pre-school experience. Numbers in the Nursery were extremely low until very recently. Children enter at well below age-related expectations, especially in personal and social development and the skills that lead to reading, writing and numeracy. Although they make satisfactory progress, when they leave Reception they are still well below average in emotional development, writing, and knowledge and understanding of the world. The introduction of structured phonics teaching (linking letters and sounds) has led to satisfactory improvement in reading. Parents and carers are happy with the welcome they receive, the home visits and the gradual introduction to school. Children are well cared for. There are very positive relationships between adults and children and behaviour is good. The outside space has been improved to a very good standard since the previous inspection so that enthusiastic learning takes place outside and inside.

Children have a very good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy, and remind each other. Adults have sound knowledge of children's learning and development. Satisfactory planning for the Nursery class is overseen by the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teaching is satisfactory in both classes, but sometimes work is not set at the right level of challenge for individual children. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The leader is new in post but has excellent support from a leading teacher in the partnership primary school to develop assessment and planning further. There are clear plans for further improvement including strengthening the quality of teaching, learning and management.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers are very positive about the school. They praised the headteacher's leadership and the changes made to the school; exciting learning opportunities that motivate children and give them confidence; and much improved relationships between staff and parents and carers. Parents and carers are happy with the improved information about events in the school, the following week's timetable, and ways they can help their children. A very small minority were less happy with communication between teachers and parents and carers, and having lots of meetings about children with medical needs but action not being fast enough. Inspectors find that communication is good in many respects but information about progress is not frequent enough. Action on medical needs is sometimes in the hands of other agencies and this can mean delays.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Royal Park Primary 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 68 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 189 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	44	65	22	32	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	44	65	19	28	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	30	44	35	51	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	54	29	43	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	37	54	27	40	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	46	34	50	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	51	29	43	2	3	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)	28	41	34	54	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	40	36	53	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	40	32	47	5	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	29	43	63	3	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	30	44	31	46	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	60	24	35	2	3	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



28 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Royal Park Primary School, Sidcup DA14 4PX

Thank you all for your help during the inspection. We have judged that your school gives you a satisfactory education, but are pleased to say many things are good and some are outstanding. We spoke to lots of people and visited all the teachers' lessons as well as some of your exciting clubs and booster groups. Your behaviour was good in lessons and around the school. Many of you told us how much you enjoy it and how much the school has improved while you have been there: you are learning more interesting things, punctuality and behaviour have improved, teaching is better, and of course the school looks beautiful.

We can see that all the adults in school look after you well and keep you very safe. We were very impressed by how active you all are and how well you know about keeping healthy. You take on lots of responsibilities and are learning very well about other people's lives beyond your school. Most of you have made good progress recently, especially in mathematics, but we found that when you have good teaching all the time you can learn really, really fast. We want to see all the pupils at Royal Park being excellent learners so we have asked the school to:

- make sure that all teaching and learning are good
- make sure you know how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve
- keep your parents and carers well informed about your progress
- improve your attendance
- speed up children's progress in the Reception and Nursery classes.

You can help by trying your hardest and telling your teacher if the work is too easy or too hard. Ask how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve. Pupils who miss school are missing out on some lovely experiences in the curriculum at Royal Park.

Yours sincerely

Ann Sydney

Lead inspector

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