

Rettendon Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114856
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	338468
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Michael Sutherland-Harper

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	97
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ray Ryde
Headteacher	Jacquie Barber
Date of previous school inspection	6 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons and part lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including a sample of pupils' books, school development plans, minutes of the governing body meetings, information about the monitoring of vulnerable pupils, records of the school's arrangements for safeguarding and protecting pupils, policies and 30 parental questionnaire responses.

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

- how well teaching caters for the needs of all groups and in particular boys
- the impact of leaders' work on accelerating pupils' progress
- the consistency of pupils' progress in all key stages
- the extent to which the school has addressed the weaknesses in science and in writing
- how effectively assessment information is being used to move learning on in all subject areas.

Information about the school

Rettendon Primary School caters for children from the local village and surrounding areas. Numbers have fallen over recent years. The proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals, from minority ethnic backgrounds, who speak English as an additional language or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are all below average. There is an on-site nursery which is managed by a private provider and was inspected separately. The school has obtained the Healthy Schools Award and the Activemark for promoting physical activity.

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

Rettendon Primary School is a satisfactory and improving school, where pupils' attainment and the quality of teaching are getting better because of the drive in these areas given by school leaders. It is a supportive school; as one pupil put it, 'My school is well looked after and so are we.' Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where good provision is carefully matched to their learning needs. In the rest of the school pupils make satisfactory progress through Years 1 to 6. The attainment of more able pupils has improved sharply in English and mathematics as a result of an innovative programme which groups pupils in sets based on their potential targets rather than by age. Improved monitoring and assessment procedures are raising the achievement of all learners but have not yet had a full impact on what are currently average standards. Leaders and managers have developed closer analysis of pupils' progress and increasingly focused intervention strategies. As a result, work on mental methods is now a feature of mathematics lessons, and pupils' writing skills are improving due to an approach that makes links between subjects which has more effectively engaged boys in their learning. The school has made a good start responding to a legacy of underachievement in science by doubling the time available for the subject and reviewing the way scientific topics are covered. As a result, the progress pupils make in science is improving. There is still more to do to ensure that attainment in science matches that in English and mathematics and those pupils reach more challenging targets in science.

The teaching is satisfactory with much that is good and it meets the needs of all groups. This includes pupils of higher ability where the most recent test results show that there was an improvement in their performance. Teachers have looked more closely at the use of resources, including new technologies, to engage learners and some best practice has been shared across the school. Pupils are responding well to what they term the 'fun' thematic curriculum but there are limited opportunities for them to participate in setting their own targets for improvement, and as a result they do not always know what to do to improve in order to reach them. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are effectively supported by the special needs team and make satisfactory progress, but a general lack of pace and challenge in some lessons limits their progress at times.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They know that there is someone to talk to if they have any issues and all staff give time to make themselves available to see and help pupils. During the inspection, the headteacher met frequently with individual children who were keen to share their latest success with her. The personalised approach brought a smile to all faces. Behaviour in lessons and around the site is good

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because expectations are clear and attendance is also above average and improving. The school has been effective in reaching out to the local Traveller community and ensuring that care for all groups is good. The headteacher has worked hard to develop an innovative curriculum and this is beginning to have an impact on achievement. The emphasis on a variety of experiences for social, moral, spiritual and cultural development has ensured pupils' growing confidence in all these areas, as shown by the friendly way they approach visitors, and a variety of clubs are enriching their personal development.

The clear and astute leadership of the headteacher, allied to increased training in the analysis and use of assessment data for all staff, has given a renewed sense of direction to the school. As one governor put it, 'It now feels like a different place.' Given the successes in English and mathematics and a sharper focus on self-evaluation at all levels, the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in science by:
 - using a range of resources and strategies which fully engage all pupils in their learning
 - involving pupils in assessing their progress and providing clearer targets for them to reach.
 - Embed systems for tracking and monitoring to ensure that pupils make consistent progress across all key stages, and are aware of their targets and what they need to do to improve.
 - Raise the quality of teaching by:
 - sharing best practice, especially in English, mathematics and science
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to contribute to their learning through more active involvement in lessons
 - ensuring that lessons are always conducted at a brisk pace, and challenge all groups of pupils to do consistently well.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

Observations of lessons carried out during the inspection show that learning is satisfactory for all groups of pupils, and attainment in English and mathematics is in line with national averages. Attainment in science, although improving is typically lower when compared to English and mathematics. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from targeted support and encouragement from support staff, although the quality of the support in encouraging

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independent skills varies. Boys and girls make similar rates of progress. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and Travellers were all seen to be making steady progress. Work in books shows that a variety of approaches are being used this year in an attempt to consolidate learning. There is some good use of feedback in lessons to inform pupils of their progress, but written comments do not consistently inform pupils of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their learning and progress.

Pupils are very knowledgeable about healthy lifestyles and are keen to ensure that everyone eats well. They adopt healthy and active lifestyles and many attend a good range of clubs and activities to ensure their well-being. When interviewed, pupils said that the one thing they would change is the desserts at lunchtimes because they are not as good for you as fresh fruit. Pupils have good opportunities to help younger pupils as buddies and to take on positions of responsibility such as membership of the school council, where they relish the opportunity to work as a team. Through charity work, they have engaged with communities in Africa. They are helping to develop the school grounds and the principle of restorative justice is being promoted across the school. One pupil said, 'I would really recommend this school because there is something for everyone.' Good behaviour is based on a culture of respect for each other and care for the community. Improved information and communication technology facilities have provided pupils with good opportunities to enhance their skills in this area. Teaching in literacy and numeracy has an increased focus on practical skills. Pupils have been enterprising in helping to develop communications using the school's website. All of these developing basic skills ensure that pupils are well prepared for secondary school and later life.

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

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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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 Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers' lesson planning is detailed in most subjects, and they regularly evaluate the progress of individuals, reflecting recent improvements to the use of assessment. However, lessons do not always allow pupils to take a fully proactive part in their learning. For example, teachers across the school make effective use of new technologies to support learning and pupils have opportunities to access them, but there are missed opportunities in some lessons for pupils to demonstrate their understanding using, for example, the electronic whiteboard. Questioning is used to advance learning but follow-on questions which might require pupils to explain why they think in a certain way and thereby promote thinking skills are less frequent. The pace and challenge provided in lessons is not consistent across classes.

Care, guidance and support are good because the school places a strong emphasis on the welfare of individuals and works well with parents and the community to ensure pupils' welfare. Pupils are adamant that the school takes very effective actions against any occasional instances of bullying.

The innovative curricular structure, with its blend of grouping by outcomes and themed topic approach, is being used well in many areas of the school to enhance pupils' development and well-being. Displays of pupils' work around the school sometimes enhance the learning environment, but some learning areas do not take full advantage of the possibilities afforded to encourage pupils' efforts by more prominent displays of their achievements.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
	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?

The headteacher has worked effectively on implementing a focused action plan to drive up standards and achievement following a period of variable progress. She has shared

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her planning with staff, parents and governors, who support her goals and are now working steadily with her to achieve them. Managers at all levels are making an increasingly effective contribution to the development of teaching and learning through more focused planning and target setting. Assessment and tracking have become more rigorous and the impact of these strategies is being embedded across the whole school due to the careful monitoring by leaders and managers. Strategies which have worked well in English and mathematics are now being applied in science. All learners' progress is being tracked carefully and the most recent school data show an upward trend in pupils' attainment, including that seen in science. A large number of learners have already surpassed their challenging targets for this year, although the school has not yet established consistently challenging targets for all year groups in science.

Governors are very active in their involvement with the school and bring a considerable breadth of experience to their role. They hold the school to account. The partnership with parents is enhanced by the use of questionnaires and home-school logs which enable parents to support their child's learning. There are opportunities for parents to come into the school to assist in a variety of ways. There is an engaging and effective school website and an attractive plasma screen, which the pupils manage, publicises what is going on around the school. Other partnerships such as the close links with a local secondary school are contributing to provision and ensuring positive transition to the next stage of learning. Equality and fairness are important concepts to the pupils, and the school is ensuring that they are in place. The school is closing any remaining gaps in both participation and achievement between different groups. The school has good safeguarding procedures and health and safety checks are fully in place. Provision for community cohesion is good because there are clear policies and initiatives at all levels. The school has a clear understanding of the needs of its intake. It has done an audit and implemented a plan for community cohesion and is evaluating the impact of its work on pupils of all backgrounds and abilities.

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

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The children make good progress in relation to their low starting points, particularly in language and communication, problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. By the end of the Reception Year, most children are working securely within the standards expected for their age in all areas of learning, although there is still room to improve the children's knowledge of early scientific skills. The school places great emphasis on nurturing children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to raise skills in mathematics and phonics, especially through a focus on play-based learning. Teaching is good because children are actively involved in their learning. This is effective because the staff use a good variety of resources, including the electronic whiteboard and sound board, along with skilled questioning that engages and extends the children's thinking. Children play well together and develop good social skills. They know the importance of healthy eating. They make good progress because activities are planned well to suit their needs and interests. The school keeps a good record of their development which links targets to photographic and recorded evidence. Indoor and outdoor areas provide a good balance of adult-led activities and those that the children choose for themselves, and staff manage well within a confined space. Links with parents and carers are good and there are opportunities for pupils to take the initiative and make decisions. Leadership and management are good because the Early Years Foundation Stage leader makes good use of monitoring data to ensure that all pupils are effectively challenged, and uses human and learning resources well to consistently improve outcomes for all the children.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
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 of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Approximately one third of parents responded to the parental questionnaire, and they expressed great satisfaction with the school. They were particularly positive about their children's enjoyment of school and the care the school takes of their children. Hardly any parents expressed any dissatisfaction with any aspect of the school's provision, and where they did there was no particular pattern to their comments.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rettendon 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 30 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 97 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	80	6	20	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	77	7	23	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	60	12	40	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	60	11	37	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	63	11	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	63	11	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	60	12	40	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)	13	43	14	47	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	57	13	43	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	33	18	60	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	53	12	40	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	63	11	37	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	63	11	37	0	0	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.



19 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rettendon Primary School, Chelmsford CM3 8DW

I am writing to thank you for the lovely welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and the way you shared all your interesting experiences with us. We judged the school to be improving and it is now satisfactory, which means it does some things well but some things need to be improved.

These are the things we particularly liked about your school.

You look after each other well and take care to be sure that everyone is safe and happy.

You listen to each other so everyone has a chance to contribute and you think about what they say.

You like the way you have fun with the themes you cover in your topic work.

You are working well with the local community and are raising lots of money for charity.

Your headteacher and her staff are working hard to develop your learning opportunities.

In order for your school to continue to improve, we have asked your teachers to work with you to use resources you like to make learning in science better and to let you participate as much as possible. We would like you to know all your targets and what you need to do to improve. We have asked your teachers to ensure that the best teaching methods we saw in some lessons are found in all subjects and that you are more actively involved in lessons.

It was wonderful to be greeted by so many smiley faces each day. The other inspector and I send you all our best wishes for your future success.

Yours sincerely

Michael Sutherland-Harper

Lead inspector

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