

# Rowanfield Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115592
<b>Local Authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	338611
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joan Lindsay

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	231
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Diana Wright
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alison Cobb
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 October 2006
<b>School address</b>	Alstone Lane Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL51 8HY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01242 515334
<b>Fax number</b>	01242 515334
<b>Email address</b>	admin@rowanfield-inf.gloucs.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school development plan, governors' minutes, monitoring files, assessment information and numerous policies. In addition, 37 parent questionnaires were received and analysed.

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

- whether teaching is sufficiently challenging for more able pupils and tailored to the individual requirements of pupils with special educational needs, pupils entitled to free school meals and boys
- how effective strategies have been to raise standards in reading and writing
- what the impact is of low attendance and/or behaviour issues on groups of pupils.

## Information about the school

Rowanfield is bigger than most infant schools. Most pupils live locally and the majority are White British. A small number of pupils have English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is far higher than the national average as is the number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision for three Reception classes. The school runs a breakfast club in conjunction with the adjoining junior school and there is an adjacent children's centre managed by the governors. The children's centre was not inspected at the same time as the school. There have been several recent staff changes at teaching and management level.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Rowanfield is a good school. It has improved in many areas since the last inspection and now has some outstanding features. Pupils make good progress throughout the school because there is a very high regard paid to their welfare and to preparing them to learn. Teachers create a fun atmosphere, teaching different subjects through topics to enthuse these young learners. A recent emphasis on providing resources and subjects to appeal to boys has been very successful in addressing the difference in achievement between boys and girls, especially in literacy. Parents and pupils appreciate the high quality care and wealth of learning opportunities. One parent summed up the school by saying, 'I am very pleased I chose this school for my daughter, she looks forward to school every day. I think it is a fab place to be taught'.

The key strengths of the school are:

- That each pupil's individual needs are catered for extremely well as the school has excellent care, guidance and support procedures. As a result, pupils of all abilities make good progress.
- Teaching is consistently good throughout the school and pupils have a positive attitude to their learning because of the excellent, broad curriculum.
- Pupils have a superb understanding of how to keep healthy.
- The provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is consistently good.
- Leaders and managers at all levels have a strong commitment and shared vision to improve standards.

The school is successful and continuing to improve because there is such a strong commitment to each child's welfare and individual needs. This ensures that pupils who may have difficulties in their learning or social and emotional needs have these needs met, and so are ready to learn. There is a strong emphasis on enhancing pupils' personal development and giving pupils experiences beyond the school subjects, such as through the extensive range of clubs and other learning opportunities that are available. Despite recent staff changes at senior and teaching level, pupils have continued to make good progress. Monitoring of teaching is rigorous, with an emphasis on how well pupils are learning and a stronger tracking system to inform teachers of what pupils know. Self-evaluation is accurate and the school has been successful in implementing initiatives in areas of weakness, such as in pupils' reading and writing and in closing the gap between boys' and girls' performance. Given this track record of improvement and the strong sense of team work, the capacity for sustained improvement is good.

Key weaknesses which remain are:

- Standards in reading and writing, which are still below national averages.

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- Attendance, which is only satisfactory because some parents do not ensure their children attend regularly.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise standards in reading and writing by
- using individual pupil targets to challenge pupils to do their best
- giving more detailed feedback, including through marking, on how well pupils are doing and how they might improve.
- Improve attendance and the attainment of some pupils by
- encouraging parents to become more involved in their children's learning.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Achievement is good for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those with English as an additional language. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. They enter the school with skills that are often well below those expected for their age, especially in reading, writing and calculation. When they leave, they are attaining standards that are slightly below, but broadly in line with, national averages and so the quality of their learning, and the progress they make, are good. A strong focus on teaching phonics and improving writing skills through the Story Making project, providing topics and resources to enthuse boys and teaching literacy and numeracy in sets in Years 1 and 2, has had a significant impact on pupils' progress. The majority of pupils at all levels of ability meet or exceed the challenging targets set for them. The pupils who do not, often have poor attendance records despite the school's considerable efforts to encourage and support them.

Other key features of pupils' outcomes are:

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness are developed well from an early age. This adds to the strength of relationships and the strong sense of 'family' in the school. Pupils are given a good awareness of other cultures through the long-term work done as part of the Comenius project, developing links with Sweden, Iceland and Romania. They also celebrate other cultures and religions in their topic work. However, their knowledge and understanding of the local and wider UK community is less well developed.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

**How effective is the provision?**

How effective is the provision?

The climate for learning is good because teachers plan carefully to make lessons fun and pupils learn whilst enjoying themselves. In addition, good account is taken of pupils' different learning needs, including more able pupils. Work is tailored for different abilities even when pupils are in sets for literacy and numeracy. Lots of picture prompts for visual learners and a variety of teaching strategies are used to engage and keep pupils focused on their work. For example, in a numeracy lesson, pupils went outside to collect leaves to count, giving them the chance to be active while reinforcing their numeracy skills. Marking is generally satisfactory although it does not always make it clear how pupils can improve. Similarly, teachers do not use individual pupil targets consistently well to help pupils achieve as well as they can. At times, teachers also fail to make clear the distinction between targets for individuals and for the whole class, what pupils should be learning in the lesson, and what the teacher is looking for when assessing the work. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported in lessons and through specific group work. This ensures they make good progress.

The curriculum is outstanding as it has been developed to focus on the pupils' weakest areas of reading and writing, with a strong and successful emphasis on enthusing boys. Phonics teaching is key throughout the school but also the topic-based approach has encouraged a love of learning and an exciting atmosphere for pupils. For example, when the topic was 'Rubbish', pupils came in to school to find their classrooms taped off and rubbish strewn everywhere! Their imagination was immediately captured and their

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knowledge and understanding of a variety of subjects were enhanced through careful whole-school planning. The curriculum is also strengthened greatly by the amount of enrichment pupils receive. There is a wide range of clubs, including those that focus on key skills such as the boys' reading club when firefighters give up their time to read with boys (and arrive in their fire engine!), cooking club that also involves families, and dance and football clubs. Trips and visits also enhance pupils' experiences.

Pupils' individual needs are central to the work of the school and all adults have the pupils' welfare at the core of what they do. The school has developed very effective and supportive links with a plethora of different agencies and staff have been extremely well trained to cope with pupils' different emotional, social and medical needs. Several parents commented on how well the school supported their children when they entered with, for example, very little English or a learning difficulty. The support provided to help pupils learn as well as they can ensures that vulnerable children achieve as well as others. The school tries hard to engage with all parents but there is still a minority who are reluctant to become more involved in their child's learning, although this situation is improving as links with the children's centre become even more established.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Despite recent changes to the leadership and teaching team, there is a strong understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a joint commitment to improve. This is already having an impact in areas where pupils are weakest as there is now an effective method of tracking pupils' work and homing in on underachievement. As a result, although the number of pupils who are entitled to free school meals and those who have special educational needs is increasing year on year, standards have not fallen and pupils continue to make good progress. The school has successfully narrowed the gender gap whereby boys did not perform as well as girls, and pupils of all abilities are generally meeting or exceeding the challenging targets set for them. The headteacher and senior staff are rigorous in their monitoring of teaching to ensure it is consistently good. She is well supported but also challenged by an effective, knowledgeable and hardworking governing body.

The school promotes equalities well, as reflected in the way pupils of all abilities make good progress. As a result, and because of careful financial management, the school provides good value for money. All safeguarding checks on adults are robust and the

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school's procedures for child protection are excellent. The school is regarded as a leader in these matters and is held as an example to other local schools.

Community cohesion is only satisfactory as the school is still developing an action plan and assessing the impact of its work. Also, pupils' knowledge and contribution to the local and national community is less well developed than their knowledge of some European countries.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

There are strong links with the children's centre and with other pre-school settings and this helps children settle when they first arrive. Even although the children had only just had their first full week of school at the time of the inspection, they were confident and very happy because staff put great emphasis on developing their social and personal skills. Children already know the routines such as when the tidy-up time music comes on, and they bustle around quickly to make the classroom neat. They obviously love school and approach their tasks with a bubbly enthusiasm because they are appropriate to their learning needs, yet fun to do. For example, when a small group were working with the teacher playing a game to recognise circles, the group grew larger as more children saw how much fun the teacher was making it. The well-planned curriculum has a good balance between activities the child can choose and those led by the teacher. For example, the whole class may have a phonics session on the letter 'p', then children will work independently on tasks that reinforce their learning and focused groups will work with the well-qualified adults to try to write the letter with big chalks outside. Teaching is good and, as a result, although children enter with skills well below those



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expected for their age, especially in reading, writing and calculation, they all make good progress. Children who have a special educational need are well supported not only by school staff but also because the school has established strong links with experts such as speech and language therapists. Care, welfare and the transition to Year 1 are all good and add to children's positive achievement. Although children do have access to outdoor resources, often they do not have the chance to 'free-flow' and choose their own activities because of the nature of the buildings. This means that there is some restriction as to how much time they can spend outside and on developing their independence to choose to do so. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader is currently on temporary leave but the provision continues to be well managed by the headteacher in her absence.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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**

There were 37 parental responses which is relatively low for a school of this size. A large majority of parents are satisfied with the school. Parents are especially positive about how much their children enjoy school and how the school promotes a healthy lifestyle. Strengths identified by parents include how well their children settle even when they arrive other than at the usual time, the individual support given to their children, and the approachable and committed staff.

Parents also feel the school keeps their children safe. Individual concerns relating to this aspect were discussed with the headteacher, as were the small number of other issues raised in the questionnaire such as the behaviour of a small number of pupils. Parents' concerns in this respect were not borne out by inspection evidence.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rowanfield Infant 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 37 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 231 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	62	12	32	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	21	57	13	35	2	5	1	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	46	18	49	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	51	15	41	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	51	15	41	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	46	16	43	2	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	70	9	24	1	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)	18	49	16	43	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	57	14	38	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	49	12	32	3	8	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	43	17	46	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	51	57	14	38	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	59	13	35	1	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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



5 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rowanfield Infant School, Cheltenham GL51 8HY

Thank you all very much for making us so welcome to your school. We enjoyed talking with you and your teachers. We will remember how friendly you all were and how well you behaved.

Rowanfield is a good school and these are the things we found your school does well.

- You get off to a good start in the Reception classes and make good progress there and throughout the school. This is because teaching is good.
- You all enjoy coming to school and think that lessons are fun because the well-planned topics mean that you learn about lots of different things in an interesting way.
- You behave well and feel safe in school. You have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy, which is helped by lots of activities to keep you fit.
- Your school cares for you extremely well and has really good links with lots of people who can help you to be happy and to learn.
- Your headteacher, senior leaders and governors know the school very well and are working together to help it to improve further.

We have asked the school to develop your reading and writing skills more so that you reach standards similar to other boys and girls the same age by helping you to understand what you need to do to improve. Also, a small number of pupils are missing too much school and we have asked that school works even harder with some parents and carers to help them learn better. Thank you very much for a very enjoyable and memorable visit to your school and best wishes for your future.

Yours faithfully

Joan Lindsay

Lead Inspector

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