

Rolvenden Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118379
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	339210
Inspection dates	20–21 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Margaret Coussins

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	76
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Jacques Desrosiers
Headteacher	Mrs Anita Rivers
Date of previous school inspection	0 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They spent over 40% of the school days looking at learning, visited nine lessons and observed all five class teachers. Meetings were held with governors, the headteacher, other staff and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documentation including the self-evaluation document, records of pupils' progress, school improvement plans and safeguarding procedures. Questionnaires were received and analysed from 40 parents and carers.

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

- how well the use of assessment and progress data is used to inform planning, teaching and learning to ensure all pupils make the progress they should
- the impact of the work of other leaders and managers in sustaining improvement and further developing the school
- the effectiveness of the school's work in raising attainment in reading
- how well the outside area in the Early Years Foundation Stage supports children's learning and development.

Information about the school

This is a small school with four classes. Two teachers job share in one of the classes. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. One quarter of the pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is a higher proportion than found nationally. Their needs relate mainly to dyslexia and speech, language and communication difficulties. The proportion of pupils who start and leave the school other than at the normal times is higher than average. Provision is made for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in a Reception class. The headteacher joined the school in September 2007. Prior to this the school had been without a substantive headteacher for two terms.

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

Rolvenden Primary is a satisfactory school. Pupils get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, enjoy school, behave well and contribute much to the community. They are enthusiastic about their learning and good relationships between pupils and staff help to create a happy and caring ethos. One pupil wrote, 'Teachers and other staff always listen to what you have to say.' Attainment is average and achievement is satisfactory. Within English, a whole-school focus has elevated pupils' enjoyment of reading, helping them to make better progress. In mathematics, standards are beginning to improve but pupils are not yet skilled enough in mental mathematics or using and applying their mathematical skills to confidently do more complex and problem-solving activities. These aspects hold them back from doing better in mathematics.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and some teaching is good, particularly in Reception and Years 1 and 2. Teachers do not always make the most of pupils' good behaviour and attitudes by affording them sufficient opportunities to take more responsibility for their learning and, as a consequence, expectations for how quickly they can learn are often too low. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and tracking of individual pupil progress over time is detailed. However, use of the assessment data to inform teaching is not as effective as it could be. As a result, the work planned is not always challenging enough for some pupils and sometimes too difficult for others, which can slow the progress they make.

The effective leadership of the headteacher, supported well by the governing body, has ensured that the work of the school is back on track after a period of decline when it was without a substantive headteacher. Self-evaluation procedures are satisfactory. Systems for tracking pupils' progress are now in place and a good start has been made to developing the role of other leaders, which is helping to improve teaching and learning. As a consequence there is a clear view of where the school is working well and the areas for developing, and the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning from satisfactory to good by:
 - giving pupils more responsibility for their learning and raising expectations of how quickly pupils can make progress
 - using data more effectively to make sure teaching more precisely meets the needs of all pupils and provides consistent challenge.

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- Raise attainment in mathematics by:
 - improving pupils mental mathematics skills
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills in problem-solving activities.

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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they enjoy their learning. Pupils with special educational needs and those who join the school in different year groups make similar satisfactory progress to others as their needs are quickly identified and effective support is given. One pupil said, 'I love it, I'm new, so far it's really good and everyone's friendly.' In class, pupils show their enjoyment through good concentration and willingness to volunteer answers. When given the opportunity they cooperate well and share ideas, and show the ability to reflect.

Particular strengths in English were evident in the classroom. For example in English lessons linked to their work in history, pupils in Years 1 and 2 learnt to write a set of instructions and, using information and communication technology (ICT), considered the format and presentation of their work. Good teaching and a meaningful link between subjects meant that pupils made good progress. Mathematics is the weakest subject, with fewer pupils reaching the expected level in the national tests than in English or science. The school has started to teach the Year 5 and 6 pupils in ability groups to help them make better progress but this has not yet had an impact on raising attainment.

Pupils' enthusiastic participation in sporting activities and their understanding of healthy eating and balanced diets help them to adopt healthy lifestyles. Pupils enjoy their responsibilities in class and around the school such as being 'Buddies' to the Reception children. They take part in fund-raising ventures that help them develop a good understanding of those less fortunate than themselves and have close links with the local church. They are tolerant and respect the needs of others within the school community. These activities make a strong contribution to their very good spiritual, moral and social development. Cultural development is satisfactory but not as strong.

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.

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

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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan activities well so that the different year groups in their classes cover the appropriate curriculum for their ages. They make lessons interesting and enjoyable because, increasingly, they link subjects together to make learning more relevant and meaningful to pupils. Teaching, however, does not always provide the right level of challenge for pupils as, on occasion, expectations are not high enough. Opportunities are missed to involve pupils, for example by giving the class a range of aims of different difficulty and encouraging pupils to decide which is right for them personally, or getting pupils evaluating for themselves how well they have reached lesson targets. The curriculum places an appropriate level of emphasis on literacy, numeracy and ICT but is not always adapted to meet the different needs of pupils, and has not given enough weight to problem solving in mathematics. A good range of after-school clubs, visits and visitors to the school enrich the curriculum well. Pupils and their parents and carers are particularly proud of the drama performances. The curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' understanding of issues connected with their health and safety. This has been recognised by an Activemark award.

Vulnerable pupils, for example those who have special educational needs, including speech, language and dyslexia, receive well-targeted support. This enables them to play a full part in the school. Good partnerships with other agencies make a positive contribution to pupils' well-being. The school has worked successfully to improve attendance to a broadly satisfactory level by careful monitoring of absences and challenging parents and carers. Care overall is good and contributes much to this being a happy school. One parent wrote, 'My children are all confident, happy, safe and well

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adjusted. They have all had a great start to school life.'

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Improvement priorities are identified that are suitably focused on raising attainment and leaders and managers embed ambition and drive improvement satisfactorily. They have correctly identified aspects of mathematics to improve to raise attainment. The headteacher is rightly enabling subject leaders to have an increasing role in monitoring and evaluating, which is strengthening their accountability and enhancing their contribution to school improvement.

Leaders give sound attention to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination. They ensure that all pupils have every chance to take part in all the school's activities, and monitor their performance. The school actively promotes the global dimension of community cohesion through its link with a village and school in Africa. There are good links with the local community. This was demonstrated when the school and local community worked together and pooled resources and expertise to create a bright, attractive library from a neglected, unused classroom. The national dimension is less well developed as pupils have few opportunities to engage with groups from a diverse range of backgrounds other than those in the immediate community. Plans are well in hand to improve this.

The governing body is well organised and the school benefits from a range of expertise within its members. Governors are committed and supportive as well as challenging and know the school well. Some are often active in the day-to-day life of the school, for example regularly hearing children read and visiting classes. They are clearly involved in evaluating the effectiveness of the school and in strategic work, shaping the direction of its future. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are good and the school ensures that pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

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

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the Reception class with skills, knowledge and understanding that vary considerably from year to year, but are often a little below expectations for their age because of lower communication, language and literacy skills. As a result of good leadership and teaching they generally make good progress in many areas to reach the standards expected for their age by the time they move into Year 1. There are very positive relationships between children and adults and, as a result, behaviour is good and children feel safe and secure. Children thoroughly enjoy all the activities on offer. For example, they were bubbling with excitement and showed very good levels of determination when making a chair for Baby Bear. Children followed their own designs and carefully made their own selection of materials. Good questioning by adults helps children to extend their thinking and learning. There are good opportunities for children to take responsibility and make their own choices and these are balanced well with activities that are directed by adults. As a result, children quickly develop independence. Children enjoy many opportunities to use the outdoor area and as a result their physical skills and knowledge and understanding of the world develop well. The school has correctly identified the need to provide shade and a covered area to enhance the outdoor area as a resource for play and learning. There are good links with parents and carers and with the main local pre-school to ensure that there is a smooth transition into the school. Children are supported well and their welfare is given high priority.

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

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

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Views of parents and carers

All parents and carers who returned the questionnaire agreed that their children enjoy school and most are happy with their children's experience at the school. This reflects the findings of the inspection. A few do not feel that their children are making enough progress and, although the inspection found that progress is satisfactory, inspectors agree that some pupils are not always challenged sufficiently in their work and expectations of the rate of progress are not always high enough.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rolvenden 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 40 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 76 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	78	9	22	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	75	10	25	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	43	21	52	2	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	38	16	40	6	15	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	20	50	15	37	4	10	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	40	18	45	3	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	50	18	45	2	5	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)	17	43	19	47	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	45	14	35	6	15	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	50	15	37	3	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	48	14	35	4	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	17	43	18	45	4	10	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	53	15	37	2	5	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.



22 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rolvenden Primary School, Cranbrook TN17 4LS

You may remember that two inspectors came to your school recently. I am writing to thank you for being so friendly and for telling us about your school. We agree with you and your parents and carers that Rolvenden Primary is a happy and safe place to be.

Your school is satisfactory overall which means that some things are particularly good and some things need to be better. You do broadly as well as other schools in your English and science but you could be doing a bit better in your mathematics. You make steady progress but we think some of you could do even better, especially as you enjoy your learning and behave well. We were very pleased to hear that you enjoy coming to school. Well done for trying so hard to become fit and healthy and for coming to school regularly.

We have asked everyone in your school to do the following important things.

- Help you make better progress in mathematics by improving your skills in mental maths and giving you practice in applying your skills to problem-solving activities. You can help by always trying your very best in your numeracy lessons.
- As you behave so well and have good attitudes to school and learning we think that everyone should have higher expectation for how quickly you can learn new things. We want your teachers to involve you more in deciding what you are aiming for and judging how successful you have been.
- Use the information from the checks that are made on how well you are doing to plan work that precisely meets the needs of each of you so that you can do your very best.

Thank you again for being so polite and interesting to talk to.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Coussins

Lead inspector

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