

Rushton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121863
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	340030
Inspection dates	8–9 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Carol Worthington

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	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Fay White
Headteacher	Mrs Sally Bingham
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. A large majority of the time was spent looking at learning: 11 lessons were observed; all four teachers were seen at least twice; meetings were held with the headteacher and middle leaders, three governors, a group of pupils. Many pupils and parents collecting their children were spoken to informally. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at records of assessments, tracking of pupils' progress and samples of books. All safeguarding documents were scrutinised. Forty one returned parental questionnaires were analysed, as were questionnaires from all staff and all Key Stage 2 pupils.

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

- whether current standards have returned to their previous levels following the 2009 dip in Key Stage 2
- whether attainment in science, particularly for girls, is high enough
- confirm strengths in personal development identified by the school
- how well the school's provision for community cohesion prepares its pupils for life in multicultural Britain.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average school in a rural setting. Most pupils are of White British origin. A few are from a White European background. All speak English as their first language. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to that of most schools, but varies from year to year. Most have learning difficulties such as dyslexia, and some have emotional and behavioural problems. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The school's yearly admission number is 12. There are four classes; all except the Reception class contain a mix of pupils from two year groups.

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

The school is much improved since its previous inspection because the headteacher's ambition and vision for excellence is constantly communicated and shared by all staff, pupils and governors. The headteacher is a very strong leader and manager. She looks for the best in her staff and develops their capacity to the full. As a result, all staff in this small school take on an area of responsibility. The whole school's views are taken into account in the self-evaluation process so leaders have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and work together well as a team. The school is in a good position to make further improvements.

The quality of pastoral care is excellent. All pupils reported that they know adults care about them and deal promptly with any problems they may have. Pupils say they feel very safe and their parents agree. Discussion shows they have an excellent understanding of unsafe situations, for instance when on the internet, and know how to avoid them. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is well above average. They are able to learn well in this secure and orderly environment and make good progress from their broadly average starting points.

Pupils' attainment is above average in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave school. This fluctuates slightly from year to year because of the small numbers in all years and the variable numbers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, there was an apparent dip in standards, particularly in science, in 2009, reflecting the relatively high number with special educational needs in that Year 6 cohort. The inspection focus on science shows that attainment in the current Year 6 is already above average because girls' attitudes have improved due to the school's focus.

Pupils' academic progress has improved from satisfactory to good since the previous inspection because of the highly effective assessment and progress tracking system introduced by the headteacher. This clearly shows individual pupils' progress throughout the school, making it easy to identify underachievement very quickly and to put in measures to rectify it. Teachers know their pupils well in the small classes and plan work to challenge both girls and boys, those with special educational needs and those of higher ability, within the wide age range of their classes.

Teaching assistants are deployed well to guide and support groups of pupils in class, but some younger pupils in Key Stage 2 in particular are very dependent on adult support. The good degree of independence seen in Reception is not fully developed as they move up the school, although pupils in Years 5 and 6 demonstrate good independent research skills in their 'learning logs'.

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The curriculum is enriched with an excellent range of activities which the school could not provide without its excellent partnerships with parents, other schools and colleges. All pupils, from Reception to Year 6, for example, learn French through an arrangement with a local secondary school. The development of literacy through the wider curriculum is more consistent than numeracy. Pupils often write at length in most subjects, but activities involving mathematics to solve problems is a less frequent occurrence.

The school prepares its pupils well for life in their next school and beyond. Their social skills are highly developed, together with a strong sense of belonging to the school community. They willingly take on posts of responsibility as members of the school council, play leaders or 'buddies'. Pupils in this mono-cultural school gain knowledge of a wider range of cultures through religious education, French, residential visits and links with an African school, but they do not get first hand experience of the multicultural mix in modern Britain.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' mathematical skills by providing them with more opportunities to solve problems in real-life situations and in different areas of the curriculum.
 - Improve pupils' independent learning skills by building on the good practice provided in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
 - Create opportunities for children to develop cultural awareness through first-hand knowledge of multicultural society.

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

Pupils enjoy their lessons and achieve well. Their good behaviour is an important factor in their successful learning. They show interest and enthusiasm for learning, for example when older pupils considered in a religious education lesson what it might be like for a Sikh boy to come to their school. Younger ones enthusiastically choose their favourite sandwich fillings and enjoy making tally charts and pictograms to show what they like best. They work hard with effective support from adults. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are often set tasks well suited to their needs and encouraged to do things for themselves, but some do find it difficult to work independently or in groups without close supervision.

Assessments show that all pupils make at least good progress and the majority are currently exceeding the attainment expected for their age by the end of Years 2 and 6 in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Some have made outstanding progress from their starting point in the Reception Year. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similarly good progress, as do those of higher ability. There is no significant overall difference between the progress of boys and girls.

Pupils appreciate the way that their views are taken into account and are happy because they have someone (adult or child) to talk to if they feel troubled. All take some positions of responsibility in their school community. They feel part of the local

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community and care about local issues; for example, pupils have worked with the Parish Council on a project to eliminate dog-fouling of pavements in the village. They are now considering the feasibility of a local wind farm.

Pupils work and play well together. Their sense of morality and fairness is demonstrated by the very large amounts raised for charities and the Tanzanian school they are linked with. They have little first hand contact with children from ethnic minorities in this country. Pupils understand how to live a healthy life; they know the benefits of eating well and being active. They are prepared well for their secondary schools by their above average attainment in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT), their good personal development, behaviour and their excellent attendance and punctuality.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

The majority of teaching seen during the inspection was good, agreeing with the school's view. Pupils said lessons were fun, and many of them were. This is because teachers use a good variety of activities and expect children to be doing practical things

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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like measuring real objects, rather than sitting on the carpet. Teachers make good use of ICT. Pupils know what they are expected to learn, because this is made clear to them at the beginning of the lesson. They usually know how well they have done by the end because this is frequently checked in most lessons.

The Year 6 pupils often make excellent progress in their lessons because of the way they are encouraged to take responsibility for learning, thinking of different ways of classifying animals, for example, and suggesting further investigations to be done at home for their 'learning logs'. This is not so well developed lower down the school. Marking is good and gives pupils good points for improvement towards meeting their very challenging targets, but occasionally, corrections are not followed up promptly. The curriculum has recently undergone modification and some innovative real-life themes have been developed. Literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are developed well, but there could be more opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematics skills to problem-solving. The school provides excellent care, guidance and support to all its pupils, who are all known well as individuals. They and their parents and carers are very happy with the care they receive and the high quality of guidance when starting or leaving school. The school provides outstanding support to any pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable and to their families Its collaboration with key agencies is exemplary.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Since the last inspection the headteacher has empowered all staff to realise their potential and has distributed leadership well. Managers are now effectively in place for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and play a full monitoring and evaluative role. As a result, the quality of teaching and its impact on learning and progress, has improved from satisfactory to good since that inspection.

The headteacher has also encouraged the governing body to re-organise and develop. All governors are highly supportive of the school. The chair and some long-standing members are rigorous in challenging the school, and play a full role in its self-evaluation. Training for the high proportion of new governors is already taking place.

Safeguarding is excellent because governors and staff at all levels take this as their first priority and receive regular updates on their training; they consult and take parents' and pupils views into account. Procedures are regularly updated to take developing

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technologies, such as those relating to the internet, into account.

The school makes sure that all pupils, including those with barriers to learning and the potential high flyers, have equal opportunities to succeed. Since the nature of groups of pupils varies every year the school's focus is on catering for the specific needs of individuals and addressing any gender differences in performance. Targets for attainment and progress are very challenging, but the high expectations for points of progress in every year group are usually met.

There is good community cohesion within the school, where all adults and pupils demonstrate a strong sense of belonging and caring for each other. The school's partnership with parents and families is excellent; communication is particularly strong. The Parent and Community Association provides the majority of funding for all school trips and many other resources, so that all pupils can be freely included. In the school's outreach to the local community, it benefits from strong links with other schools and the local church and Parish Council. It also has beneficial links with a school in Tanzania; a visitor from that school amazed pupils by his awe and wonder on his first sight of snow. There is a planned link with a local multicultural school to give pupils first-hand experience of people from different cultures, but this has not yet taken place.

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Most children enter the Reception class with skills and abilities similar to those expected for their age. By the time they enter Year 1, virtually all have attained the early learning goals, and many have

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exceeded them. Consistently good teaching by all adults who work with the children ensures that they make good progress and thoroughly enjoy learning. Excellent relationships with parents and carers extend children's learning into their homes.

There is a well-equipped learning environment both indoors and outdoors with free-flow use of both teaching areas. Children enjoy a good mix of adult-led and independent learning through play and are able to plan some further activities for themselves, such as devising and making a 'castle' home area. Some free play activities could be improved by being more closely linked to specific learning objectives. Children's social skills are very good and they work and play well together.

Good leadership ensures planning is good and effective use of the good assessment systems ensures that activities are matched well to the different abilities of the children. The safety and care of all children has a very high profile. Behaviour is excellent and children settle quickly into school routines.

There is a good curriculum that includes exciting activities across all the areas of learning. There are regular sessions to develop linking letters and sounds and mark making. These form a good basis for the high standards of reading and writing in Key Stages 1 and 2. There are relatively fewer opportunities to use early mathematics skills in solving problems.

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

The vast majority of the 41 parental returns were entirely positive. All reported that they felt their children were safe in school. One or two reported individual concerns about behaviour and healthy food. Inspectors found nothing to substantiate these concerns. Most returns had very positive comments, and in addition, several letters were received, praising the headteacher and various aspects of the school's provision.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rushton 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 41 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 84 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	80	8	20	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	90	4	10	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	28	68	12	29	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	76	10	24	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	32	78	9	22	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	68	13	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	63	14	34	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)	24	59	16	39	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	73	10	24	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	56	16	30	2	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	59	15	37	2	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	29	71	12	29	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	80	8	20	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.



10 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rushton Primary School, Rushton, NN14 1RL

Thank you for being so friendly, well mannered and helpful when we visited your school recently. We very much enjoyed the time we spent with you. You told us and wrote in your questionnaire returns that you think yours is a good school and we agree with you.

These are some of the things we found to be good in your school.

Your headteacher does a good job in running the school.

All the adults take excellent care of you. You always have somebody to talk to if you are troubled. We agree with you that the buddy system is very useful.

You enjoy your lessons and work hard, so you do well.

Your behaviour is good and you all get on well with each other.

You know how to live a healthy lifestyle. You enjoy lots of sport, you try to eat healthy food and you are aware of how to keep yourselves safe.

You take on lots of responsibility in the school, in the school council and in your classes.

You have a good community spirit and get involved in village affairs.

All the adults in your school want it to be even better. To make this happen I have asked them to do the following things.

Help you become more independent in your learning.

Show you how to improve your use of mathematics to solve problems.

Provide opportunities for you to mix with more children from different cultures who live in Britain.

I am sure you want your school to be better too, so please make sure you work hard and do your best all the time. I wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Carol Worthington

Lead inspector

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