

Rochford Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115315
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	357730
Inspection dates	7–8 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Raminder Arora

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sonia Worthington
Headteacher	Andrew Howe
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2008
School address	6 Ashingdon Road Rochford SS4 1NJ
Telephone number	01702 544342
Fax number	01702 530711
Email address	admin@rochford.essex.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited three assemblies and 14 lessons, observing nine teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the data on pupils' attainment and progress, procedures for keeping pupils safe and the school improvement plan. Inspectors analysed 78 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, together with those completed by staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well is the teaching challenging the more able in mathematics and writing?
- To what extent has teaching improved this year and how well do staff use assessment to plan work at the right level for pupils?
- In view of recent staff changes at a senior level, how effective is the monitoring and evaluation by leaders and managers to raise attainment and drive improvement?

Information about the school

This average sized school caters for pupils who are mainly of White British descent. The proportion of children from ethnic minority backgrounds, or who speak English as an additional language, is very low. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly lower than in most other schools as is the number known to be eligible for free school meals. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The school has single-aged classes and a nursery, which can take up to 52 children. The school has experienced major changes in its senior leadership. The current head teacher was appointed in September 2010 and the current deputy headteacher started in January this year. The school has the Activemark award and Healthy Schools status.

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

Rochford Primary and Nursery School provides pupils with a satisfactory education. It is an improving school that is emerging from a period of upheaval. The changes, particularly at senior leadership level, have affected school improvement. In spite of the many challenges faced by the school, it is now in position to move forward. The local authority has given valued support and the appointment of a highly experienced headteacher has stabilised the school and given it clear direction for improvement. Parents and carers appreciate the school's work, particularly the good level of care it provides for its pupils, including those whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

Following a legacy of low attainment at both Key Stages 1 and 2, attainment has risen and is now firmly average by the end of Year 6. Pupils make satisfactory progress through the school from their start in the Nursery. The school's clearly focused actions to improve attainment in writing are starting to have an impact. Progress in writing and mathematics, although improving, is not yet consistent and is stronger in the older year groups than younger ones. Pupils' spelling and presentation skills are identified as weak, and not yet consistently attended to in all classes. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because of the well-targeted support they receive, both in class and through additional, individual programmes.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving securely. Combined with some good lessons, the improved provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and catch-up programmes, are helping to improve rates of progress. Lessons are prepared and structured well; classroom displays are attractive and celebrate pupils' achievements. Teaching remains only satisfactory overall because some lessons lack sufficient pace and challenge, and pupils sometimes sit listening for too long. Some teachers do not use the data from previous learning sufficiently rigorously to plan activities which challenge all pupils, particularly those identified as more able. The extent to which pupils are given guidance about how to improve their work further and are involved in assessing their own progress is inconsistent across subjects. The suitably planned curriculum provides pupils with varied and interesting opportunities and contributes to their enjoyment. Themed topics make clear links across different subjects and promote pupils' growing awareness of cultures and beliefs different from their own. Resources, such as computers are not used enough to advance pupils' mathematical skills; the school does not have interactive whiteboards to enhance teaching and learning.

Pupils are keen learners who behave well, and concentrate hard even when tasks sometimes lack challenge. Pupils feel safe and appreciate the way all staff act promptly if they need advice or guidance. The school has Healthy Schools status and pupils enjoy all kinds of sporting activities and want to be healthy.

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The governing body and the new headteacher have been the driving force in bringing about improvements on a number of fronts, including securing additional external support and funding. Systems for tracking pupils' progress have improved as has pupils' attainment and progress. The more recent appointment of senior leaders has strengthened the leadership, making the school's capacity for further sustained improvement satisfactory. However, the monitoring role of the school's newly structured middle leadership is not fully developed with a sharp enough focus on evaluating pupils' learning and progress.

Up to 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress and raise attainment in English and mathematics across the school by:
 - developing further opportunities for pupils to practise using their writing skills in other subjects
 - ensuring high expectations of spellings and presentation
 - providing pupils with well-planned practical tasks and opportunities to use information communication technology (ICT) to enhance their mathematical skills.
- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching to 85% by September 2011, through:
 - ensuring that lessons have greater pace and challenge, particularly for the more-able pupils
 - greater consistency in marking to help pupils know what they need to do to improve
 - using assessment data to match work precisely to pupils' abilities.
- Increase the accountability of middle managers to have greater impact on teaching and pupils' learning through:
 - more rigorous monitoring of teaching to ensure that targets for improvement are met.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils like school and their teachers. As one pupil said, 'I enjoy school because I learn a lot.' Pupils have positive learning attitudes, respond well to adults and work sensibly together. They are motivated and engage with enthusiasm, when teachers plan interesting activities that capture their imagination, as in a Year 6 writing session, focused on using powerful vocabulary and using visual imagery to describe appearance.

Children get off to a sound start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Their overall progress is currently satisfactory, as is progress in Key Stage 1. Some children enter with language and communication skills lower than expected. In Key Stage 2, progress improves as pupils move up the school, with some that is increasingly good, particularly in

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Years 5 and 6, where teaching is good. A large majority of pupils are already at the average attainment levels for the end of Year 6, with a small number assessed as being even higher. This is due to gains in pupils' confidence, effective development of skills and filling gaps in learning; however, the more able are not always challenged enough. In English, standards are starting to rise, but not all pupils write as much as they might, nor correct spelling errors and make their work look neat. Pupils enjoy rewards and certificates for good work. Good behaviour permeates the school and pupils are polite and helpful. Pupils have a secure understanding of basic skills, and their use of ICT is satisfactory. The school council operates democratically, regularly seeking pupils' views about ways to improve their school. Pupils participate in local community events, but have less opportunity, apart from the positive relationships established with the few minority ethnic pupils, to learn from wider and global links.

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
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well through more recently introduced intervention group work. This is having a satisfactory impact on learning, aided by good staff teamwork and regular meetings to discuss pupils' progress. Teaching is improving rapidly, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6, where there is solidly good practice to be shared. However, this is not yet consistent across the school. This is because teachers spend too much time talking and so

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pupils have less time to spend on task, or the task is not matched well to pupils' abilities and results in lack of learning. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and effective questioning keeps pupils interested. Some staff use good teaching strategies, such as rigour in learning, pace and greater challenge, to fire pupils' imagination. There is thorough assessment and tracking data, with effective whole school target setting so that pupils know what they have to do to reach the next level. However, the quality of marking is variable, with insufficient informative marking to help pupils improve their work independently. Relationships are good and there is mutual respect between staff and pupils.

The broadly balanced curriculum is suitably focused on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. It is carefully adapted to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or difficulties, so that they progress in line with their peers. However, pupils do not use their skills in ICT to good effect in other subjects. Pupils are enthusiastic about physical education and the Activemark award recognises the good use they make of local community and school facilities. They also enjoy art, dance, music, Spanish and educational visits. Visits and visitors enrich the curriculum and broaden their knowledge of others' lives. A group of younger pupils, and children who are identified as being gifted or talented, have begun working with others at a nearby school.

The staff create a caring atmosphere and value each pupil; this raises self-esteem, enabling them to focus on their learning. The school works closely with a wide range of outside agencies to provide the right type of help for more vulnerable or needy pupils. Staff listen to pupils carefully, acting promptly to resolve any concerns. The school has improved attendance and has reduced the level of persistent absence. However, a small number of families still persist in taking their children on extended holidays during term time, to the detriment of their education.

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?

Staff share the headteacher's clear vision for school improvement. The school's development plan is focused on the most important areas and contains appropriate actions. Currently the school is working on a well-considered termly single plan and monitoring it very closely for its impact on standards. A long-term, three years plan is being put together by involving governors, staff, parents, pupils and the local community. Restructuring of the leadership team has placed a greater emphasis on the role of phase leaders to monitor the quality of provision and pupils' standards. This role is in a developmental stage, as some of the staff are new. All staff work well as a team and

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follow the headteacher's clear model of identification, evaluation and monitoring, increasingly focused on raising standards and pupil outcomes. This is starting to have a positive impact on the school's performance, for example in teaching and learning and attendance. The pace of change is gaining a momentum to sustain improvement, particularly in writing, and in raising expectations for teaching and learning to become consistently good or better. Members of the governing body now have a satisfactory understanding of their role; they ask more questions and are starting to challenge senior leaders. Safeguarding is good and meets current government requirements. Strengths include the training of staff and governors, and careful attention given to the needs of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Community cohesion is satisfactory; local links are well-developed. The school has undertaken a recent thorough audit that has identified that there are insufficient links to develop wider and global cohesion. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory because all groups of pupils make satisfactory progress, despite some unevenness in the provision, and learn that discrimination is not acceptable.

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
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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
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 work and play in a safe and stimulating environment. Early Years Foundation Stage has been a focus for improvement, particularly in the Reception Class. As a result of both Nursery and Reception sharing good practice, there are notable recent improvements. Aspects of the provision, carefully planned and delivered by their teachers and support staff, have enhanced children's social skills and creative development. Almost all children transfer to Reception having come through Nursery. This provides good continuity of assessment through shared learning journey books, profiles and records. On entry children's skills are broadly in line with what is expected from this age, with some identified weaknesses in language and oral skills. At the end of Reception the outcomes are in line with the national expectations in most areas, but behind in letters and sounds

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and in writing more fully. Counting and number skills are soundly established, but further skills in problem solving and application are less secure. Children's disposition and attitudes, their self-care and confidence in making relationships, are strengths. Improvements to the outdoor curriculum are helping their knowledge and understanding of the real world, whilst promoting their physical development and use of equipment. Welfare is both good and thorough.

Children are encouraged to respond to experiences through stories, music, imagination and their senses. They use ICT by exploring and getting feedback through responses. Children develop body awareness through gym trails and play. Teachers ensure a sound balance of adult-led and children's own activities. Children understand the importance of being healthy and enjoy preparing simple foods such as sandwiches or fruit salad. Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving due to strategic impact. A climate of improvement is maintained through good teamwork. Parents and carers are happy and suitably involved in supporting their children's learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

A larger-than-average proportion of questionnaires were returned by parents and carers. The majority of these have overwhelmingly positive views of the school.

Parents and carers are particularly pleased with the caring, friendly and welcoming ethos. Evidence from the inspection supports parents' and carers' views that children enjoy school immensely, and the care for their safety is good. Many wrote to the

- inspectors to describe how happy they are with the school. Very few parents and carers have any concerns. One parent's comment is echoed by many: 'Children are happy at school and progressing.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rochford Primary and Nursery 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 78 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 228 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	69	23	29	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	49	63	25	32	3	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	32	41	40	51	5	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	37	40	51	6	8	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	35	45	40	51	3	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	37	44	56	5	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	47	41	53	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)	23	29	45	58	5	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	38	42	54	4	5	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	35	46	59	0	0	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	35	42	54	5	7	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	33	42	42	54	3	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	47	38	49	3	4	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



9 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rochford Primary and Nursery School, Rochford, SS4 1NJ

Thank you all for your kindness and courtesy when we came to inspect your school recently. We are particularly grateful to those of you who gave up your time to speak to us and tell us all about the many things you do. We think that you are very polite, and your parents and carers should be very proud of the way you speak to visitors. We think your school is satisfactory with more good things beginning to happen. Here are some of them.

Your teachers provide you with an interesting range of enrichment activities involving, trips, visitors to the school, and sporting activities.

You know how to keep yourselves safe, and told inspectors how the school cares for you and keeps you safe.

You are all very keen to lead a healthy lifestyle, knowing the importance of eating sensibly and taking regular exercise. You said you enjoy your 'Wakey Wakey Club'.

In lessons and around the school, you behave well, and all try hard to do your best.

Your parents and carers are very pleased with the improving work of the school.

We have suggested three things that will help your school to become even better.

To ensure that you make the best possible progress in writing and mathematics we are asking your teachers to plan work that builds on what you know already.

We are also asking them to make sure that all lessons run at a good pace and let you know how to improve your work further.

We are requesting that your school leaders take an active part in checking you all make good progress.

You have your part to play too! Please keep working hard and helping each other.

Thanks again for your contribution to the inspection. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Raminder Arora

Lead Inspector

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