

Rowdown Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131339
Local Authority	Croydon
Inspection number	366608
Inspection dates	15–16 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Graham Lee

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	350
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wendy Howell
Headteacher	Linda Shute
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 17 lessons taught by 17 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, two members of the governing body, the headteacher, staff in leadership positions and those involved in the care, guidance and support of pupils. They observed the schools work and looked at some of the schools documentation, including policies and procedures related to the safeguarding of pupils, self-evaluation and information about the progress made by pupils. Inspectors also took into account the views of 106 parents and carers expressed in responses to the schools own questionnaire.

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

The extent to which pupils attainment in English and mathematics has risen since the last inspection.

The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management in securing school improvement.

The extent to which attendance has improved since the last inspection and persistent absence has been reduced

Information about the school

The school is larger than average for a school of its type. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is increasing and is much higher than average. These pupils are from a wide variety of backgrounds although the largest group are of Eastern European heritage. Relatively few of these are at the early stages of learning English. There is also a small Traveller community represented in the school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is much higher than average. Of these, pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties and those with moderate learning difficulties form the largest groups. The school runs a breakfast club. It also hosts an after-school club, which is run by a private provider and is subject to a separate inspection. Since the last inspection the school has appointed a business manager and four assistant headteachers from within the existing staff. The Chair of the Governing Body has also been appointed since the inspection and there have been several new governor appointments.

At its last inspection the schools overall effectiveness was found to be inadequate and it was placed in special measures. Significant improvement was required in relation to pupils attainment in English and mathematics, the effectiveness of leadership and management and levels of attendance.

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

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. Rowdown is now providing a satisfactory quality of education and has improved significantly since its last inspection. The school has maintained the confidence of most parents and carers and engages well with them. One commented, We are very happy and proud our three children have attended this school. This was typical of the views of others.

Pupils attainment at the end of Year 6 remains low. Consistently good teaching is now accelerating their progress throughout the school. Data about pupils performance are being used much more effectively to identify potential underachievement and to provide additional support where necessary. As a result, attainment is rising and the gap with the national average is closing, particularly in mathematics. This represents satisfactory achievement often from well below average starting points.

Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage where a stimulating and welcoming environment enables them to become confident learners. As pupils move on, teachers provide well, for the most part, to meet their wide ranging needs and abilities. This is particularly the case in mathematics where achievement is improving rapidly. In a few lessons in English, however, the level of challenge is insufficient for the most able pupils. In English the systematic teaching of sounds and letters in Key Stage 1 is providing a sound platform for pupils to build their reading and writing skills on. This approach is not as firmly embedded in Key Stage 2 where some gaps remain in these basic skills. Many pupils have limited vocabulary which has a negative impact on their written work. Teachers often compensate well by giving pupils good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills in order to provide a context for writing. Sometimes opportunities are missed to do this and this can limit the quality of the written work.

The school looks after its pupils well and arrangements for their safeguarding are robust. Staff are particularly good at supporting those whose circumstances make them vulnerable through The Place to Be, for example. Good support is enabling pupils with a variety of special needs to make the most of their learning and to make good progress. There are good relationships between adults and pupils. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure and have confidence in the adults around them. They enjoy their learning, which is reflected in their rising attendance. They are especially enthusiastic about the impressive range of additional activities which contribute to their good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. The popular sports activities help pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles well. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are proud of their school and enjoy the opportunities they have to take on responsibilities. The school council has not met this year, and this limits the opportunities pupils have to contribute to the development of the school.

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The headteacher has tackled the schools weaknesses with considerable determination. The new senior leadership team has provided her with invaluable support and distributed leadership more widely and effectively. They are supported by knowledgeable curriculum teams. Together, they know the schools strengths and weaknesses well and have made good progress in tackling the latter since the last inspection. Responsibilities for monitoring the quality of teaching and raising attainment is evolving between the teams and is not yet fully developed. Attainment is not yet as high as it should be. Nevertheless, the ambition of school leaders and the increasingly effective governing body, together with the considerable progress made over the past year, indicates that the school has satisfactory capacity to continue to improve.

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?

- Raise attainment at the end of Year 6 to broadly average by 2012 through:
 - embedding strategies for teaching sounds and letters throughout the school
 - developing pupils speaking and listening skills in a range of contexts to enhance their vocabulary and improve their skills
 - ensuring that the most able pupils are consistently challenged in lessons.
- Develop the monitoring role of leaders at all levels in order to improve teaching and learning and raise attainment.
- Develop strategies for pupils to express their views about aspects of school improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils are now making good progress often from very low starting points in language, communication and number skills. Pupils are keen to learn and motivated well by the activities they are provided with. They readily offer their ideas and respond thoughtfully to their teachers questions. They cooperate well in pairs and groups and enjoy applying their skills in practical situations. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson pupils enjoyed using their newly acquired understanding of ratio and proportion to solve a range of problems. This practical approach together with pupils better acquisition of basic number and calculation skills is contributing to rising attainment. Pupils really enjoy the range of stories and texts that underpin the English curriculum. This fires their imagination and stimulates imaginative pieces of written work. For example, pupils in Year 2 discussed *The Snail and the Whale* enthusiastically which enabled them to understand narrative in the first person and to write letters as a result. Some pupils in Key Stage 2 still have a comparatively weak understanding of sounds and letters which inhibits their written work. Nevertheless progress is improving in English although some more able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently which is reflected in the relatively low numbers working at the higher levels.

Pupils with a range of moderate learning difficulties become confident learners and make good progress as a result of group and one-to-one support. The latter, in particular, has enabled a considerable number of pupils to make real spurts in progress. Pupils from a

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range of backgrounds are inducted well into school which enables them to quickly settle and to make as much progress as others. The significant number of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are helped to manage their emotions well and to make the most of school. As a result, challenging behaviour has minimal impact on learning.

Pupils say that they feel safe and have confidence in the adults around them. They display a good understanding of different aspects of keeping themselves safe, for example on the internet. As well as their wide participation in a range of sports activities, pupils adopt healthy lifestyles well through a good understanding of the elements contributing to a healthy diet. Most groups of pupils are now attending regularly and the proportion of persistent absentees has reduced significantly. Most of the remaining poor attenders are from the small Traveller community, who make slower progress as a consequence.

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	4
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	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	2

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?

The schools provision is improving strongly which is enabling pupils to make good progress. The curriculum is increasingly tailored to the needs of pupils. For example, the systematic teaching of sounds and letters has been extended to the lower end of Key Stage 2. This has been helpful in reinforcing these skills in which many pupils are not entirely secure. Moreover, the emphasis on speaking and listening is enabling pupils to articulate their ideas and develop their vocabulary. The various intervention strategies are helping some pupils to catch up with their peers, in some cases quite rapidly.

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Nevertheless, these strategies are not entirely embedded and attainment in English, while rising, is not doing so as rapidly as it is in mathematics. In Key Stage 2, setting by ability in mathematics in some year groups is helping to accelerate progress as pupils are taught in smaller groups with pupils of similar ability.

The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy their learning because they say that teachers make lessons interesting and fun. For example, pupils gave thoughtful advice to one of the characters in *Jessie Came Across the Sea* in a conscience alley which demonstrated the depth of their understanding of the text. In a mathematics lesson in Year 3, pupils enjoyed exploring a range of problem-solving activities related to time in the hall which consolidated and developed their understanding of the topic in a concrete way. Teachers are using assessment well to tailor work to the needs of different pupils although occasionally the pitch is not quite challenging enough for the most able pupils in English.

Pupils experience of school is enriched through a wide range of sporting and artistic activities as well as subjects such as French and drama and even Latin in Year 6. This contributes considerably to their personal development and enjoyment of school. The school has many effective strategies to look after its pupils whose circumstances have made them more vulnerable including the popular Place to Be which many pupils find a haven in times of difficulty. The learning mentors also provide invaluable support to vulnerable pupils and families. As a result of the robust action taken by the school the attendance of nearly all groups in the school has risen rapidly and persistent absence much reduced. The school's commitment to its children and families is also evident in its popular breakfast club.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has high aspirations for the school and secured the commitment of leaders at all levels to school improvement. Together they have focused the school's actions to good effect on the most important priorities for improvement. Increasingly effective use is being made of a range of monitoring activities to raise attainment and improve teaching and learning. Key to this is the more robust use of data to track the progress of individuals and groups in the school and to set challenging targets for improvement. The role of the curriculum teams in terms of the monitoring of provision is not fully established which limits their effectiveness in assessing the impact of their work. While much has been achieved, the impact of new strategies are not yet fully established and, while progress is accelerating, attainment remains low. The governing body has

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developed a much better understanding of its roles and is beginning to hold leaders effectively to account for the performance of the school.

The school places a high priority on the safeguarding of pupils and arrangements for child protection are robust and understood by all. The school has strong partnerships with a range of agencies to support the welfare and learning needs of pupils. The school's commitment to equality of opportunity and the elimination of discrimination is enshrined in its policies and evident in its daily life. As a result, pupils are now achieving satisfactorily and any remaining gaps are closing with the exception of Traveller pupils who continue to underperform. The school is a harmonious place and the school promotes community cohesion well at the local level. However, its strategy at the national and global levels is at an early stage of development.

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	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

When they join the school children often have weak communication and social skills. They settle quickly in the Nursery where a calm and purposeful atmosphere enables them to develop good social skills. Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage children play and work harmoniously together, sharing toys and resolving any conflicts amicably with the help of the adults. They learn to choose for themselves and are increasingly able to sustain activities for longer periods of time. At the same time a range of well-focused activities led by the adults enables them to make good progress in their language, communication and number skills. Adults observe the children closely to record their progress and to ensure that activities are suitably challenging. Occasionally, opportunities to develop children's speaking and listening skills are missed by the adults. In spite of their good progress children's attainment remains below average, particularly in language and communication skills by the time they enter Year 1.

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The Early Years Foundation Stage is well resourced and the extensive outdoor area is used effectively to develop all areas of childrens learning. The new leader is a role model of good practice and has led significant improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage since the last inspection. Adults work closely as a team and are focused on further improvement. Better use is now being made of data to track childrens progress although it is not yet sufficiently refined for staff to be able to demonstrate childrens good progress with complete confidence.

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

As this was a section 8 inspection, Ofsted did not send out a questionnaire to parents and carers prior to the inspection. However, the school did use its own survey to which 106 parents and carers responded. This showed that most were happy about all aspects of the schools work. Most expressed the view that the teaching is good, pupils behave well and that they would be comfortable to approach the school if they had any concerns. A typical view expressed by parents and carers was: I am very pleased with my childs teachers. They are very helpful and kind. The highest area of dissent was expressed in response to statement My child is not bullied or harassed at school. Inspectors found that some pupils do present challenging behaviour from time to time. However, there are good procedures in place for dealing with any issues and pupils feel confident in the adults around them to sort out any problems they may have.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



17 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rowdown Primary School, Croydon CR0 0EG

You may remember that I visited your school recently with two other inspectors. This was my third visit to the school and I have enjoyed each one of them. I have always found you all to be very friendly and polite. I would like to thank you for the help you have given me.

You may remember that at the last inspection it was decided that Rowdown needed some extra help and was put into special measures. I have found that the school has been improving each time I have been thanks to the hard work of the headteacher and all the staff. I am very pleased to tell you that it is now providing you with a satisfactory education and no longer needs special measures.

Everybody at the school looks after you well and you told us that you feel safe and trust the adults around you. We were impressed with your good behaviour in lessons and around the school. Well done! The teaching is good and the teachers give you interesting things to do that help you to learn well. This means that you are making better progress in mathematics and English. Some of you have done really well in the one-to-one sessions. Your attendance has also improved a lot so keep it up.

The headteacher, governors and staff are keen to continue to improve what they do for you all. We have asked them to do three things that will help.

Although you are making better progress in English you are not doing quite as well as you are in mathematics. We have asked your teachers to help you to do even better by making sure that you know your sounds and letters and have lots of opportunities to talk about your work. We also want them to make sure that those of you who find the work a bit easier are always challenged.

We have asked all the teachers who are in charge of different things in the school to check up to make sure you are all doing as well as you can.

You are very proud of your school and want to make it better. We have asked your headteacher to give you chances to make sure your views are heard.

With all best wishes for the future, especially those who will soon be moving on.

Yours sincerely

Graham Lee

Lead inspector

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