



John Rankin Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109825
LEA West Berkshire LEA
Inspection number 278283
Inspection dates 19 September 2005 to 20 September 2005
Reporting inspector Christopher Parker AI

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Henshaw Crescent
School category	Community		Newbury
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		RG14 6ES
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01635 42859
Number on roll	222	Fax number	01635 522889
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Lynne Duncan and Sarah Hunt
Date of previous inspection	29 September 2003	Headteacher	Miss S Brown

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

John Rankin Junior School is similar in size to many schools of this type. It has a relatively stable population with the large majority of pupils spending all four years at the school. Although there is fluctuation from year to year, attainment on entry is broadly average. Most of the pupils are from White British backgrounds with a small number coming from minority ethnic groups, none of whom is at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average. However, some year groups have a higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties than others. The school has a stable core of teachers but two new teachers have recently been appointed.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Inspectors agree with the school's view of its performance. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well. With the clear direction of the headteacher, supported by senior managers, it has the capacity to improve further. The school provides satisfactory value for money. The school has been effective in raising standards and now ensures the pupils make the progress they should. The satisfactory teaching and broad curriculum, enhanced by many visits and out of school activities, provide an education which the pupils enjoy very much. However, not all lessons captivate and challenge them, and in science the teaching does not always encourage their independence. Although the pupils develop a good level of competence in information and communication technology (ICT) it is not used extensively to promote learning across the curriculum. The personal development, guidance and support for pupils are good. Parents rightly feel the school builds confidence in their children. The teachers give the pupils many opportunities to become involved in the life of the school. They feel safe, behave well and are willing to work hard. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community. School councillors take their roles seriously and have successfully improved, for example, lunchtime arrangements. Parents' views of the school are extremely positive. Some sought to highlight the considerable commitment of the staff. One added, 'The headteacher is full of enthusiasm which motivates the pupils.'

What the school should do to improve further

* Raise standards further in English, mathematics and science. * Ensure that teaching encourages independent investigation in science. * Make more extensive and effective use of ICT to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The pupils are making satisfactory progress and achieving standards similar to the national average. In 2003 the pupils were not making enough progress between Year 2 and Year 6. The school tackled the underachievement and results improved. In 2004 the pupils made the progress expected of them. The trend in national test results is now clearly upward. Results in 2005 have continued to improve with an increased number of pupils reaching the highest level in mathematics and science. However, in English fewer pupils reached this level than last year. The school has analysed the reasons for this and taken action to maintain the rate of improvement. The pupils are building successfully on what they already know and are able to do. Pupils with learning difficulties are being well supported to achieve as well as they can. As a result, all pupils in Year 6 reached at least the nationally expected level in mathematics last year. The teachers have a greater awareness of the need to challenge pupils but instances remain where more could be demanded, for example, in scientific investigations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They enjoy school very much and are willing to work hard. Although the current building work is potentially disruptive to the smooth running of the school, an atmosphere of calm and order is very evident. Pupils show a growing self confidence and a mature outlook. Teachers encourage them to think about the consequences of their decisions and how their behaviour may affect others. Pupils appreciate being able to express their opinions and feel that they are listened to. Attendance is good and pupils are punctual. They say they feel very safe in school and in the playground. Behaviour and relationships are good. The pupils know what they need to do to stay healthy. Many of them take part in sports clubs. They are encouraged to eat healthily and have access to drinking water throughout the day. Until recently many pupils were unhappy with lunchtime arrangements. The school council investigated how they could make lunchtimes a social and pleasant occasion. A group of older pupils looked at how school meals could be improved. They canvassed pupils' and parents' views. The governors took account of their findings and invited two pupils to interview applicants for the post of school cook. Pupils now enjoy lunchtimes. One pupil commented, 'the food is now healthy, much more palatable and the vegetables are not overcooked!'

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory and enables pupils to enjoy their education and make the progress they should. The teachers make it clear what they expect the pupils to learn during each lesson. At the end of lessons the teachers carefully question the pupils to highlight any difficulties they may have encountered. They also ask the pupils how well they feel they have done. Teachers mark the pupils' work in a way that encourages them to make improvements. Pupils enjoy working and learning independently but in science, for example, there are occasions when pupils are guided to conclusions rather than being encouraged to find out for themselves. Although increasing use is being made of ICT to enhance learning and achievement it is not used extensively enough. The headteacher and senior staff recognise that consistently good teaching is essential to help pupils learn as well as they can. They have developed systems to promote good teaching. For example, experienced teachers share their knowledge with less experienced colleagues. Teachers also work together closely to plan lessons. Similar systems are in place for developing the work of teaching assistants who are particularly effective in helping those with learning difficulties.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The pupils enjoy the broad and interesting range of work they do. There is good provision for literacy and numeracy, and many opportunities for pupils to extend and enhance their learning. Teachers plan well to develop pupils' skills and understanding. However, they do not always ensure that the more able pupils are challenged, for example, by giving them greater control over decisions when they are doing science experiments. The needs of the less able are well met by the highly organised and effective support of the teaching assistants. The school's knowledge of how much pupils have learned is good. As a result, the school is increasingly effective in tailoring activities to meet the pupils' needs. It has rightly set a priority within its improvement plan to demand more of the most able pupils. Visitors to the school, such as members of the Civil War Society and residential visits to, for example, Ufton Court add interest to the curriculum. These particular activities help to bring colour and life to the pupils' learning in history. Other visitors such as Tibetan monks add diversity to their learning. Parents and pupils alike value and enjoy the many clubs and extra-curricular activities the school provides. One parent commented, 'There is an excellent variety of extra-curricular activities on offer.' There are many sporting opportunities and pupils are encouraged to participate as often as they can.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils, parents and inspectors agree that there is a 'very happy atmosphere' in the school and that the care and welfare of pupils is good. The school is proud of its strong commitment to knowing all of its pupils and bringing out the best in them. For example, those with emotional or behavioural difficulties benefit from a specialist programme run by teaching assistants that helps them to manage their emotions and build their self-esteem. This enables them to make good progress in lessons because they behave well and have more confidence. Child protection procedures are clear and any pupil who may be at risk is carefully monitored. The school uses its effective links with local agencies to ensure that pupils are well cared for. Although the school has yet to complete and fully implement its Race Equality Policy it is inclusive of all of its pupils. The tracking of each pupil's progress is comprehensive. The information the school collects is being used with increasing precision to provide programmes that help the pupils make better progress and achieve more.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership team provides clear direction and drive for improvement. The headteacher is establishing a learning culture that influences all aspects of the school's work. Although she acknowledges that the school is, 'Not there yet,' the teachers and teaching assistants are committed to this goal. The drive for higher achievement is evident, for example, in assemblies where

the pupils are encouraged to grasp every chance to learn. As a result, pupils are now making the progress they should and standards are rising. Over half of the pupils reached the highest level in the 2005 test in mathematics, showing a marked improvement over recent years. The deputy headteacher rigorously analyses the pupils' academic performance. She uses the information from her analysis to highlight where, for example, further training is needed. As a result, an upward trend in test results has been established. The views of parents, pupils and governors are sought and acted upon. These influence the priorities in the sharply focused improvement plan. Governors, who are increasingly effective in holding the school to account, monitor the impact of the plan on the provision made for pupils. The school has proved it can make sustained improvements and is well placed to raise standards further and accelerate the pupils' progress.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

This letter is to tell you about the findings of the recent inspection and to thank you for taking the time to talk to inspectors about your school. You are able to learn in a calm and friendly atmosphere. Even though the building work causes some interruptions and distractions you behave sensibly in lessons and at playtimes. You told us that you enjoy lessons and feel your teachers are encouraging you to do well. We could see this in lessons but feel that some of you could be asked to do harder work.

The headteacher and teachers have done a lot to raise standards. They want you to do even better and have plans to make sure you make good progress in all your learning. We feel they will be able to do this and have asked them to challenge you to do more on your own. For example, when you do a science experiment you may be asked to make more of the decisions. You have the skills to make wider use of the computers you have in school. Therefore, we have asked your teachers to create more opportunities for you to use them in your learning.

You have many good opportunities to visit places of interest and join a wide range of clubs. You are given responsibilities and meet them well. You contributed to the decisions about how lunchtimes can be improved. As a result, everybody is much happier with the meals and where they can sit. We enjoyed being in your school and hope that in the future it is even more successful in helping you to do as well as you possibly can.