



Rocks Park Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114471
LEA East Sussex
Inspection number 279389
Inspection dates 7 June 2006 to 8 June 2006
Reporting inspector Terry Elston AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Lashbrooks Road
School category	Community		Uckfield
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		East Sussex TN22 2AY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01825 762827
Number on roll	181	Fax number	01825 768702
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	7 February 2000	Headteacher	Mr Chris Davey

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 7 June 2006 - 8 June 2006	Inspection number 279389
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Rocks Park is a medium-sized primary school taking children mostly from two private housing developments close to the school. Numbers have decreased significantly since the last inspection. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and none speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below that of most schools. Pupils' attainment on entry is broadly average. The school has recently achieved an Arts Mark, Active Mark and Curriculum Award. At the time of the inspection, children in the Foundation Stage were taught by a temporary teacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that serves its community well. The leadership and management are good, and the headteacher and senior staff have a clear vision for the school's future. The good teaching is an important reason for pupils' good progress, although sometimes tasks are not well matched to the abilities of all the pupils. Children make a sound start in the Reception class but there are shortcomings in the assessment of their skills and tracking of their progress that prevent them doing better. By the age of 11, pupils achieve well and standards are well above average in mathematics and above average in English, science and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils have fun learning and behave well. The well planned curriculum is a significant reason for this because it provides a wide range of interesting challenges that pupils relish. In particular, the school justifies its high reputation for provision for the arts, as can be seen in the excellent quality of art, design and music produced by pupils of all ages. Parents value this highly, as well as the excellent quality of care, guidance and support that ensures their children are well looked after and feel safe. They are consulted regularly about ways to improve the school further and are very well informed about their children's progress. The provision has improved significantly since the last inspection, gives good value for money and is well placed to be an excellent school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of assessment information to ensure that children in the Foundation Stage do as well as they can.
- Make sure that teachers plan tasks that are challenging but achievable for all groups of pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress from their starting points and most groups of pupils achieve well. They have a hunger for learning, as is illustrated by one pupil's poem, which began 'I can't bring myself to stop asking questions. What's wrong with me?' Children achieve satisfactorily in the Reception class and most meet expected targets in all areas by the time they enter Year 1. However, in this class, not all tasks are matched well to children's abilities or experiences. This means that they do not always achieve the standard of work of which they are capable.

Progress is good in the infant classes and in 2005 standards overall were above average. The current group of pupils has improved further on those results and, while standards in reading and writing remain significantly above average, those in mathematics are now very high.

Pupils continue to do well in the junior classes, and in 2005 standards by Year 6 were above average in English and science, and well above average in mathematics. Pupils

achieved their very challenging targets in English but missed them narrowly in mathematics. This year's targets are still higher and the current group of Year 6 pupils are well on course to achieve them. In their subjects, pupils do better than expected in ICT and music. In art and design, pupils' work is excellent and their vivid displays bring gasps of admiration from visitors.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is above the national average. All those interviewed said that learning was fun and how much they valued the teachers' help in lessons. They have very good relationships with all the staff and each other. Pupils mostly behave well and have very good attitudes to learning when the work set for them is matched well to their abilities. However, when the work set for them is too easy or too hard, they chatter to each other and miss what the teacher is saying. Otherwise, pupils are attentive in lessons and contribute with confidence.

All pupils are aware of the school's 'Golden Rules' and apply them consistently. They take responsibility willingly and enjoy doing jobs around the school. Pupils are good at taking care of one another. For example, at lunchtime the older pupils show great maturity when helping others to be safe and happy by playing games with them. Pupils are knowledgeable about the need to eat healthily and take regular exercise. They take part in physical activities with enthusiasm and are justifiably proud of their skills.

Pupils prepare themselves well for the future by developing good skills in reading, number and ICT. This is enhanced further by their very good links with local businesses that work closely with pupils to produce and sell items such as greetings cards and key fobs. Pupils develop well socially, morally, spiritually and culturally. In particular, they learn a lot from assemblies and personal, social, health and citizenship lessons about their own feelings and how to understand the way others might feel about them. A wide range of visits to local theatres and museums and visitors from around the world help pupils develop a very good cultural awareness. A visitor from The Gambia, for example, gave pupils a valuable insight into the richness of African music.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and explains why pupils make such good progress. Teachers are very good at encouraging pupils to attempt difficult work without fear of failure and this explains why many are such confident learners. Teachers begin lessons well with clear explanations and searching questions that take very good account of the different abilities in the class. However, in some lessons, this good introductory work is followed by pupils being asked to complete the same worksheets,

irrespective of their ability. This hampers progress because the least able pupils struggle to understand the work and the most able fly through the task without being extended.

Teachers make lessons enjoyable by using exciting resources, including large computer screens that pupils find fascinating. A very good example of this was in a Year 4 numeracy lesson when the teacher had pupils entering the coordinates of a shape on to the screen so that all could see it gradually appearing. They found this great fun and learned a lot about the topic in a short time. The very good partnership between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that pupils who need help are supported very well in their learning.

Assessment is good. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and generally set them challenging but achievable targets. Pupils are given very good opportunities to assess their own work and this gives them a clear understanding of how well they are doing and how they can improve. The assessment in the Foundation Stage, however, gives little indication of what children can do and what they need to achieve to move to the next stage in their learning. This sometimes leads to them not being sufficiently challenged. The school's very good partnership with parents, including the very informative school website, gives them every chance to support their children's learning at home and school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, and provides a wide and exciting range of activities so pupils want to learn. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their lessons and the many exciting educational visits. They even find revision fun because of the way it is planned, and one group of pupils was amazed to find that the work they had been doing most of the day was in preparation for the forthcoming national tests.

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, although sometimes there is an over reliance on worksheets that limits children's ability to explore their own ideas and extend their learning. The personal, social, health and citizenship programme is good, and teaches pupils much about living healthy lives and keeping safe. Many pupils take advantage of the excellent range of activities after school that enrich the curriculum. Provision for the arts is outstanding and pupils are given excellent opportunities to be creative in art and design, music and drama. The recent introduction of the 'Learning Journeys' has done a lot to make the curriculum come alive and make learning fun for pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Arrangements to ensure children are safe are very good. Health and safety systems are very thorough and staff measure carefully the risks associated with trips out of school. The procedures for child protection are robust and parents feel strongly that their children are well looked after.

Pupils are given excellent opportunities to express their views on how the school can be improved. This is typified by the introduction of the 'Buddy Bus Stop' that is very popular with pupils who have no one to play with. Pupils are given good opportunities to influence many aspects of school life. For example, some were involved in the appointment of the new headteacher. Teaching assistants provide very good support for pupils who have learning difficulties. This enables them to make good progress and be included fully in all activities. The school is good at keeping pupils informed about their progress. They are generally knowledgeable about their targets for learning and know what to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management are good. The headteacher has done very well in his first year and has high expectations of what pupils and staff can achieve. By using rigorous self-evaluation procedures, the very good knowledge of senior staff and regular discussions with parents and pupils he has quickly gained a very clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This has enabled the school to set challenging targets for improvement. The leadership team is not afraid to use innovative ways to raise standards and parents speak highly of some of the improvements they have made recently, particularly in the planning of the curriculum. The headteacher and senior staff make a big contribution to enhancing the personal development of pupils, both in assemblies and in less formal meetings with them. The effectiveness of this work can be seen every day in the way pupils work, behave and reflect deeply on issues.

Subject coordinators support their colleagues satisfactorily, but the school recognises that they could do more. With this in mind, the school has begun a good programme of monitoring and evaluation by coordinators. This has got off to a very good start with some useful evaluation of provision by the ICT co-ordinator and challenging targets for future developments in the subject. The governing body provides good support and guidance to the school. Governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and work closely with the headteacher and staff to make improvements. This explains why the school has a good record of improvement and why it is so well placed to do even better.

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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?	2	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	3	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	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	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	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?	1	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?	2	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	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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

Thank you for letting us come to visit your school. We both really enjoyed seeing you work so hard in lessons and play so energetically in the playground. We saw you in assembly and thought your singing was excellent. Those who were kind enough to speak to us told us a lot about your school.

What we liked most about your school:

You are very friendly and helpful to visitors.

You do well in the special tests in Year 2 and Year 6.

You work very hard in lessons and enjoy learning.

Your headteacher runs the school well and knows how to improve things.

Your teachers are doing a good job. They work hard and are helping you make good progress.

Your behaviour is good, both in class and in the playground.

Your parents are very pleased with the school.

What we have asked your school to do now:

The children in the Reception class work hard but could do even better. We have therefore asked the staff to check on their progress more carefully to show what they need to learn next.

In some lessons, teachers set the same work for the whole class. It is too easy for some pupils and too hard for others. We have asked them to make sure that all of you have work that is just right for you.

I hope you find the report interesting. We certainly enjoyed writing such a good one!