

Rowner Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116168
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	290444
Inspection dates	19–20 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Rob Crompton

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	150
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr R Robertson
Headteacher	Mrs B Hosie
Date of previous school inspection	4 February 2002
School address	Copse Lane Rowner Gosport PO13 0DH
Telephone number	01329 280807
Fax number	01329 823526

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is working in increasingly challenging circumstances. Children's social, language and mathematical skills as they start school have declined significantly in recent years and are now below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities has increased to over twice the national average. Pupil turnover is high. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups.

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 provides a satisfactory and improving quality of education. Etched into the entrance doors is 'Every Child Matters at Rowner Infant School' and this maxim underpins the school's work. Pupils enjoy learning and behave well. Good levels of care and support mean that they feel safe. They understand the importance of a healthy life style and willingly take on extra jobs, such as table monitors at lunch time.

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. In recent years, standards fell, due mainly to the lower attainment levels as children started school and the growing number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Teachers found it difficult to adapt their approach to cater for pupils' differing needs. The recent assessments in Year 2 show that standards have improved considerably. The good provision in the Foundation Stage helps children build well on their low start. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is now consistently satisfactory and frequently good. As a result, most pupils made good progress last year. Pupils who remain at the school from Reception to Year 2 attain above average standards. Despite the school's best efforts, pupils who join at different times often have many gaps in their learning and this influences overall achievement and standards. Good support for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities enables them to make good progress towards their individual targets. Teaching assistants play a significant role in this but their skills are not always used to full advantage in class lessons.

The curriculum supports pupils' personal development well. There is still work to do to ensure that the good progress and improved performance this year are sustained. A start has been made on broadening opportunities for writing and in extending investigative work in mathematics. However, pupils' knowledge of letter sounds and spelling, and their ability to write in different styles, remain weak and hinder their attainment in writing. Pupils have sound numeracy skills but lack the confidence to use them to solve problems.

The headteacher is held in high regard by pupils, staff, governors and parents. Her clarity of vision, sense of purpose and determination to provide the best possible education for pupils are recognised throughout the community. She has led the school very well through a challenging period of change and has ensured that key staff are well placed to move the school further forward.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' skills in phonics and spelling, and in writing for different purposes.
- Improve pupils' ability to use their numeracy skills to solve problems.
- Ensure that teaching assistants are deployed effectively during whole class lessons.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children make good progress in the Reception classes, particularly in personal development. Good teaching of early literacy and numeracy skills means they build well on a low start but, by the end of Reception, standards in these key areas are below average. Following a period

when pupils were not doing as well as they should in Years 1 and 2, the teaching improved and pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, are making at least the expected progress. A range of additional support strategies, together with rigorous tracking and targeting of gaps in pupils' learning, have successfully halted recent underachievement. Standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are now very close to last year's national averages with more pupils reaching the higher levels. Achievement is now satisfactory and improving. Regular reading sessions are helping to improve pupils' skills but there is still much to do to boost pupils' skills in reading and spelling unfamiliar words. Pupils' ability to structure writing in different ways according to its purpose, such as a story or a set of instructions, is patchy. Standards in mathematics are improving but pupils lack the confidence to use their numeracy skills to solve problems.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They are well behaved and enjoy learning. One parent reported that her son exclaimed, 'Yeah, school today, I love school!' Pupils are well aware of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and the importance of a balanced diet and regular exercise. They know why fruit makes a good snack and that they should avoid too many fizzy drinks and sweets. A reception child explained that exercise 'helps the blood go round'. Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that an adult would help them if they were worried. As 'helping hands' in the playground, for example, pupils make a good contribution to school life and are involved in a variety of fund raising activities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They understand the need for rules and help to draw up the school's 'golden rules' and class behaviour codes. They have a good awareness of the diversity of modern British society. Children's literacy and numeracy skills need to be more firmly grounded to provide a more secure base for their future education and economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There is now more good teaching than in recent years and this is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. Very good relationships underpin lessons and teachers are skilled in motivating less confident pupils to try hard. Assessment information is increasingly used to plan a range of activities to meet pupils' needs. However, there is still some way to go before this is fully embedded to ensure that all pupils make the progress that they should. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities benefit considerably from the extra support they receive from the specialist teacher and teaching assistants, both in class and in small withdrawal groups. However, teaching assistants are not always involved in introductory sessions and, at this stage of the lesson, their skills are not fully utilised.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and has some good features. In Reception, a good variety of practical activities enables children to explore and investigate new ideas, although, due to the physical access, opportunities for learning outdoors are better for one class than the other. Recent adaptations to the curriculum have had a positive impact on pupils' progress. Focused

support in small groups is improving pupils' speaking, listening and reading skills. There are opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in writing and in solving mathematical problems but these are not planned systematically enough. Pupils' learning experiences are extended through a good range of visits and visitors. For example, pupils' understanding of cultural diversity is well supported during 'intercultural weeks' by visitors who introduce them to the customs and traditions of people of Chinese, Indian and African origin living in Britain. A well-planned programme for personal, social and health education contributes effectively to pupils' personal development. The curriculum is modified appropriately to meet the needs of the large proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. The school acknowledges that provision for the few more able pupils has had less attention. It has recently focussed on ensuring that they are suitably challenged and is using central grants effectively to fund small group support.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, support and guidance are good. A key feature of the school is how well teachers know pupils. The procedures for ensuring that pupils are kept safe are fully in place, are known to staff and work well. Extremely good attention is paid to the many pupils who have social or emotional problems. The home/school tutor plays an important role in this and her sensitive approach is much appreciated by parents. Pupils new to the school are very well supported. One parent commented, 'My son has come on in leaps and bounds'. Whole-school tracking systems identify individuals and groups of pupils who are not making the progress that they should. This leads to rapid intervention to give these pupils an extra boost and is proving successful in helping them to make up lost ground. Pupils who receive additional support have a clear idea of their individual targets because small steps in learning are set out clearly. They regularly review their own progress during small group sessions. This is not always the case in day-to-day class work, so opportunities are missed for all pupils to consider how well they are doing and identify what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory with some good features. The headteacher ensures a calm and measured approach to school improvement. There is a strong sense of collegiality because teachers are confident that any suggested improvements are well founded, tried and tested and strongly relate to raising achievement. With the active support of key staff, the headteacher has successfully tackled the recent dip in performance. The school's self-evaluation process has led to the accurate identification of its strengths and weaknesses. The impact of leadership and management is evident in the recent improvements in pupils' progress and the rise in standards. Tracking systems have been refined and good use has been made of support from outside the school to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The wealth of assessment data now needs to be synthesised to provide a clearer picture for staff and governors of how different groups are progressing. Teaching is monitored effectively by the headteacher and a school priority is to involve more senior staff in this process. Governors are well informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses and have an effective strategic plan. There are several vacancies on the governing body which constrains their effectiveness. The school's proven success in identifying and eradicating weaknesses in the teaching, in responding to the

increasingly challenging circumstances and in raising standards, indicates a good capacity to improve further.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

29 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Rowner Infant School, Gosport, PO13 0DH

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me during my visit. It was good to see how well you get on with one another and how much you enjoy lessons. You were always ready to have a chat and tell me what you were doing. You obviously take pride in your work. I could see this from the many displays in the classrooms, such as the records Year 2 made when investigating how plants grow.

Adults make sure you are well looked after and it is pleasing to know that you always have someone to talk to if you are worried or upset. What a lot you know about healthy eating and keeping fit! I saw that many of you bring a balanced lunch to school and during playtimes and PE it was plain to see how much you enjoy exercise.

I found that most children are making good progress. This is because the teachers plan interesting lessons and you work hard. To improve your work in writing and mathematics, I have suggested that teachers keep helping you with phonics and spelling. You can do your bit by reading as much as you can. I also think that you could use your numeracy skills a bit more often to solve problems. I like the 'traffic light' system which you use to say how hard or easy the work is. I have suggested that teachers could make clear the small steps you need to improve and help you consider how well you are doing.

I saw that the school is well run by the headteacher. She obviously knows every one of you and wants you to make the most of your time at Rowner Infants. I am sure you'll keep trying to do so by working hard and helping one another.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Crompton Lead inspector