



Round Diamond Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117299
Local Authority HERTFORDSHIRE
Inspection number 290790
Inspection date 9 October 2006
Reporting inspector Paul Cosway

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	White Horse Lane
School category	Community		Great Ashby Way, Great Ashby Way
Age range of pupils	3–11		Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 6NH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01438 219410
Number on roll (school)	466	Fax number	01438 219411
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr J Rodgers
		Headteacher	Mrs D Godbold
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2002		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
3–11	9 October 2006	290790

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector over one day.

Description of the school

The Round Diamond is a large school serving the north of Stevenage, including the Pin Green area and new housing estates in Great Ashby. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language and five of these are at an early stage of learning English. Most pupils start school with levels of knowledge and understanding that are close to those typical of children nationally. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is slightly above average. The percentage of pupils who are eligible to free school meals is average. There is a special unit attached to the school for fifteen pupils with speech and language impairment. When these pupils are included on the school roll, the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is well above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The Round Diamond Primary School is a good school. It has some outstanding features and few areas for improvement. The school buildings and grounds are of very high quality; modern, spacious and well equipped. They are maintained to a high standard and pupils respond to this very well, valuing their school and the opportunities it offers them. Other excellent features include the care and support for pupils and the richness and variety of the curriculum. The school succeeds because it is a place where pupils feel secure and happy, whilst being challenged to give of their best. The pupils love coming to school and say that they feel part of a team, because everyone helps each other. Pupils achieve well. Children in the Reception classes and the Nursery make good progress because of the good provision. Pupils leave Year 6 with results in the national tests that are above average in mathematics and well above average in English and science. In 2006 the school met or exceeded its challenging targets for pupils reaching the higher than expected Level 5 in English and mathematics. In reading, speaking and listening and science their progress is outstanding. This is partly because of the school's high expectations of pupils. They are set challenging tasks and are motivated well by good and sometimes excellent teaching. Overall, they achieve well in English, but writing is a weaker area. The achievement of the less able pupils was satisfactory in mathematics. The school has responded to this by readjusting the teaching of groups so that their needs are catered for more appropriately. Parents are very supportive of the school and value it highly. 'I am privileged to be able to send my children here,' said one parent. They and outside agencies have an excellent partnership with the school and this helps pupils to succeed. The school makes excellent use of the visiting specialists who work in the school and the special unit. The information given to parents about the curriculum is very detailed, helping them to support their children's learning. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Within this large school there is a strong family atmosphere and a sense of everyone belonging to it. Each individual child is known and cared for so their individual talents are fostered. There is good support for pupils for whom English is an additional language. The breadth of the curriculum allows every pupil to fulfil their talents for art, music, history, geography or sport. There is outstanding care and guidance for pupils including a school counsellor, a 'buddy' system, peer mediators, an excellent personal, social and health education programme and a very effective school council. Teaching is good, ranging from satisfactory to outstanding. Teachers manage their classes well and plan interesting and stimulating lessons. Pupils want to learn. They concentrate and help each other, with very good support from the teaching assistants. The special unit, for pupils with statements of special educational need, provides excellent care and support for these children and they achieve well, some reaching national average standards in science and numeracy by the end of Year 6. The encouragement given to pupils to lead safe and healthy lives is excellent and they make a good contribution to the community. They make excellent progress in their appreciation of the many cultures and faiths in the world. The progress they make in literacy and numeracy and in gaining enterprise and information and communication technology (ICT) skills means pupils are very well prepared for their next schools. Leadership and management have brought

about excellent progress since the last inspection and there is a clear focus on raising attainment further. The school has excellent capacity for continued improvement and gives very good value for money, because of the all round quality of education that its pupils enjoy, the good and improving progress that they make and their outstanding personal development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics for the less able pupils and in writing for the average and more able pupils, by ensuring pupils reach their target levels.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Tests and inspection evidence show that pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 2, results are in line with national averages. Standards are well above average by the end of Year 6 in English and science and above average in mathematics. In 2006, pupils reached very high scores on the reading tests, but there was some underachievement from the more able pupils in writing and few pupils reached Level 5 in the tests. Writing is a weaker area because pupils' drafting skills are not as well developed as other aspects of their work in English. In contrast, almost half the pupils reached Level 5 in mathematics, but some of the less able pupils failed to meet their target levels because pupils' progress tracking information was not used well to monitor their progress. Much improved tracking and support are now in place.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Children really enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average. Staff are very good role models and treat pupils with great respect. Consequently, almost all pupils behave well. They are confident, polite and considerate. Pupils are keen to face new challenges, work hard and demonstrate mature attitudes. They have many opportunities to be involved in decision making and their views are taken seriously and are acted upon.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan lessons well with specific objectives for pupils. The pupils concentrate and work hard because the lessons are interesting. Teachers' high expectations and the pace in many lessons mean that pupils learn quickly and make rapid progress. ICT is used well to make lessons exciting. In the few satisfactory lessons, the pace of

activities is slower, resulting in less challenge for pupils. In literacy and numeracy lessons, this lack of challenge leads to small groups of pupils underachieving.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Excellent opportunities are made for pupils to use their basic skills in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. There is a particular focus on physical activities to ensure that pupils are healthy and fit. Very good provision for teaching history, art, French and music deepens and broadens pupils' experience. The school provides an excellent range of enrichment and extra curricular activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils feel happy and safe and they are confident about taking any problems to their teachers or the recently appointed school counsellor. They know that any incidents, such as bullying or racism, will be dealt with firmly. Close attention is given to health and safety issues including child protection arrangements. Teachers and support staff are sensitive to the needs of all individuals. The care and support for pupils with special needs in the main school and the unit, as well as nursery children, are outstanding. Parents were almost unanimous in their praise for the school and the care it gives their children. Academic guidance has improved over the past year. Pupils now have appropriate individual targets to reach. They understand them and teachers are tracking their progress rigorously.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Aspects of leadership and management are outstanding and have brought about considerable improvements in the effectiveness of the school since the last report. All teachers share a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school's analysis of its own performance is of good quality and has led to well planned changes in provision to bring about further improvement. Consequently the school has identified the causes of underachievement in writing and mathematics and taken steps to resolve them, though it was too early for those steps to have had an impact on achievement and standards at the time of the inspection. The governing body is monitoring and supporting the school well.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
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	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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	2
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

Dear Pupils The Round Diamond Primary School, Whitehorse Lane, Great Ashby, Stevenage, SG1 6NH Thank you for being so friendly and helpful to me when I visited your school. I enjoyed sharing your lessons and talking to some of you. You told me how much you like your school and I agree with you that it is a good school. You said that everyone is friendly and that they help each other. These are reasons why you are so happy and you are doing so well at school. I was very impressed with your behaviour in the special music event and how eager you were to join in and answer questions. Other good things about your school include: - you work hard in lessons and behaviour is good - your headteacher and senior teachers have excellent ideas about ways to improve the school - you are set clear targets and are helped to achieve them - teachers work hard to make lessons interesting - teachers, teaching assistants and all adults care for you very well indeed - you are encouraged to be healthy and safe - you have an excellent range of clubs and visits. I have asked your school to try to make things even better. The most important things are: - improving the number of Year 6 pupils who get the expected levels in tests for mathematics - helping you to improve your writing. Keep working hard and make the most of your time at this lovely school. Yours sincerely Paul Cosway (Lead inspector)