



Rowley Hall Primary School

Inspection Report - Amended

Unique Reference Number 103955
Local Authority Sandwell
Inspection number 296523
Inspection dates 19–20 September 2006
Reporting inspector Susan Morris-king HMI

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

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|---|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Windsor Road |
| School category | Community | | Rowley Regis |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 | | B65 9HU |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 0121 5591400 |
| Number on roll (school) | 391 | Fax number | 0121 5598030 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | R Downing |
| | | Headteacher | Lynda Townsend |
| Date of previous school inspection | 14 September 2005 | | |

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| Age group | Inspection dates | Inspection number |
| 3–11 | 19–20 September 2006 | 296523 |

Amended Report Addendum

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Rowley Hall is a large primary school in Rowley Regis. The school was given a Notice to Improve in 2005. This was a re-inspection.

About 11% of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups but only one child is at the early stage of learning English as an additional language. A slightly higher proportion of pupils than average are eligible for free school meals. Children start in the Nursery with lower attainment than expected for their age, especially in speaking and listening. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average.

Rowley Hall has been in an Education Action Zone for the past four years. It has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark and Investors in People standard. In 2005, the school gained a Leading Parent Partnership Award, and the gold-level National Healthy Schools award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. The overall effectiveness of Rowley Hall Primary School has improved over the last year and is now satisfactory. Pupils are well behaved; they enjoy their learning and they are happy to be at school. In the Foundation Stage, children continue to be well taught and therefore make good progress. Progress at Key Stages 1 and 2 is now satisfactory overall, although the school recognises that more-able pupils do not always make the progress they should, particularly in Year 1. Because pupils are making faster progress, standards are rising overall, although this has yet to be evident in the end-of-key-stage tests. The progress that pupils make in mathematics has improved, and standards are rising accordingly. Pupils who have learning difficulties benefit from some carefully planned and well-taught small-group lessons.

Teaching is satisfactory overall, with a growing proportion that is good. Some lessons have outstanding elements. Good teamwork between learning support practitioners and teachers helps to ensure that all pupils are included well in class activities such as discussions. Teachers have risen to the challenge of using a number of new strategies in their teaching and some of these approaches, such as a new method of teaching phonics, are already showing good results. In the Foundation Stage there are effective systems to track children's progress and identify areas to develop. Better and more regular assessment at Key Stages 1 and 2 has begun to give teachers more detailed information about what the pupils can do and what they need to learn next. Teachers have started to use this information to help them to plan the next steps in the pupils' learning, and the school recognises that this needs to remain a priority in the coming terms. Older pupils in particular know what some of their learning targets are, and now need more help in using them to improve their work.

Personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils are keen to learn and respond well to interesting lessons. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes develop their confidence and a positive attitude to school because relationships are good and the learning environment safe and stimulating. Pupils' confidence then continues to grow as they spend more time at the school. Pupils feel safe and secure in school because they develop good relationships with each other and adults. They understand the responsibility of working together in a school community and feel that their views about the school are regularly sought and acted upon. They are well cared for and there is a good range of support staff to help to meet their various individual needs. The curriculum is satisfactory but has recently been expanded to include an innovative new creative arts project, Spanish lessons for some pupils and an increasing range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils are enjoying these new developments.

The leadership team's evaluation of the school's effectiveness has become more accurate and rigorous. As a result, the team now has a more secure understanding of the school's strengths and the areas which need further development. Careful monitoring and evaluation have helped to improve the school's work in several important areas, such as the quality of teaching and assessment. The leadership team

understands the need to ensure that future monitoring activities are sharply focused and followed up to check that they result in better achievement for the pupils. In particular they are aware of the need to notice any pupils who are underachieving and to support staff in devising strategies to put this right. Because governors are receiving better quality and more accurate information, they are asking challenging questions about the school's performance, which is helping the leadership team to be more analytical. Governors also continue to be very supportive.

Improvements over the past year demonstrate that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use the assessment information from the end of the Foundation Stage effectively to ensure a closer match of work to pupils' needs from the start of Year 1, especially for the most able pupils.
- Ensure that more-able pupils are suitably challenged and achieve appropriately throughout the school.
- Consistently recognise any underachievement and take appropriate steps to put this right.
- Ensure that monitoring activities are sharply focused and result in improved outcomes for the pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress overall in all areas of learning and they enjoy the well-planned activities.

Results of the national tests for 2006 are likely to show that standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics and have improved since 2005. Pupils' progress between the end of Reception and the end of Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall, although pupils generally make more progress in Year 2 than in Year 1. Some more-able pupils do not make as much progress as they should.

End-of-Key-Stage 2 national tests for 2006 indicate that standards are broadly average. Between 2005 and 2006 the number of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 and above decreased in English but rose substantially in mathematics and science. Overall, not enough pupils reached the higher Level 5 in the core subjects, although there was an increase in English.

In 2006 the progress Year 6 pupils had made since the start of Key Stage 2 was less than the national average. However, school data shows quite convincingly that progress in other year groups is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. This demonstrates that since the last inspection the school has implemented measures to address underachievement that are having an effect on raising standards but these have not yet had full impact in order to affect attainment at the end of Key Stage 2.

Pupils with learning difficulties generally make satisfactory progress in their usual lessons, and some make good progress in improving specific skills, such as reading, speaking or listening through small-group support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development is good because it is given a high priority by the school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils say they feel no threat from bullying and are confident that they would be well supported by staff should any incident arise. There are named children who undertake 'anti-bullying' duties. Older pupils in particular enjoy opportunities to be responsible for others in roles such as 'Buddies' and 'Huff and Puff' monitors. The school has a strong focus on healthy lifestyles. It provides a range of good lunch options and there are excellent opportunities during lunch time as well as in lessons to develop physical and social skills. Consequently pupils develop an appreciation of the importance of eating healthily and keeping fit. Children are increasingly encouraged to contribute to the school and wider community and to suggest what charities to support and how to raise money for those less fortunate than themselves. The school council is well organised. Members have specific responsibilities, such as health and safety, and regularly report to the governing body. Attendance levels are broadly average and the school works hard to improve these.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory but has improved and continues to do so. Teaching and learning are good in the Nursery and Reception, and consequently children make good progress. The outdoor area is a stimulating learning environment and is well used. The school has a sound action plan for the pupils' transition from Reception to Year 1, and an 'activity room' has begun to provide some opportunities for pupils to continue to learn through play. However, the school recognises that this is an area for further development. In Key Stages 1 and 2 the proportion of teaching that is good or better is increasing. A closer match of work to ability, especially for the more able pupils, would enhance the quality of teaching and learning. In all areas of the school, interactive whiteboards are being widely used to support pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets the need of most pupils. There are exciting new initiatives to develop the creative and expressive arts, which are still in their infancy, and a developing cross-curricular approach to learning. Pupils enjoy the

well-planned trips and residential visits such as the one to Ingestre Hall. They enjoy using the expressive arts room and performing using music, drama and art. Activities such as 'Wow Week' also contribute to pupils' learning across the curriculum. Pupils learn about other cultures through various activities such as the Indian dance workshop. Since the previous inspection the school has worked hard to increase the number and range of clubs and activities. A discussion with older pupils indicates that, while they enjoy the clubs available, they would like to have more.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school has maintained the strengths in pastoral care and is making satisfactory progress to ensure pupils receive the academic guidance needed. There are more effective systems in place to check on the progress pupils make. Target setting and marking ensure pupils have an increasingly sound understanding of how they are doing, although this continues to need development to be fully effective. The school keeps children safe and ensures all risk assessments are carried out. Secure procedures for child protection are known to all staff. Good induction procedures in the Nursery enable children to settle into school routines happily. Pupils in Year 6 are well prepared to move onto their next school through an effective programme of planned visits. Any pupils in need are monitored carefully by senior staff and have appropriate individual plans.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and the newly restructured leadership team recognise the progress that the school has made over the past year and have secure plans for the next steps in its development. New middle leaders have creative ideas for curriculum development and for further improving pupils' health and well-being. The leader for inclusion has further improved the provision for pupils with learning difficulties. These pupils receive a wide range of support, and monitoring has become more rigorous. Parents are very positive about the school and feel that their children are happy and well cared for. Governors have made a series of visits to the school, including to lessons. They are well informed and dedicated. The local authority (LA) has provided good support and challenge to the school over the past year, which is valued both by the governors and the school. The combination of support and challenge provided by the governors and the LA has helped the school to become more self-evaluative and more effective.

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Inspection judgements

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|---|-----------------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|-----------------------|

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 | 3 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 3 |

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? | 3 |

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

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| 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 | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |
| 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

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when we visited Rowley Hall. We thought you were very polite and helpful.

When your school was visited by inspectors last year they were impressed with lots of things about your school, but they also asked Mrs Townsend and your teachers to do a few things to help you to make better progress with your learning. Both you and the staff have worked very hard and we could see plenty of improvement. For a start, you are doing much better with your maths. For example, when I saw Year 6 practising their tables, with the help of the flying owl, I could see that you were used to thinking quickly about mathematics. In your other lessons you are also working hard. Your teachers are expecting a lot from you and you are rising to the challenges and learning more quickly. Interactive whiteboards are helping you to learn and are making lessons more interesting too. Just like the last inspectors, we were impressed with your attitudes and your behaviour. You help each other well. The school council is very well organised. We really like the way that you report to the governors on important issues. Mr Downing, the chair of governors, tells me that you ask the governors some difficult questions too, which is good – it shows you are thinking about how you can constantly improve your school.

Mrs Townsend and your staff have already decided that some of you sometimes need harder work to make sure that you achieve the best that you can. We agree with them. We have also asked them to keep a close check on how every pupil in the school is getting on with their work so that if anyone needs any help they can get it quickly. They can do this by looking at your assessment results and coming into your lessons too. You can help by knowing your targets and working hard to reach them, and finding ways to help yourself and each other if you are stuck with your work.

We wish you every success with your learning in the future. Keep working hard and supporting each other.

Yours sincerely

Mrs S Morris-King Her Majesty's Inspector