

Robinsfield Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101117
Local Authority	Westminster
Inspection number	307590
Inspection date	17 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Martin Beale

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	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	189
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tony Howells
Headteacher	Mrs Tanya O'Connor
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2003
School address	Ordnance Hill London NW8 6PX
Telephone number	020 7641 5019
Fax number	020 7641 5035

Age group	3-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspection focused on:

- how the school is seeking to improve achievement for the more able
- the key features of the school's provision that support the pupils' personal development
- the qualities of leadership that maintained standards and improved the school in the absence of a permanent headteacher.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in the self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This above average sized infant school with a Nursery serves a diverse and changing community where some families experience considerable social and economic disadvantage. Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Over half have a home language other than English, and most of these are at an early stage of learning English. A new and experienced headteacher was appointed from the start of term, the school having been without a permanent headteacher for the previous year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Robinsfield is the good school that staff and governors judge it to be. It has some outstanding features. Pupils and parents are hugely positive about the school, and work closely with staff to give a strong feeling that this is 'our school'. Its happy atmosphere and sense of purpose is down to strong staff teamwork. As one parent wrote, 'Robinsfield is a lovely place to bring your child to school. A happy environment and welcoming staff await us every day'.

There is much good teaching that gives pupils a very firm platform for success in the next stage of their education. Children enter the Nursery with the skill expected of three-year-olds, although many have weak literacy and communication skills. These weaknesses are more than eliminated by the end of Year 2. High pupil mobility leads to fluctuating standards, but Year 2 assessment results are consistently above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school sets itself challenging targets to improve these further.

All work tirelessly for the success of the pupils, whatever their background. Pupils make good progress because teachers plan lessons to tackle their carefully assessed needs. This, along with the high level of adult support for individual pupils, means that often the best progress is made by pupils of low ability, those with learning difficulties or the large number at an early stage of learning English. Amongst all these strong features is one weaker aspect. The most able pupils are not consistently challenged and their targets do not represent the highest of aspirations. Moreover, there is no real identification of pupils with talents, or programmes to extend their learning. This slows their progress and means a small number who are capable of reaching the higher levels do not do so.

Pupils arrive at school happy and smiling. They are eager to learn and work hard. One reason for the pupils' enjoyment is their exposure to a wide range of interesting experiences. Art, music and drama all make significant contributions and extensive use is made of the school's London location for visits to art galleries and museums. Pupils are proud of their contribution to the school through their garden and their idea of 'litter pickers'. They help others through the harvest collection and raise funds by walking for charity. They enjoy acting as 'buddies' for newcomers and support their friends when they are unhappy about something.

The school's deserved reputation for supporting pupils' social and emotional well-being is based on well-established links with other organisations such as family therapists. Regular and informed discussions between the headteacher and staff about each pupil's development result in sharply focused action. Pupils set and evaluate personal targets, aided by constructive marking that helps them to see how well they are doing and what needs improving. Parents say how everyone not only knows the names of the children but also their specific learning and emotional needs. Families are grateful for the support they receive when newly arrived and pupils are supported sensitively when entering Robinsfield and moving on to junior school.

The school has achieved 'Healthy Schools' status in recognition of its success in helping pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle. There is a very strong focus on healthy eating. The food for school meals is sourced locally and prepared on site to high nutritional standards, and each day the ingredients are explained to the pupils before they choose their food. The result is that well over 90% of the children eat a school lunch. Pupils have the opportunity for plenty of vigorous exercise including lunchtime activities organised by sports leaders and much enjoyed by all.

Pupils understand the high expectations of their behaviour because all adults show how they should respond to each other. A parent summed this up well as, 'Children are nurtured and

loved, beautifully behaved without being subjected to excessive discipline, respected and therefore respectful'. Pupils are caring and aware of the need to think about and respect others. Religious education and the personal, social and health education programme are used to encourage pupils to respect other's beliefs and backgrounds. The many cultures in school are recognised and celebrated. For example, apples with honey were incorporated into the menu for the Jewish New Year, and pupils tasted meals reflecting their studies during 'Black History Month'.

The transition to a new headteacher has been smooth. Parents praised the deputy headteacher for her efforts during this period and governors supported the school well, becoming an effective 'critical friend'. There is now an experienced hand at the helm. Parents are pleased with the changes now taking place, particularly the recently introduced after-school clubs, such as the Year 2 newspaper group. The headteacher is keen to develop self-evaluation skills amongst staff and governors so that plans for improvement can be even more sharply focused on raising achievement. Robinsfield is a happy, successful and vibrant school. It has the capacity to become outstanding.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The youngest children get off to a flying start to their school life in the Nursery. 'It is truly excellent, caring, thoughtful and nurturing and the best start you could give in life to your child' as a very happy parent wrote. From the minute that they start, the children's personal development is of paramount importance. Sensitive arrangements help them settle in quickly. Strong teamwork based around experienced leadership means all adults combine closely to match activities to the children's current stage of development. Consequently, they are completely absorbed and gain much enjoyment from the rich and interesting environment and extensive links between indoors and outdoors. There is a careful balance between activities led by the adults and those initiated by the children. This excellent start is built on well in Reception. The outside area for Reception classes is limited, but the children have helped in its redesign. Children make at least good progress during their time in the Foundation Stage particularly in their social and emotional development. Most reach and some exceed the goals expected of them by the end of Reception. Although they improve their literacy, writing and the ability to link sounds with letters are still behind other skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Challenge the more able pupils, including those who are gifted and talented, consistently so that they achieve challenging targets.

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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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	1

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	2
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.

Annex A

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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

1 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Robinsfield Infant School, London, NW8 6PX

I am writing to thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave to me when I visited your school. You were very kind and helpful and showed how proud you are of your school. I enjoyed talking with you and your teachers. You, your parents and teachers are right in thinking that you go to a good school.

The youngest of you have an excellent start in the Nursery and Reception. You make good progress during your time at school. Most of you reach the standards expected by the time you move on to the junior school. Many of you do better than this. You thoroughly enjoy school, attend regularly, work very hard and behave maturely. Your teachers provide interesting tasks to help you learn and you clearly enjoy extra activities such as trips and visits. All members of staff help to make sure you are safe and cared for very well. You take your responsibilities seriously and make a huge contribution to the life of the school. I was impressed by the care you show for each other. You have an excellent understanding of the importance of diet and exercise for a healthy lifestyle. I really enjoyed the school meal I had with you. You are lucky to have such tasty and healthy food.

Your new headteacher, other staff and governors are trying hard to make the school even better. I think that there is one thing in particular they could do so I have asked your teachers to:

- help able pupils to reach higher standards and provide challenging activities for those of you with particular talents in a subject.

I am sure that you and your teachers will work hard to make these improvements.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale

Lead Inspector