

John Rankin Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109826
Local Authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	310112
Inspection date	20 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Vanessa Ward

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	194
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	21
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Malcolm Douglas
Headteacher	Ms Linda Valenti
Date of previous school inspection	9 May 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Garford Crescent Newbury RG14 6EX
Telephone number	01635 42376

Age group	3–7
Inspection date	20 November 2008
Inspection number	310112

Fax number

01635 521731

Age group 3-7

Inspection date 20 November 2008

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school, and investigated the features that contribute to the apparent successful outcomes for pupils' personal development. They also investigated how well the school is raising the achievement of more able boys in writing, and how successfully its subject leaders carry out their roles. The inspectors looked at the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and in the school's additional care for children. The inspectors gathered evidence both from the school's records, planning and policies, and by observing teaching and learning. They also held discussions with staff, governors and pupils and scrutinised parents' questionnaires. The inspectors did not investigate other aspects of the school's work in detail, but found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These assessments have been included in the report.

Description of the school

Children are admitted to the EYFS in the September or January following their third birthday and attend part time until they are nearly five. A large majority of the pupils are White British, the other pupils coming from a range of ethnic backgrounds. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average; these include pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. The school provides additional care for pupils in its Breakfast, Lunch and Sunshine Clubs. A privately run after-school club meets in the school building. The school has gained Healthy School and Investors in People status, and has received the Silver Artsmark Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

John Rankin Infant and Nursery School is a good school. The pupils achieve well and enjoy attending school because they have 'exciting things to do'. Their parents comment very favourably on the 'warm, welcoming atmosphere' and the progress that their children make 'both academically and in their personal and social development'.

The headteacher has a very clear understanding of what the school does well and of how it can improve. She has built a strong team commitment among the staff and governors, and this provides impetus to bring about school improvement. Leadership and management are good at all levels. The governing body has a good understanding of, and involvement in, school improvement. It fulfils its roles effectively and offers a good balance of support and challenge to the headteacher. Since the previous inspection, the roles of subject leaders have been developed significantly. These staff now take far more responsibility for initiating and implementing plans for improvement, and for monitoring their effectiveness. Opportunities are provided for working alongside other teachers in order to influence teaching and learning, with these opportunities being increased as teachers become more skilled.

As a result of thorough analysis of assessment data, the school identifies where pupils could do better and takes action. The recent rise in test results at the end of Year 2 has been achieved because challenging targets have been set, and determined action taken to raise standards. The good progress that pupils make enables them to attain above average standards by the end of Year 2. In the 2008 assessments, standards were high in mathematics and writing. In reading, standards were above average overall and the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level greatly exceeded the national average. The school is working successfully to improve standards in reading for less able pupils through strategies such as a catch-up programme and reading buddies. These improvements indicate that the school has good capacity to improve further. The school recognises that more able boys do not always achieve as well as they should in writing, and has drawn up good plans to provide more purposeful opportunities to stimulate their interest.

The pupils' good personal development and well-being are supported effectively by the quality of care, guidance and support that the school provides. Pupils feel that they are safe in school and know that an adult will help them if they are worried or upset. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They eat fruit and vegetables daily in school and speak enthusiastically about their participation in physical exercise. Pupils develop good levels of confidence and self-esteem and their behaviour, both in lessons and at playtimes, is good. They carry out responsibilities, such as looking after playtime equipment, conscientiously. They are proud of the opportunities provided by the school council and know that their ideas are listened to. Pupils enjoyed being involved in choosing furnishings for the new library. They are looking forward to a new council being established once the councillors have been trained. The pupils' good achievement in basic skills, combined with opportunities to be involved in enterprise schemes and to help with fundraising, prepare them well for later life.

The school promotes community cohesion well. It focuses successfully on providing equality of opportunity for all of its pupils. It works successfully with a range of agencies to support the learning needs of pupils. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with speech, language and communication difficulties, is effective, and enables them to make good progress. Additional challenge is provided for more able pupils, for example

by means of a recent project to develop their skills as researchers. Tracking data indicate that pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds also make good progress. The school works successfully to involve parents and the community in school life, through such events as weekly coffee mornings and local community family learning projects. The school's rich curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures. This is given particular focus through visitors to the school and by means of 'Around the World' weeks. The school acknowledges that it could broaden pupils' experiences by increasing its links with local schools with a contrasting population.

The broad and interesting curriculum and good teaching do much to motivate the pupils to learn. They speak excitedly about work they are doing on the Great Fire of London. Visits from specialists greatly enrich the pupils' learning. The curriculum is currently being revised to create more effective links between subjects, while ensuring that skills are taught sequentially. Greater emphasis is being given to making the curriculum more creative and to develop pupils' thinking skills. Pupils speak positively about the teachers 'always helping us'. The regular sharing, at the start of lessons, of what pupils should achieve helps them to understand what is expected. Pupils are less skilled at reflecting on how well they are doing. Good relationships between adults and pupils promote positive attitudes to learning. Pupils were enthusiastic about writing in sequence the main events from a story they had heard, because of the lively approach of the teacher.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The EYFS is well managed and the children are given a good start to their education. Successful induction procedures enable the children to settle quickly and they soon become familiar with school routines. When the children are first admitted, they have knowledge and skills that are generally similar to those found in three-year-olds. Good teaching and effective assessment enables them to make good progress and to achieve well. By the end of the EYFS, most children achieve the expected goals, and a significant proportion exceed them. They achieve particularly well in recognising letters and sounds. This is due to well-structured and purposeful teaching across both year groups. The staff regularly assess how well the children are learning and use this information effectively in their planning. They are increasing opportunities to improve the children's early reading skills and their use of language for communication and thinking.

The staff provide a good balance between direct teaching and activities that are chosen by the children themselves. Exciting and imaginative activities extend children's curiosity and sustain their interest; this is revealed in the artwork they enjoy doing with a specialist teacher. The care and attention given to the children's care and welfare, and personal development, are very effective in both the EYFS and in the additional care provision. The children who attend the Breakfast, Lunch and Sunshine Clubs are supported well and are successfully involved in a wide range of activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Introduce and evaluate a challenging programme to motivate more able boys to raise their achievement in writing.
- Increase pupils' ability to reflect on how well they are doing.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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?	2

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

02 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of John Rankin Infant and Nursery School, Newbury, RG14 6EX

Thank you for welcoming us when we visited your school recently. It was interesting to talk to you and to hear what you think about your school. You and your parents and carers think that you go to a good school, and we agree.

Here are the things that we liked most about your school.

- All of the grown-ups take good care of you and this helps you to feel happy and safe.
- You do well in your learning and, by the end of Year 2, you can read, write and do mathematics better than most seven-year-olds.
- You enjoy learning because your teachers make lessons interesting and will always help you. We noticed that you were very excited about the work you are doing on the Great Fire of London.
- You eat healthily in school, enjoy taking part in exercise, and behave well.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the children are given a good start to learning in school.
- The children who attend the Breakfast, Lunch and Sunshine Clubs are cared for well.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors are working really well together to make your school even better.

In order to help your headteacher, teachers and governors to improve your school, we have asked them to do two things:

- make sure that boys are doing as well as they can in writing, especially those who learn quickly
- help you to understand better how well you are doing with your learning.

You can help by always doing your best.

We hope you carry on enjoying school and learning many interesting things.

Yours sincerely

Vanessa Ward

Lead Inspector