

# Rivermead Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109894
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wokingham District Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	310135
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Olson Davis

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	352
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ivan Marks
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Judith Castle
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 December 2003
<b>School address</b>	Loddon Bridge Road Woodley Reading RG5 4BS
<b>Telephone number</b>	0118 9540 770
<b>Fax number</b>	0118 9540 772

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This large school serves an area of comparative advantage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below the national average. There has been a large turnover of staff since the last inspection. The headteacher joined the school in January 2006 and the deputy headteacher joined in January 2007.

## 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 education for its pupils. It is improving from a period when standards were declining and there was a high turnover of staff. The relatively new team of headteacher and deputy headteacher have been successful in providing clear direction for the school. There is now a common purpose among staff firmly fixed on raising standards. The large majority of parents are pleased with the provision the school makes for their children and with recent changes. One parent wrote, 'In the past couple of years Rivermead has been through a period of change - many of these for the better. Through this time my children have been very happy and motivated.' The school works closely with outside agencies, including the local authority, who have provided valuable support and guidance. These links are helping to improve achievement, teaching and aspects of leadership and management. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. Although there have been improvements there is more to do to ensure the full impact of new structures and initiatives on raising standards.

Pupils enjoy school as illustrated by their above average attendance. They feel that they are in a safe environment where adults are approachable and sympathetic if they have any concerns. Members of the school council take their responsibilities seriously and pupils are confident that their views are listened to. Older pupils act as reading mentors and help with the lunch-time arrangements for younger pupils. Some contribute to the wider community by helping in the neighbouring special school. There is strong awareness of the benefits of healthy eating and taking regular exercise. Pupils speak highly of the wide range of sporting activities and many represent the school in a number of sports.

Teaching is satisfactory and, as a result, pupils make steady progress in their learning, achieve satisfactorily and reach average standards. The school is not complacent and recognises that more remains to be done to raise standards further, particularly by teachers making more rigorous and consistent use of assessment information to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve as well as they can.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Improved leadership and the development of managers' roles have begun to make a marked impact on the quality of provision and achievement. However, the quality of the monitoring of lessons is inconsistent, especially the way in which the impact of teaching on learning is evaluated. As a result, there are missed opportunities to help teachers to improve their teaching.

Governors are supportive and carry out their role of 'critical friend' well. They have been particularly effective in helping the school to improve its accommodation, for example, the new computer suite and the Reception classroom.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Warm relationships between adults and children and close contacts with parents help children to settle quickly into school life. Children are well cared for and they enjoy their time in school. Children make satisfactory progress from average starting points across the areas of learning. Many reach the goals expected for children when they enter Year 1 although their skills in communication, language and literacy are not as well developed as in other areas. The curriculum provides a good balance between activities led by adults and those chosen by children. The

accommodation is spacious and well equipped. However, not enough use is made of the outside area to help children make progress in all areas of their learning.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Make better use of assessment information to challenge and support pupils to do their best.
- Sharpen the quality of monitoring, so that managers evaluate learning effectively and thus help teachers to improve their teaching.

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**

Achievement is satisfactory and pupils attain broadly average standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in mathematics in Year 6 are broadly average, although in the 2007 national assessments too few pupils reached the expected level. The school missed its target. Current work shows that achievement is improving and more pupils are on track to reach the expected level. This is because of the school's focus on basic skills. Teachers are making better use of assessment information to identify and close the gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge. Standards in English have improved. Pupils now have a daily literacy lesson. Teachers are providing more opportunities for pupils to talk about their work and to improve their skills in reading and in writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and minority ethnic pupils make satisfactory progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Assemblies successfully reinforce the moral and social values of the school community but not all pupils show respect during periods of reflection. There are good relationships between adults and pupils. In most classrooms this results in a happy, productive and purposeful learning environment in which pupils are increasingly taking responsibility for their learning. Behaviour is satisfactory, although the behaviour of a few pupils can sometimes interfere with their own learning and the learning of others. Although a small minority of parents take the view that behaviour is not as good as it should be, pupils say that behaviour has improved. This is because of systems, such as the 'good choice' tokens, that encourage good behaviour. As one pupil said, 'Now everybody wants to learn.' Pupils' sound basic skills mean that they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teachers plan and work closely to ensure there is a consistent approach to the teaching in classes within the same year group. However, there are still some shortcomings in the use of assessment and the tracking of pupils' performance. In some lessons, assessment information is not used well enough to match work to the needs of pupils. Consequently, progress slows because the work is too easy for more able pupils and too difficult for some others. Teachers

mark pupils' work regularly but comments in books are not often linked to the purpose of the lesson or to pupils' targets. Lessons are usually well structured and teachers make good use of resources, such as the interactive whiteboards, to support pupils' thinking and stimulate their interest in their work. Teachers give clear explanations so that pupils know what they have to do. Learning support assistants are usually well briefed allowing them to play an effective role in ensuring that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve as well as other pupils in the class.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

There is a strong emphasis placed upon mathematics and English and this is helping pupils to achieve better in these subjects. Curriculum planning is improving, but school leaders have accurately identified the need for it to meet the needs of individuals and groups more closely. Teachers are beginning to revise the links between subjects to make learning more exciting and meaningful for pupils. However, they sometimes miss opportunities to extend pupils' writing skills in other subjects. Pupils have well-structured opportunities to practise their information and communication technology skills (ICT) within the new computer suite. Many pupils take advantage of the increasingly wide range of lunchtime and after school activities offered by the school. These add greatly to their enjoyment of school. A good programme of visits and visitors effectively enhances the curriculum and broadens pupils' experiences. There is a satisfactory programme to support pupils' personal, social and emotional development which is having a positive impact on behaviour and increasing pupils' sense of social responsibility. Through it pupils are learning to stay safe and lead healthy lives.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The care, guidance and support provided by the school are satisfactory. Procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare and safety are securely in place and are followed well by adults. Careful checks are made of adults working with pupils. The vast majority of parents are confident that their children are well cared for. Sound links with outside agencies, such as the behaviour support team, benefits vulnerable pupils and those who need additional help. Academic guidance is only satisfactory. Systems for keeping track of pupils' progress and evaluating how well they are doing are developing. Teachers are making sound use of this information to set targets for pupils. However, pupils are not sufficiently aware of their targets. Consequently, pupils do not always know exactly what they need to do next to improve their learning and make faster progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide determined leadership whilst ensuring that staff are encouraged and supported. The roles and responsibilities of managers are now clearer and as a result there is a more unified drive to raise standards and improve the quality of provision. School self-evaluation is satisfactory. Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses because of their close monitoring of standards and some aspects of provision. Although senior leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching, these activities are done mostly informally and areas for improvement, for

example planning work with the right level of challenge or support, are not always followed up sufficiently. Lessons observations do not always place a strong enough emphasis on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. This means that teachers are not always well enough informed about how to improve their teaching to accelerate pupils' progress.

Governors carry out their roles diligently. They have a good understanding of the school's strategic development through their close monitoring of the school.

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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
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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	3
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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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**

22 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rivermead Primary School, Reading, RG5 4BS

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited recently. We enjoyed talking to you and listening to what you had to say about your school. We found that your school provides you with a satisfactory education.

Here are some of the many good things about your school.

- You enjoy school and come to school regularly.
- The school teaches you to stay safe and healthy and is helping you to become responsible members of the community.
- You are making satisfactory progress in your learning and this is getting better.
- The adults take good care of you at school.
- The headteacher and governors know the school well and have clear plans on how it should improve.

There are two main things that we think your school should do to improve further.

- Make sure that teachers give you work that challenges you to achieve as well as you can.
- Make sure that senior staff observe lessons more thoroughly to see how well you are learning.

We hope that you will continue to enjoy your school. We also hope that you will help your teachers as they work hard to make your school even better for you.

Yours sincerely,

Olson Davis

Lead Inspector