

Rochford Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115315
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	311910
Inspection dates	10–11 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Judith Dawson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	257
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr T Key
Headteacher	Mr G Rampersaud
Date of previous school inspection	3 November 2003
School address	6 Ashingdon Road Rochford Essex SS4 1NJ
Telephone number	01702 544342
Fax number	01702 530711

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized school caters for pupils who are mainly from White British families. About 10% come from minority ethnic groups, which are well below average, and few pupils have specific learning difficulties. The school has single aged classes and a nursery, which can take up to 52 children. It has recently completed major building work, significantly improving information and communication technology (ICT) and sports resources, and receiving design, heritage and conservation awards for the building and playground. Attainment on entry to the nursery is generally below national expectations.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Rochford Primary and Nursery School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The new buildings and extremely well-planned outdoor environment provide a stimulating and attractive platform for learning and are a tribute to the hard work and vision of the senior management team and governors. Almost all parents agree that adults in school provide good pastoral care for the pupils. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They take their responsibilities seriously and most enjoy school. However, the school does not make the most of these talents by providing them with the skills to take responsibility for improving their learning.

Standards vary by the end of Year 2 but have been mainly below average over the last few years. However, the school's assessments show that pupils now in Year 2 attained levels that are slightly higher than last year's national average overall. By Year 6, standards in English have improved significantly from the below average standards in 2007 and pupils have made good progress in the subject. Standards in mathematics and science remain below average. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall throughout the school.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There are good relationships between adults and pupils, and pupils work well together. Work is generally matched to the needs of pupils' different abilities within the class. Pupils who need additional support in developing their literacy and numeracy skills are provided for well and so they achieve effectively. While a few teachers give pupils guidance and advice when marking work and ensure that they are clear about what they need to achieve, this is not common practice. Many pupils are not clear what their targets are. The school provides good enrichment activities to support pupils' learning, and improvements in the way English is planned and taught have resulted in improved standards. The school has identified what needs to be done to generate similar improvements in mathematics.

The headteacher, senior management team and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths. Plans for improvement are sensible and relevant to the school's needs, but they are not prioritised so that pupils' learning is at the heart of its work. This has resulted in pupils' achievements varying from year to year. New systems for tracking pupils' progress are insufficiently effective to pinpoint and address underachievement. Staff absence has resulted in limited time available to train and support teachers. The deputy headteacher is now fully involved in improving teachers' and subject leaders' use of tracking data and the school is receiving strong support from the local authority. Sound leadership and management have brought about suitable improvements since the last inspection and this gives the school satisfactory capacity for future development.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children join the Nursery with knowledge and skills that are below those expected for their age, particularly in language and communication. They make good progress in Nursery and Reception because teaching and learning are good. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children's skills are above that expected nationally in some elements of language and personal and social development but remain below expectations in most other areas. Teachers and their assistants interact with children well and create an attractive and welcoming environment with a wide range of resources and activities. Children feel safe and secure and are eager to learn.

Adults make careful assessments of what each child can and cannot do and plan activities that meet their learning needs closely. Activities that the children develop themselves demonstrate their capability. Adults then plan further challenges for them. This develops children's personal skills particularly well. Occasionally, adults try to pack too much into their direct teaching sessions. This slows down children's learning as they have too much to assimilate.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve school development planning to make raising standards and accelerating achievement the main priorities.
- Refine and make full use of the school's assessment and tracking data to identify and eliminate underachievement and raise standards, especially in mathematics and science.
- Improve teaching and learning throughout the school so that all pupils know how to improve and take more responsibility for their learning.

A small proportion of 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

There has been an improvement in the pupils' standards by the end of Year 2 this year. Their unvalidated results for 2008 indicate that in reading and mathematics standards are higher than the 2007 national average. Standards in writing, while still below last year's national average, are higher than in 2007. In all subjects, more pupils are attaining the higher level. This is an indication that the good start children now have in the Foundation Stage is improving their achievement through Key Stage 1. The standards in English of pupils now in Year 6 are similar to last years' national average and pupils, including those who find learning difficult, have made good progress from below average standards in Year 2. Standards in mathematics and science remain below average and progress in these subjects has been slower. In recent years, overall standards have varied significantly, with attainment being above average in 2003, 2004 and 2006 and below average in 2005 and 2007. These inconsistencies reflect the lack of a clear focus on accelerating achievement in all subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Well-planned opportunities for pupils to work and play collaboratively result in good behaviour overall. Nearly all pupils consider the impact of their actions on others' feelings, and so know how to keep themselves and others safe. Bullying is rare and pupils are clear that adults will sort out any incidents that occur. Strong relationships with each other and with adults help pupils feel confident to ask for help with their work or a personal concern. Attendance is satisfactory. They listen attentively in lessons and most want to achieve well, but, as many do not receive sufficient written guidance, they are unable to take enough responsibility for improving their work. Pupils make a strong contribution to the school community through the work of the school council and acting as 'PALS' on the playground. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and the link with a school in China gives pupils a good understanding of other cultures. Their basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills make a satisfactory contribution to their future economic well-being. Pupils know how to keep fit and healthy,

enjoying the range of physical education and sporting activities during and outside the school day that challenge them both physically and emotionally.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

While teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, there are variations throughout the school. Lesson planning is sound, although sometimes the summing up at the end of lessons is too hurried and lacks impact. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and relationships with pupils are good. Pupils enjoy their work and are enthusiastic learners, especially when lessons are brisk and challenging and they are involved in evaluating their learning. In a Year 4 literacy lesson, for example, each group of pupils had very clear targets for their writing. Their success in achieving them was evaluated by themselves and their classmates at the end of the lesson. This led to pupils making exceptionally good progress. All teachers question pupils effectively in lessons to test and extend learning. However, teachers occasionally miss opportunities to involve pupils thoroughly in their own learning so that they learn to take more responsibility for their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. The school ensures a sound focus on the provision of basic literacy and numeracy skills, and ICT is used satisfactorily. Improvements in the curriculum for English and its use in other subjects have helped to raise standards. The school is putting systems in place to improve provision for mathematics. Links between different aspects of the curriculum, although achieved in some areas, are inconsistent throughout the school. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is good, promoting pupils' personal development well. There is a good range of support groups to help vulnerable pupils or those who may be struggling with their learning. Learning is made interesting and relevant through a range of visits, including residential trips, visitors and through links with other schools. The early morning Gym Trail is having a good impact on pupils' physical and social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils' care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. The school ensures all staff follow the detailed policies and procedures for pupils' pastoral safety and well-being successfully. All safeguarding government requirements are met. The new buildings, as well as the commitment to pupils' welfare, provide a safe haven for all pupils. A parent wrote 'Staff are professional, courteous and genuinely care for the children.' Good systems for promoting a happy and orderly society ensure pupils behave and socialise well. Targets in individual education plans outline the next learning steps and specific support and guidance needed to help pupils who find learning harder. The use of targets to support the learning of other pupils is inconsistent. In a few classes, pupils are not sufficiently focused on what they are expected to learn. As a result, they are not clear enough about how to improve their learning, a key skill they will need, as they grow older.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school has experienced a difficult year with the prolonged absence of the headteacher. The deputy headteacher has held the fort efficiently, supported by the governors. Subject leadership is satisfactory and leaders have sensible plans for development, based on a sound understanding of pupils' standards and needs. Plans for school improvement list a range of items for development over the year, including raising standards and accelerating progress. These are based on satisfactory school self-evaluation, but are not prioritised in terms of importance or urgency. However, the good use of support from the local authority and the introduction of systems for measuring pupils' progress more accurately demonstrate the school's commitment to improving achievement. Resources are managed satisfactorily and, when the budget allows, additional teaching assistants have been employed to support groups of pupils who need extra help. Governors are supportive and knowledgeable about the school but are not fully involved in monitoring the success of initiatives or challenging the school about, for example, pupils' progress.

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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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
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	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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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 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	3
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

12 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rochford Primary and Nursery School, Rochford, SN4 1NJ

Thank you all very much for your help and support during our visit to your school. We enjoyed talking to you and hearing your views. A special thanks to those of you in Year 6, and to the school council, who talked to Mrs Beasley and Mr Missin.

We were impressed by your good behaviour and politeness, not just to grown-ups but also to each other. We noticed how well you look after each other and carry out your duties. Well done. I know how proud your teachers are of you all, and that you make the most of all the activities your school provides. Your teachers take good care of you and help you become good citizens. You have a good start to your education in the Nursery and Reception Classes. Standards have risen in Year 2 this year and I am sure that this is partly due to the way you are taught how to learn in the Foundation Stage. Most of you in Year 6 have made good progress in English this year. Your teachers have improved your literacy lessons and made sure you practise your skills in other subjects.

We want you to make good progress in all subjects. Teaching is satisfactory but we have asked teachers to help you make your learning more effective. We would like the school to focus most of their plans for improvement on helping you learn more rapidly. We want all teachers to use their records to make sure each of you is making at least good progress and provide help or more challenge when you need it. This will help you improve your mathematics and science. We know that you want to do well, so we have asked all your teachers to make sure that they give you advice when they mark your work. Make sure you take it, won't you? You should know exactly what you need to do to improve your work and what you need to learn next. This will help you set your own targets and take more responsibility for improving your work.

Your school is run satisfactorily. The adults in charge of the school have worked very hard to provide you with your lovely building and grounds. Your school will continue to improve further as they concentrate on helping you to make faster progress.

We wish you good luck in this and in your future lives.

Best wishes

Mrs J Dawson

Lead inspector