

Rumboldswyke CofE Infants' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125975
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	315377
Inspection date	30 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Shirley Billington

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	112
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Tildesley
Headteacher	Marion Osborne
Date of previous school inspection	9 May 2005
School address	Rumbolds Close Chichester PO19 7UA
Telephone number	01243 782368
Fax number	01243 530 682

Age group	4-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the strategies used to maintain consistently high standards at the end of Year 2; opportunities for pupils to use their key skills in subjects across the curriculum; and how the school is responding to changes in leadership arrangements and increasing diversity in the pupil intake. Evidence was gathered from observations in lessons and around the school, and scrutiny of pupils' work and a range of documentation. Parents' responses to questionnaires and discussions with pupils, governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. 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 its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a small infant school with five classes. The school holds several awards, including Artsmark Gold, Activemark and Healthy Schools status. There have been some recent changes in staffing arrangements after a lengthy period of stability. The headteacher and deputy headteacher will move to a job share arrangement in September. There have also been changes in the pupil intake. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties has increased, although it is still below average. A small number of pupils from occupational Traveller families and a few children speaking English as an additional language attend the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. A caring ethos, combined with high expectations for the pupils, ensures that they thrive both socially and academically. The majority of parents are delighted with all that the school offers. Comments such as 'my child thoroughly enjoys attending school and her progress is terrific' and 'a perfect start to our children's school career' demonstrate their confidence in its work.

There are several factors that contribute to the school's success. The first is that pupils are known exceptionally well on an individual basis. Their progress is very carefully tracked from the time they join the Reception classes. Staff use information from ongoing assessments to identify precisely the next stage in pupils' learning. Pupils themselves are involved in thinking about what they need to do to improve and many show remarkable sophistication in setting their own targets. A Year 2 pupil identified, for example, the need to 'extend my sentences using "if" and "so" to make my writing more interesting'. Pupils become highly reflective learners, as is evident in the end-of-year reports that they write. Statements such as 'I am very confident to talk out loud to the class' and 'I can order numbers over a thousand' demonstrate their clear understanding of, and pride in, their achievements.

The second factor that contributes to pupils' excellent achievement is a curriculum that offers a wide range of exciting first-hand experiences. This means that learning is made relevant for pupils and is purposeful. Account is taken both of pupils' earlier experiences and what they identify they would like to learn. The environment and the locality are used exceptionally well as a resource for learning. A study of Chichester, for example, led to pupils learning a good deal about the history of the city and exploring questions such as 'why is the cathedral called the cathedral?' A visit to a museum generated an excellent range of opportunities to extend skills in literacy. The pupils prepared key points on how to stay safe on their visit, made notes on their observations and presented information comparing farming methods and lifestyles five hundred years ago with those found today. The creative elements of the curriculum have a high profile, with opportunities taken to promote collaborative working through whole-school projects. Much of the artwork on display is of a very high standard. Pupils enjoy a range of opportunities for music making, which culminated recently in the whole school performing at the Chichester Festival Theatre.

The third element is consistently high quality teaching combined with rigorous attention to pupils' individual needs. Lessons are well organised and purposeful and learning moves on at a good rate. Planning is very detailed to take account of what pupils already know or can do. Pupils who need additional support benefit from extra help from skilled teaching assistants. They make excellent progress so that by the end of Year 2, they are usually working within expected levels and sometimes exceed these. Organisation is flexible in terms of teaching arrangements for English, mathematics and science. For most of the year, pupils in Years 1 and 2 are organised into 'core groups' for the teaching of these subjects so that those of similar ability work together. This has proved very successful over several years for pupils of all abilities. Standards at the end of Year 2 are exceptionally high, with a significant proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels for their age in national tests and assessments. Very strong leadership and management ensure that the school is not complacent, despite its strong track record. The headteacher sets a clear direction for further development, in conjunction with staff and governors. Systems for checking on the quality of the school's work are very robust. There is a comprehensive programme for monitoring and evaluation that involves leaders at all levels

and also includes governors. There is detailed planning for changes in the management structure that will occur over the next year so that high quality provision can be maintained. Pupils themselves make a significant contribution to the work of the school through taking on a range of responsibilities such as helping to organise lunchboxes or looking after those on the 'friendship bench'. School council members have been involved in interviews for a new teacher, carrying out a survey during 'walk to school' week and thinking about how to introduce more activities at playtime.

The school is very inclusive and, as one parent noted, 'Every child is cared for here.' Individual records demonstrate that all do extremely well, whatever their starting points. There are very detailed arrangements for tracking the progress of each pupil and for checking whether boys and girls achieve equally well. However, the data gathered are not summarised to check on the achievement of different groups of pupils, such as those learning English as an additional language. The school is assiduous in paying attention to all aspects of pupils' welfare. Attendance has been above the national average for several years but is now not quite as high as it was. There are good arrangements to support those pupils whose are absent for lengthy periods and to encourage parents to send their children to school regularly wherever possible.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

From an average starting point, children make very good progress in all areas of learning. By the end of the Reception Year, almost all are working securely within expected levels. A high proportion of children exceed these and are working in the early stages of National Curriculum. The learning environment is very well planned and staff are effectively deployed so that children have access to a wide range of stimulating activities. However, some resources, such as those for role play and the sand and water trays, are showing their age. This makes it difficult to ensure the highest quality work in all areas. There is an excellent balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities. These are carefully monitored so that staff can make sure that all children benefit from the learning opportunities on offer. Parents are appreciative of these, making comments such as 'The learning through play is a fantastic approach.' Every opportunity is taken to extend children's understanding as they go about their activities. This was evident as children were making animal hats to use in 'Noah's Ark'. The teacher working with them reinforced mathematical terms such as 'longer' and 'shorter' as they checked on the length of card needed. Children's progress is carefully tracked and parents get very detailed information about how their children are doing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use the detailed information from assessments to track and analyse the achievement of all groups of pupils.
- Upgrade resources in the Foundation Stage to offer the highest quality experiences in all areas of learning.

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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?	1
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	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Dear Children

Inspection of Rumboldswyke Infant School, Chichester PO19

You may remember that I visited recently to see how you are getting on. Thanks to all of you who explained what you were doing in lessons and what goes on around the school. Special thanks are due to the group of Year 2 pupils that met with me and gave me so much information. I thought you would be interested in what I am saying in my report. Yours is a fantastic school! You told me how much you enjoy what goes on there and I can see why. Many of your parents also told me how pleased they are with how much you are learning.

Your teachers plan all sorts of interesting activities for you to do, which means that you learn new things very quickly. I think it is a great idea to talk about what you want to find out at the start of each topic. This helps you to become very good at researching and presenting information in different ways. I also discovered that you are very smart at setting yourselves targets and you really work hard to meet these. Everybody in the school takes very good care of you. If you need some extra help, your headteacher makes sure that you get it.

One of the very best things about the school is you, yourselves! You work extremely well together and you are very good at listening to each other's ideas. You know how important it is to help each other. The special helpers do a lot to get things organised around the school and keep a check on the friendship bench. The school council is working on making morning playtime more interesting and I know you have good ideas to help with this.

There are two things that I have suggested the school does now. The first is to use all the information on how well each of you is learning to check whether everyone is making progress at the same rate. The second is to replace some equipment for the Reception classes. I know you will all be pleased about this as Year 1 and 2 people enjoy using the Reception play area at lunchtime!

Thank you again for your help. Have a happy end of term and a wonderful summer holiday.

Best wishes

Shirley Billington Lead inspector

2 July 2008

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