

Risley Avenue Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131879
Local Authority	Haringey
Inspection number	315883
Inspection dates	2–3 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Mary Summers

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	601
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Conrad Plentie
Headteacher	Mr Robert Singh
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2006
School address	The Roundway Tottenham London N17 7AB
Telephone number	020 8808 0792
Fax number	020 8801 6434

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This very large school serves pupils from a wide area. Most are of Black African, Caribbean or Turkish origin. A small number are from White British backgrounds and the remainder represent a wide range of minority ethnic groups. More than half the pupils are eligible for free school meals and about a quarter are identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These proportions are higher than in most schools. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the usual times is also high with a considerable number of families housed in temporary accommodation. Many of these are newly arrived in the United Kingdom as refugees or asylum seekers and a few pupils have received no formal education in their home countries. About three quarters of pupils are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language.

The previous inspection in September 2006 issued the school with a Notice to Improve. The substantive head was on secondment to the local authority at the previous inspection and one of the deputies assumed the role of acting head. The substantive headteacher has now returned and the deputy is in her original role.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005 HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Risley Avenue Primary is a satisfactory and improving school. Pupils' achievement over the past year has improved significantly. They make satisfactory progress from a low starting point, and, when they leave at the end of Year 6, are just below nationally expected levels in English, mathematics and science. Pupils from different minority ethnic backgrounds achieve satisfactorily, including the large number who speak English as an additional language.

Senior leaders have a strong commitment towards raising standards further. They have introduced many initiatives over the past year that are starting to pay off. They have worked hard, for example, to improve the quality of teaching. Teaching is satisfactory and there are more examples of good practice around the school than at the last inspection. Lessons in English and mathematics are planned appropriately to meet pupils' different needs. Some teachers use a wide range of methods to gain pupils' interest and attention such as quickfire question and answer sessions, paired discussions and presentations using computer technology. In some instances, however, teachers talk at length and pupils have to sit for long periods of time, just listening. Consequently, they become bored, lose focus and this hinders their learning. Behaviour is satisfactory in lessons. Pupils are getting used to new extended facilities in the junior playground and a few can become over-excited at times. The school has increased the levels of playground supervision and is working with these pupils to make sure behaviour improves.

The curriculum covers all the necessary subjects and includes a very good range of extra-curricular activities. There are insufficient opportunities, however, for pupils to develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills and to use these in other subjects. Good structures are in place to support pupils who have recently arrived from overseas. This helps them settle in quickly and take an active part in school life. Effective links with local secondary schools and external agencies, such as Tottenham Hotspur Football Club, provide useful support for pupils' learning. Most pupils enjoy school. They are learning how to keep safe and healthy. They make a useful contribution to the school community as class councillors and peer mediators and are adequately prepared for the future.

Teachers and senior staff track pupils' progress systematically between Years 1 and 6. This is helping to identify pupils who are underachieving or those who are capable of attaining the higher levels. Extra support groups are making a real difference to the progress of these pupils and this is one of the reasons for the rise in standards. Teachers set individual targets for pupils and this is also helping to involve pupils more in their own learning.

Senior leaders have a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school's performance and a secure plan to drive improvement still further. New middle managers have a clear understanding of their roles but are still at the early stages of carrying these out to secure more consistency in teaching within their teams. Governors carry out their duties satisfactorily. Despite being low in numbers, they have appropriate structures in place to monitor the school's work.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 4

Children do not make enough progress over the two years they spend in the nursery and Reception classes. This is because there are too many differences between the provision for the two age groups. The curriculum is not planned well enough to ensure that children receive appropriate experiences to help them develop in all aspects of their learning. Adults do not track children's achievements in a systematic way and use this information to plan the right sort of activities to help them move on in their learning. Senior leaders have already identified weaknesses in this aspect of provision. They have introduced a new programme to improve progress in communication, language and literacy but this is in the very early stages and is not yet working effectively. There is not a common approach to involving parents in their children's learning and this valuable resource is often overlooked.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise children's achievement in all areas of their learning in the Foundation Stage.
- Ensure that pupils develop ICT skills effectively as they move through the school and use these to support their work in other subjects.
- Ensure that teachers use a wide enough range of teaching strategies to enthuse and motivate pupils in lessons and involve them more in their own 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

After several years when standards were exceptionally low, the most recent national tests in 2007 show significant improvement. Children start school at levels that are much lower than those expected for their age. They make inadequate progress in the Nursery and Reception, few reaching national goals, especially in communication, language and literacy, and in their personal, social and emotional development. This puts them at a disadvantage when they begin in Year 1. Despite making satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 6, standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 remain below average. Overall, their achievement is satisfactory because of the significant barriers to learning which many of the pupils face. Pupils from different minority ethnic backgrounds, those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language make sound progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory although their cultural development is strong and ensures that the school functions well as a truly multi-cultural community. Pupils generally enjoy school and are adequately prepared for their future schooling. At play, most pupils behave sensibly but occasionally in the junior playground, a few instances of boisterous behaviour were observed. Nonetheless, pupils say they feel safe and that they can turn to their teachers and other adults if they have a problem. They are becoming increasingly aware of the need for a healthy lifestyle. The school council meets regularly to consider various school issues and has been responsible for recent improvements to school

meals. Attendance, though below the national average, is satisfactory. The school is working hard with parents and external agencies to improve the attendance of a small number of pupils. However a significant number arrive late, disrupting the start of the day.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers plan well together in teams, especially for literacy and numeracy lessons. They plan work at the right sort of levels to move pupils on at a reasonable rate. Teachers usually deploy their teaching assistants well to support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language. Many teachers conduct their lessons at a sharp pace that captivates pupils' interest. They provide the pupils with lots of opportunities to discuss the work, and share ideas with each other and this helps to make learning fun. Pupils respond especially well when teachers use computer technology to illustrate specific teaching points. They can see what the teachers mean, and are able to carry out the work confidently. In some classes the pace of learning is slower because pupils are not engaged enough in the lessons. This is because teachers use a very narrow range of teaching strategies and pupils become bored and lose concentration. Teachers sometimes do too much of the talking themselves and do not involve the pupils enough in discussion or practical work. The marking of work is good and helps pupils to be more aware of how well they are doing towards achieving their individual targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory quality and range of learning opportunities that support pupils' literacy and numeracy skills appropriately. Senior staff have introduced a new system to teach basic literacy skills and this is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' achievement. ICT is not organised well enough and means that pupils do not build progressively on their skills and knowledge as they move through the school. A sound personal, social and health education programme contributes appropriately to pupils' personal development. The school organises a very good range of after school clubs, visits and visitors that add interest and relevance to pupils' learning as well as widening their everyday life experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

There are good levels of personal care for individual pupils, especially those with specific behaviour problems, those for whom English is an additional language and those who have newly joined the school. This aspect of the school's work is supported well by the learning mentors and the family coordinator as well as numerous well-briefed outside agencies. The arrangements for first aid, health and safety and child protection are satisfactory. Senior staff check pupils' progress periodically to identify underachievement and arrange extra support if necessary. This has already begun to make a real difference to pupils' progress. The quality of day-to-day assessment varies from class to class. It is not always used effectively to ensure that the work set for pupils matches their individual needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The deputy headteacher in her role as acting headteacher last year has made a considerable contribution towards improving many aspects of school performance. The return of the headteacher from secondment has brought added impetus to the school's work and there is a satisfactory capacity for continued improvement. Currently, senior staff have a sound understanding of what is working well and what needs to improve. Teachers are clear about what is expected of them and most have responded well to the challenge. Year group leaders, although relatively new to their roles, show a good commitment towards improving their teams. They are beginning to use data effectively to evaluate their own performance. Targets are realistic and based on an analysis of pupils' attainment but present only moderate levels of challenge, considering the rapid improvements that have occurred over the past year. Governors provide satisfactory support. They have sound procedures to monitor the school's work and are beginning to hold it to account for 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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	4
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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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

16 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Risley Avenue Primary School, London, N17 7AB

Thank you all so much for your warm welcome and for sharing with us your views about the school. We really enjoyed our visit, watching you learning and looking at your work. We reached the conclusion that yours is a satisfactory school with some strong points and some areas which could be better. Here are some of the things we thought were especially good.

- You are making much faster progress than you did last year when inspectors visited, but you could still do even better.
- Teachers check your progress regularly and help you to improve by setting targets and marking your work thoroughly.
- There are many interesting activities for you to do at the end of the school day.
- Adults help new children settle into school quickly.
- Pupils who are just learning to speak English receive a great deal of help.
- The people in charge are working hard to make things better for you in school so that you can all achieve well.

These are the things we thought could be better.

- Adults need to improve the lessons and organisation in the nursery and reception classes so that these children make better progress.
- You need more chances to use computers to help you learn in all different subjects.
- Teachers should make sure that all their lessons are interesting and enjoyable so that you can be more involved in your learning.

Thank you once again for your help. We know you will continue to work hard and support your teachers and other adults so they can help you do your very best at school.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Mary Summers

Lead Inspector