

# Rufford Primary School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	103803
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	336162
Inspection dates	15-16 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Ken Buxton HMI

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

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Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	262
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Kathryn Edwards
Headteacher	Mrs Sally Bloomer
Date of previous school inspection	6-7 June 2007
School address	Bredon Avenue Stourbridge DY9 7NR
Telephone number	01384 818975
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons, held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, parents and the coordinator for the Stourbridge Learning Partnership. They observed the school's work and looked at the school's documentation relating to safeguarding, its improvement plans, reports on the school's progress, governors' minutes, records of pupils' progress, analysed 46 parental questionnaires and took account of staff and pupil questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the achievement of pupils, particularly Pakistani pupils, to determine the effectiveness and impact of teaching on their progress
- the evidence provided to support the school's view that, because of its work, pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding
- the school's use of assessment to track and monitor pupils' progress
- the quality of the school's leadership and management and its capacity to deliver improvements.

## Information about the school

Rufford Primary School is slightly larger than average. It is situated in Lye and Wollescote, close to the town of Stourbridge in the West Midlands. It is currently coming to the end of a period of building work that has provided new and refurbished accommodation. The school population is declining, following the local authority's decision to reduce the number of places available at the school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is rising and is now about half of those at the school. Almost a third of pupils are entitled to free school meals and a similar proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disability, which is higher than average. The Nursery and Reception children's learning area is based in the Early Years Foundation Stage section of the school. The school holds a number of national awards including Investors in People, Active Mark, Basic Skills Mark, Bronze Eco School and the Healthy School Award.

The school operates a breakfast club providing supervised provision for pupils before school begins.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate  
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

## Main findings

Rufford Primary School is a welcoming school with a friendly atmosphere. It provides a satisfactory education overall but it has some particular strengths, of which it can be very proud. For example, pupils' personal development and well-being is excellent because of the care and the attention the staff pay to ensuring that every pupil is important. Parents recognise and appreciate the school's efforts on behalf of their children and talk about how proud the pupils are of their school and how well they get on together.

Pupils across the school make satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics, but the standards they achieve are currently low. However, there is a securely improving trend and the school's initiatives are having a positive impact on increasing the rate of progress pupils make, which is reducing the gap between different groups of pupils.

The quality of teaching varies across the school, although it is satisfactory overall. The inconsistencies impact on and limit the progress pupils achieve. Although activities are frequently matched to pupils' abilities there is often not enough challenge to stretch the more able to fulfil their potential. This is because most teachers are not fully aware of just how much the pupils know and understand, and the expectations they have of what the pupils can achieve are not high enough. The school's leadership recognises this situation and are working with staff to ensure that better use is made of the assessment systems to monitor pupils' development.

The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further. The school is having some success in addressing its key priority of raising standards. There is a strong emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and staff are making good use of working in partnership with other schools. These initiatives are helping pupils to make faster progress and achieve higher standards but the leadership recognise that there is still some way to go before they achieve their goal of becoming an outstanding school.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the standards that pupils achieve in English and mathematics by:
  - eliminating any variations between groups
  - ensuring that pupils make good progress across each key stage
  - increasing the quality of teaching by raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve

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- providing activities that challenge pupils to reach their full potential
  - reviewing the curriculum to remove unnecessary overlap and increasing the relevance of tasks to pupils' interests and experience
  - making better use of marking to provide pupils with clear guidance about how the quality of their work can be improved.
- Improve the effectiveness of the school's leadership on driving improvement by:
- focusing the school's improvement priorities more sharply against the intended outcomes for pupils
  - setting quantifiable success criteria that can be used to evaluate the impact of each initiative
  - making more effective use of assessment data to track and monitor individual pupil's performance and adjust their targets accordingly.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enjoy their lessons and clearly want to learn. Progress seen in most lessons was satisfactory overall, but some pupils could achieve more. This is because not all teachers have high enough expectations of pupils' capability. This, in turn, impacts on the quality and quantity of work pupils produce. Pupils for whom English is their second language generally make increasingly good progress as they become more confident of their abilities. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well and while most make satisfactory, some make good progress. There is some variation in the standards pupils achieve in the different subjects. In the past Pakistani pupils have not achieved as highly as other groups. This situation is changing and in 2009 all the Key Stage 2 pupils achieved higher standards overall in mathematics than English, which reversed the situation for 2008. However, the standards pupils achieve in all subjects, at the end of Year 6, are still lower than average. This is partly because too few pupils manage to attain the higher levels, of which some are undoubtedly capable.

Pupils behave well, both in lessons and around the school, and relationships across the school are strong. Incidents of bullying and racial harassment are rare and pupils say that, when they do occur, they are dealt with and resolved quickly by staff. As a result, pupils say that they feel safe at school and well cared for by the staff. Pupils' understanding about the importance of leading a healthy life is good. There is a good uptake of school meals, which are cooked on site and are delicious. Many pupils participate in the after school clubs including the gardening club which develops a strong interest in growing organic produce.

Opportunities to take on responsibilities around the school are welcomed by the pupils. They rise to the occasion and carry out their roles diligently and with

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maturity. The school council is established and plays a full and active role in making decisions about how the school can be improved. Pupils are very proud of their end of year productions, which are also very popular with those who attend. The role of eco-warrior has developed well and illustrates how the pupils are committed to developing a sustainable lifestyle.

Attendance levels are satisfactory and, as a result of the school's efforts in developing pupils' confidence and well-being, their aspirations for their future are high. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a clear understanding about right and wrong behaviour. The school makes good use of the families' different cultural backgrounds to promote understanding of each others' beliefs.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

## How effective is the provision?

Although there is some variation in the quality of teaching most is satisfactory. Lessons are organised well and teaching assistants are often deployed effectively, usually supporting those pupils needing additional help. In the lessons seen, teachers made satisfactory use of information and communication technology (ICT) but, at no time, was it used to its full potential to generate excitement or to inspire pupils. In the best lessons, pupils make good progress and are working at levels that challenge them to learn new skills and knowledge. However, too often pupils are required to complete tasks which they find relatively easy and unremarkable. Some teachers are linking activities to other subjects, which helps pupils to appreciate the relevance of

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<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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learning a particular concept or skill. The quality of marking is satisfactory. Teachers invest considerable amounts of time marking pupils' work but for many pupils this investment has limited value because they find it difficult to read and understand the comments. Only in a few books were teachers identifying the next steps the pupil needed to make to improve the quality of their work.

The satisfactory curriculum meets all statutory requirements and is enhanced well by out of school visits and extra-curricular activities, which generate excitement and enjoyment. There are examples of work being repeated in different year groups, which reduces pupils' learning opportunities. The teaching of French adds to the variety and interest of the curriculum that pupils experience. However, pupils' attitudes to subjects, although generally positive, show that greater effort is required to make lessons practical and relevant by increasing the opportunities to build activities around pupils' interests.

The attention paid to each individual pupil at the school is excellent. The headteacher and staff go to great lengths to make the school a welcoming environment for all those who attend. The breakfast club exemplifies this approach as it helps pupils start the day ready to learn. The transition arrangements for children joining the school and for those transferring to secondary school work exceptionally well. When the school is informed of a family wanting to take an extended break the teachers produce a pack of work for the child to complete while they are away. They then follow this up with the child on their return.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

### How effective are leadership and management?

Everyone in the school works well together to improve pupils' personal development and well-being and they are ambitious to increase pupils' progress and raise achievement. Staff morale across the school is strong. The leadership have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Working with the staff they have identified the correct priorities of improving pupils' performance in writing and mathematics across the school. Monitoring of teaching and scrutiny of pupils' work, by senior members of the team, has identified some of the changes required to bring about these improvements. As a result, teachers are making strides to reduce the achievement gap that is apparent between different groups of pupils and so promote better equality of opportunity. The increasing use of performance management to focus teachers' attention on more rigorous monitoring of pupils'

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performance has helped embed the school's ambition of becoming an outstanding school. However, because the school has not stated this goal explicitly it is not understood by all those involved in working to achieve it. The current development plans have too many priorities and the success criteria do not focus sufficiently on whether the initiatives being introduced are successfully raising pupils' performance.

Safeguarding arrangements are secure and, at the time of the inspection, met all statutory requirements. Governors are playing an increasing role in the school's development. They work well together and are increasingly holding the school to account for its performance. They have taken responsibility for improving their understanding of performance data and are working to make greater use of this knowledge to drive forward their ambitions.

The school has developed good links with parents but has plans to increase its level of engagement further. The recent initiative to provide training opportunities for parents to become teaching assistants has been received very well and demonstrates the school's commitment to working closely with parents. The school has responded quickly to parental requests for information about pupil progress to be provided earlier in the year by producing written reports at the end of the spring term. This initiative means that teachers meet earlier with parents and take account of their views to bring about change before the end of the academic year.

The school is making satisfactory progress promoting community cohesion. It works hard to promote harmony and tolerance between the different sectors of the community. The range of visits to local and sites further afield helps pupils gain an identity and understanding of their country's cultural background. The impact of the school's work is evident in the good relationships that exist across the school. Staff are now looking to extend this success by introducing plans to link with other countries.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for	3

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## Early Years Foundation Stage

Many of the children begin in Nursery with fewer skills and less experience than is the case in most other primary schools. For just under a half of all the children at the school, English is their second language. Nursery children work and play alongside Reception children, which helps them to settle in and quickly become familiar with school routines. They make good progress developing their personal skills and are keen to learn. This helps them to develop a good work ethic and motivates them into wanting to do well. Staff working with children in the Early Years Foundation Stage concentrate, rightly, on laying the foundations for learning behaviour by focusing on developing children’s speaking and listening skills and their cooperation skills. Many children make good progress in these aspects, from their relatively low starting points, but make only satisfactory progress in other areas of learning. As a consequence, children’s attainment remains below that of similar age children by the time they begin Year 1.

The staff work together well as a team, they know the children well and they ensure that the children’s safety and well-being are paramount. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. This is because although children learn well when working alongside adults and make good progress, opportunities to develop language skills are reduced during child-initiated activities. The learning environment is designed well to encourage children to take an interest in their surroundings. The outdoor play area includes a covered space that permits children to fully utilise the space in most weather conditions.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led by a very experienced coordinator who has clear ideas about how the unit can be developed and improved. Some initiatives have already been introduced such as the excellent work increasing parental involvement to secure better attendance.

### *These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of the parents who responded to the questionnaire are very positive about their child’s experience at the school. They agree unanimously that

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they are informed well about the progress their children make. Almost all judge that the school keeps pupils safe and many comment about the friendly, helpful and supportive staff. These views were confirmed by the inspection team. A very few parents questioned whether the portion size of the school meals is sufficient. The matter was discussed with the school leaders and inspectors joined pupils at lunchtime to review the situation. The school's procedures were judged to be appropriate and pupils understand that they take turns, over the course of the week, to be served first and have the widest choice of menu. They also made it clear that they were happy with the amount of food served. A few parents also expressed concern that they perceive bullying to be a problem at the school. Inspectors pursued this matter with school staff and pupils. They found no evidence to substantiate that bullying was a problem. In fact, the pupils that the inspectors interviewed claim that, on the rare occasions, when problems do arise they know the procedures to follow and that the staff quickly resolve the matter successfully.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rufford Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 46 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 262 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	32	70	11	24	2	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	71	11	24	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	27	59	19	41	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	43	20	43	5	11	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	59	17	37	2	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	22	48	22	48	1	2	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	37	28	61	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	20	43	23	50	2	4	1	2
The school meets my child’s particular needs	19	41	25	54	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	43	21	46	2	4	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	39	25	54	1	2	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	19	41	24	52	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	26	57	17	37	1	2	2	4

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>the following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



17 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rufford Primary School, Stourbridge, DY9 7NR

Thank you for welcoming us into your school and classrooms when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and talking with you to find out about your school. Thank you to everyone who completed the pupil questionnaires; they provided us with a great deal of information about your views. It is clear that you go to a very friendly and welcoming school. It provides a satisfactory education and it has some very good features, which you enjoy.

These are the main things that we found out about your school.

- Children starting in Nursery and Reception settle quickly and adapt well to school routines.
- You enjoy school and want to do your best.
- The staff provide excellent care and support for you.
- You behave well and enjoy working and playing together.
- You enjoy opportunities to learn through practical activities and you particularly like the school visits and the end of year school production.
- The extra curricular activities are very popular, particularly tap dancing and the ICT club.
- You enjoy being challenged to learn new skills and to develop your knowledge and understanding.

We have asked the school to do two things to improve the quality of education that you receive.

- First of all, we have recommended that the work you are given helps you to make faster progress.
- Secondly, we have asked school leaders to focus their improvement plans on helping you to achieve higher standards.

We hope that you all achieve your ambitions that you told us about.

Yours sincerely

Ken Buxton  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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