

Rotherhithe Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100810
Local Authority	Southwark
Inspection number	354897
Inspection dates	16–17 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Stephen Long HMI

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 of pupils on the school roll	480
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ray Piggott
Headteacher	Janet Anns
Date of previous school inspection	27 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Twenty four lessons were seen, taught by 16 teachers. Meetings were held with school and childcare leaders, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work and that of the childcare provision. They scrutinised documentation including development plans and evaluations, assessment information and monitoring records. Forty two responses were received from parents and carers to the questionnaire distributed during the inspection. The childcare provided by the school was also inspected and is reported here. The Sure Start Children's Centre provided on the school's site was inspected separately, by another one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector. Their report is published separately.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The impact of work to improve pupils' progress and raise attainment, especially in mathematics.
- Whether strengths in childcare provision have been sustained and outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage have improved.
- The use of assessment information to support pupils' learning.
- The effectiveness of leaders at all levels in monitoring and improving their areas of responsibility.

Information about the school

Rotherhithe Primary School is larger than most primary schools. Much higher than average proportions of pupils are of minority ethnic heritage, speak English as an additional language and are known to be eligible for free school meals. The turnover of staff is high and the school serves an area of multiple deprivation. The school provides childcare for 26 children between the ages of 6 months and 5 years during term time and the school was designated as a children's centre in 2008. About a quarter of the children attending the childcare join the school's nursery classes. The school hosts, but does not manage, out-of-school care. The school gained a Gold Artsmark in 2008 and a Healthy Schools award in 2009.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to raising pupils' attainment by ensuring teaching is of consistently good or better quality.

Pupils' attainment on entry is very low and, although they make satisfactory progress, they do not make the good gains in knowledge and understanding needed to catch up with their peers nationally. As a result, attainment is well below that expected by Year 6, particularly in mathematics, and pupils are not well prepared for secondary school. Teaching is satisfactory with some examples of good practice, but is not consistently strong enough to ensure pupils progress rapidly. Features of less effective teaching include activities which do not challenge pupils of differing ability, missed opportunities to make learning practical, especially in mathematics, and lessons where pupils are unclear about how to improve their work so they can take the initiative to do so.

Pupils feel safe and well cared for. Most enjoy school and their attendance has risen steadily in recent years and is average. They are keen to contribute positively to the school. Relationships between pupils are good and they are welcoming to visitors. The curriculum adds much to the breadth of pupils' experiences. They enjoy the cross-curricular topics, but opportunities are too often missed to strengthen their basic literacy and numeracy skills through such activities so they can meet their targets. A good focus on healthy living means pupils are well aware of how to stay fit and eat well.

The impact of school leadership as a whole has been variable since the last inspection. Strengths in care have been sustained but too little impact has been made on pupils' attainment. Low attainment again in the 2010 Year 6 National Tests triggered a realistic analysis of provision leading to a closer focus on teaching. Better monitoring of lessons, linked to staff training, has begun to improve teaching and thus pupils' progress which, along with broadly accurate self-evaluation, demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve. However, lesson observations do not always focus closely on pupils' progress when evaluating the quality of teaching and in identifying what should be improved. More challenging targets have been set by the school and are raising aspirations. Nevertheless, these are not comprehensively devolved into all levels of development planning, for example into subject development plans, so that everyone is working toward clear and measurable targets for pupils' attainment.

Provision in the childcare and the Early Years Foundation Stage makes a satisfactory contribution to outcomes for young children. The monitoring of provision gives leaders a

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sound awareness of strengths and weaknesses but lacks the sharpness necessary to bring rapid improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure teaching is consistently good so that Year 6 pupils' attainment is at least in line with the national average by:
 - providing challenging activities in every lesson for pupils of differing levels of ability
 - offering more practical and engaging tasks, especially in mathematics
 - enabling pupils to take more responsibility for improving their learning by making sure they know what they are aiming to achieve.
- Exploit all opportunities in the curriculum to help pupils improve their English and mathematics.
- Improve further the impact of leaders at all levels by:
 - ensuring all levels of development planning have clear and measurable targets so that everyone understands the impact they are expected to make on pupils' attainment and how they will be held accountable
 - improving the impact of lesson monitoring in the main school and the monitoring of provision in the childcare and Early Years Foundation Stage so as to bring about rapid improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning but do not achieve enough to counter their low overall starting points and set them up for secondary school. Progress in most lessons is satisfactory, and it is good in some where learning is well paced and practical. When pupils spend too long sitting listening, their engagement wavers and learning is not secured. This is particularly evident in mathematics where pupils find difficulty retaining and applying concepts from year to year. Although most pupils behave well around the school, follow sensible routines and are welcoming to visitors, many have limited confidence in leading their own learning. Equal progress is made by pupils of different ethnic groups, and also those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils are confident they can rely on adults to help them if they have any worries. They are supportive of each other. Their readiness to contribute to the school is demonstrated by the many who want to be school councillors, represent the school in activities such as a Royal Festival Hall performance, and in the pupil-led assembly about charitable work seen during the inspection. Good spiritual development is shown by pupils, for example when reflecting during the assembly on the lives of others. The different cultures and faiths represented in the pupil population are respected and displays reflect pupils' good cultural development. Pupils' clear understanding of how to stay healthy is evident in their enthusiastic participation in sport and the many that enjoy the healthy meals on offer, some of whom advised an inspector to 'eat all his veg!'

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	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	3
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	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

The majority of lessons are orderly, with positive relationships between teachers and pupils. Classrooms and extra spaces used for group work are well organised. The pace of learning is brisk in those lessons where tasks are matched well to pupils' varied needs and they understand the features of good work so they know how well they are doing and what to do next. However, in many lessons, there is too little challenge for pupils, whatever their ability, and there is not enough variation in activities to sustain their interest. For example, whole-class discussions typically feature at the start of lessons and help develop pupils' language skills. Nevertheless, they do not routinely include questions targeted at pupils, based on their ability, and are often too long. Learning objectives are explained by staff, but not always in ways that enable pupils to understand the criteria for successful work and so let them know how to improve. This is particularly evident in mathematics where too little use is made of practical tasks to help pupils absorb ideas. Marking is regular, with increasingly explicit reference to pupils' targets to help them improve. Pupils are usually aware of their targets, although less so in mathematics than English.

Inconsistent practice in encouraging pupils to respond to teachers' marking and assess their own work reduces pupils' learning.

The curriculum is adapted well to appeal to different groups of pupils. For example, a 'space' theme engages boys. Good links are made with external partners, including visits

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to Battersea Dogs Home and links to King's College, whose students act as mentors for Year 6 and run a club for the more able. Six week 'Rotherhithe University' modules for older pupils enable them to cover themes in depth. Extra sessions to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or those learning English as an additional language, are provided but are not always well coordinated with what they are learning in other lessons. Pupils sometimes leave or rejoin their class for their sessions and are not always reintegrated effectively. Visual and performing arts feature strongly. A good range of clubs, including in sport, helps pupils stay fit and develop their interests. Pupils who are vulnerable or at risk are identified well and given extra support. Good steps are taken to modify pupils' behaviour where there are concerns. Effective liaison with external agencies, including social services, helps the school improve attendance and learning in a number of cases.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and other leaders want to ensure further improvement and have a sound understanding of what needs tackling. Strategic planning includes suitable goals for improving pupils' progress. Some effective recent steps have clarified the role of all leaders in reaching shared goals. However, the strategic goals do not filter down clearly enough to all levels of development plans so that while staff seek to improve pupils' progress, they are not always clear what they are aiming for. This makes it difficult to hold them fully to account or check if the gap between pupils' attainment and their peers nationally is closing. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and the curriculum gives a broadly accurate picture of the next steps required. Lesson observations have improved in quality and are more rigorous, but the evaluation of teaching does not always focus sufficiently on pupils' progress. Much effort has been put into staff development, although the impact is reduced by the high number of staff leaving and joining the school.

Equality of opportunity is a high priority. The school ensures all groups of pupils are safe and well cared for, but pupils underachieve in basic literacy and numeracy.

Governors have a satisfactory impact and are now challenging pupils' low attainment more rigorously. The school works hard to involve parents and carers, with some success such as rising attendance at parents' evenings. Parents' and carers' have a satisfactory influence in the school's running and organisation, and in supporting their children's learning. The promotion of community cohesion is well planned. Pupils form a harmonious group and good steps are taken to make connections in the local area and further afield,

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such as through a residential trip to France. The safeguarding of pupils is taken seriously, with procedures reviewed and up-dated regularly.

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	3
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of provision in the childcare setting is satisfactory. The provision complies with the requirements for registration. Children from two years old, including some who stay in the childcare provision after a morning session in the school's nursery classes, are happy and respond well to the care of the adults who look after them. The atmosphere is warm and caring, and welfare requirements are met. Adults are keen to help children make progress in their development, but the way this is planned is inconsistent and not coherently linked to planning in the Nursery class. Some well-planned opportunities are provided to meet individual children's needs, while others are missed, including the use of background information on the children. The leadership of the childcare provision is satisfactory. Some development needs, such as extending opportunities for outside play, are effectively tackled. However, the monitoring of provision lacks the rigour necessary to comprehensively identify and remedy weaker areas of practice. As a result, high quality aspects of provision evident in the last inspection have not been sustained.

In the Nursery and Reception classes, children make satisfactory progress. From low overall starting points, the majority are still working below the levels of development expected when they start Year 1. Their personal, social and emotional development is notably less developed, as are language and communication skills. Children are looked after well and relationships with adults are good. The care provided for children, including arrangements for transition, is appropriate so they are happy to attend. Support for children with additional needs, such as those speaking English as an additional language, is satisfactory. The range of self-selected or adult-initiated activities is satisfactory,

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although the outdoor area does not fully reflect all the required areas of learning. Children's progress is tracked reasonably well, but there are inconsistencies and practice is better in the Nursery than the Reception classes. As a result, each child's next steps in learning are not sharply identified so that appropriate experiences can be offered. Children make good progress in learning to stay healthy, and enjoy their fruit snacks. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader is recently in post and has a satisfactory understanding of areas requiring improvement. Monitoring the quality of provision involves reference to planning and work scrutiny, but does not refer sufficiently to the impact made on children's progress when evaluating initiatives and deciding what to do next. ♦

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

The proportion of parents and carers who returned the questionnaire was well below the national average for primary schools. The responses were supportive of the school. Parents and carers took a more positive view of pupils' attainment than did the inspection team.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rotherhithe 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 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 480 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	81	8	19	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	29	69	13	31	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	26	62	14	33	2	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	62	14	33	2	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	30	71	10	24	2	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	62	14	33	2	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	60	17	40	0	0	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)	21	50	17	40	2	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	55	16	38	3	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	62	13	31	2	5	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	45	16	38	2	5	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	24	57	16	38	2	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	64	13	31	1	2	1	2

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



18 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rotherhithe Primary School, London SE16 2PL

Thank you for your help during our inspection. Your views were very useful to us in coming to our judgements about the school. There are some good things about your school but some areas have not improved enough since the last inspection. These are the best things about your school.

- The school takes good care of you and you told us you enjoy school and that the staff will help you if you have any difficulties.
- You make a good contribution to the school and are keen to take on roles such as being on the school council.
- You have a good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy and what kinds of food are good for you.
- The school is good at giving you interesting things to learn about and you told us you enjoy the topics and the visits you go on.

Overall, the school is not doing well enough and we are giving it a 'notice to improve'. This means it will receive extra help. The headteacher and the other staff are keen to improve the school and we have asked them to:

- make sure that teachers help you to make good progress in every lesson by giving you work which is at just the right level for each of you
- give you interesting, practical activities to help you learn, and help you to understand how to improve your work
- help you to develop your literacy and numeracy skills in all lessons so that you reach higher levels
- check more carefully that all the things they do to improve the school have an impact on your work.

Other inspectors will visit in the future to check on how well things have gone.

Thank you again for being so friendly and helpful and remember you can help too by working as hard as you can.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Long

Her Majesty's Inspector

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