

Riversdale Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101018
Local Authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	335643
Inspection dates	25–26 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Jane Chesterfield

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	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Allan Turpin
Headteacher	Christina Piombo
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons or parts of lessons, and observed 12 teachers. Three quarters of the inspection time was spent observing pupils' learning. Inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies and documentation, safeguarding records, pupils' work, assessment data, monitoring records, strategic planning and the minutes of governors' meetings. Questionnaires from staff, pupils and 29 parents were analysed.

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

- the impact of strategies to improve English throughout the school, particularly for White British boys
- the effectiveness of the school's work to improve girls' achievement in mathematics
- the reasons why strategies to improve attendance appear to be having a limited impact
- the school's success in tackling the issues in teaching identified in the last inspection
- the impact leaders at all levels have in improving the work of the school.

Information about the school

Riversdale is a primary school of average size which serves an ethnically diverse area of south-west London. Three quarters of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, many of whom have an Asian heritage. An increasing proportion are from Eastern Europe. More than half speak English as an additional language and many come to the school new to the language. The proportion of pupils who leave or join the school other than at the usual time is above average. About a third of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above average. The proportion who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is just above average. These difficulties are mainly speech and language or moderate learning difficulties. There is childcare provision run by the local authority on the school site.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Riversdale Primary is a good school, where pupils feel safe and happy and get a good start to their education. Teaching and learning are good, and underpinned by good care and a lively, interesting curriculum which is well tailored to pupils' needs. There are some outstanding elements to the curriculum, such as special events and opportunities for specialist tuition.

Pupils and their parents value the inclusive ethos created by the headteacher and staff. They commented frequently on the way in which children from many different backgrounds mix together easily. One parent summed it up by saying, 'The school encompasses many different cultures, but the children work together in harmony'. A pupil echoed the views of many by commenting, 'I do enjoy my school; everyone gets along with everyone else and treats people how they want to be treated'.

When pupils join the school, many have low or well below average starting points, but they make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage as a result of the good provision in the Nursery and Reception classes. They move into Key Stage 1 with a level of skills which is generally still below average, and make good progress through the rest of the school. Their progress tends to be more rapid in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1, as so many are new to learning English and need time to master the basic skills. Nevertheless, by the time pupils leave the school, most reach broadly average standards.

Support for pupils who have particular needs, including those with speech and language difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language, is very carefully targeted and planned, so that these pupils do well. Pupils' performance in science is consistently good, and there has been an improvement in mathematics as a result of a recent whole-school focus on this.

The school is currently addressing pupils' performance in English, which has been consistently lower. It has identified that many pupils, particularly boys from all backgrounds including White British, find writing difficult and lack the skills and confidence to achieve well in it. This is rightly the current focus for school improvement. In particular, leaders know that pupils' command of grammar, punctuation and sentence structure is in need of development. Added to this, they know that pupils need more help to understand how to write in different ways and for different purposes.

Pupils say that they want to come to school and look forward to their lessons and other activities. However, not all families support the school by ensuring that their children attend regularly or on time. In particular, a significant number take their

children out of school for prolonged trips abroad during term time. The school is working hard to impress on families their responsibility to send their children to school and their children's rights to an education.

The quality of pupils' experiences and the improvement in their achievement is down to the hard work of the school's leaders and managers. The headteacher and senior staff have tackled the issues from the last inspection with energy and determination, and have been successful in raising the quality of teaching throughout the school. In all classes, work is now closely matched to pupils' needs, and pupils of all abilities are set interesting and challenging tasks. The way that leaders evaluate the school is effective in helping them to know the school well. This means that they plan and implement actions for improvement successfully. As a result, the school has a good capacity for further sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and improve progress in writing by:
 - improving pupils' command of grammar, punctuation and sentence structure
 - increasing pupils' understanding of how to write in different ways for different purposes.
- Improve pupils' levels of attendance by:
 - strengthening work with families and outside agencies to reduce the amount of absence, especially holidays during term time.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' attainment in recent years has been broadly average by the end of Year 6. However, a dip in national test results in summer 2009 reflected the fact that the year group had particular academic and pastoral needs and that the cohort was small. The school has tracked the performance of girls in mathematics and found that this varies from cohort to cohort. In Year 6 this year, for example, girls are among the highest achievers in mathematics. Attainment by the end of Year 2 has improved over the last two years, particularly in reading and writing. The school puts this down to an increased focus on teaching sounds and letters, known as phonics, to younger pupils.

Pupils across all classes have made good progress to date this year. In the lessons observed, pupils were eager to learn and interested in what they were taught. They enjoyed their learning and achieved well. Pupils were responsive to their teachers and keen to take part in lessons. They settled to their tasks without fuss and were motivated to concentrate and persevere with them.

Pupils commented that they enjoy school and feel safe. As one pupil put it, 'It's a very happy environment'. Behaviour is good because staff have high expectations and set clear boundaries for pupils. Pupils know what constitutes a balanced diet and have plenty of opportunities to be active. The school council takes its role seriously and makes a difference to school life. All Year 6 pupils willingly take on responsibility

and play an important part in helping the school run smoothly at lunchtime. There has been an improvement in attendance over the last 18 months, but it has still to reach required levels.

Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills are good. In particular, they are proud of and celebrate the multicultural mix in the school. One commented, ‘In Riversdale boys play with girls, Key Stage 1 with Key Stage 2, black children with white children, Muslims with Christians, because we are all treated in the same way’.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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 ¹	4
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is consistently good across the school, and this is why pupils make good progress. Senior staff make sure that teachers share the same approach to planning, assessment and tracking of pupils, and that new teachers are given support to settle quickly into the school’s way of doing things. This means that staff absence or turnover does not affect pupils’ progress. Teachers uniformly ensure that their methods and resources are well suited to pupils who are new to learning English. They make good use of visual aids and practical tasks, and repeat and reinforce vocabulary so that pupils understand it. Teachers maintain a good pace in lessons to keep pupils’ interest and have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Most deploy additional adults well in class, though this is not always the case. Marking is consistently good across the school, and helps pupils realise what they need to do to improve their work. In lessons, teachers check pupils’ understanding regularly to see if they are ready to move on. Ability group teaching in Years 4 and 5 for mathematics, for example, and the deployment of specialist literacy and numeracy teachers in Year 6 aid learning well and show effective use of assessment. The school is providing some excellent links across the curriculum which make learning

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

more memorable for pupils and make writing more appealing for boys. In a Year 6 literacy lesson, for example, pupils had prepared for writing poems about trees by visiting the local park to take photos to inspire their writing. They were then going to act out their poems and set them to music. Specialist teaching in areas such as art, music and languages gives all pupils a good grounding in these areas and gives those with especial talents excellent opportunities to develop them further. Pupils enjoy a reasonable range of clubs after school, though some pupils and parents say they would like more. The school is working towards Healthy Schools accreditation, and Right and Responsibilities status.

Provision for vulnerable children in particular is carefully mapped to suit them so that they are able to achieve to the best of their abilities, despite the disadvantages they have. The school has good links with outside agencies to meet the range of pupils’ different needs. It is working hard with the Education Welfare Service to improve pupils’ attendance, with increasing success. Prompt action on absence by the learning mentor, coupled with a clear system for parent interviews and referrals mean that attendance is rising and persistent absence is falling. The school has identified that it needs to be firmer with parents who fail to understand the implications of poor attendance for their children.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior staff have got to grips effectively with the findings of the last inspection and have been successful in raising the school’s performance so that it is now a good school rather than a satisfactory one. They have done this by improving the school’s systems for monitoring its work and tracking the performance of its pupils. This has enabled senior staff to have a clear insight into where teachers and pupils need support, and directing resources to the right places. They have set high expectations and have carried the school community with them, so that there is a strong sense of teamwork throughout the school. Subject leaders are fully involved in monitoring and supporting work in their areas.

As a result of good self-evaluation, leaders know exactly what needs to be done to secure and maintain improvement. They are able to judge the impact of the strategies used to improve pupils’ performance and what the next steps should be. The school works well to promote equal opportunities and tackle discrimination. Its careful tracking of the performance of different groups of pupils means that it can quickly spot any concerns and take action on them. The school has identified that many pupils, particularly boys of all backgrounds, lack confidence as writers, and find it hard to write in different ways for different purposes. Many also have problems

structuring their sentences correctly. This is being tackled through intensive support from specialist teachers and additional individual and small group work.

Governors fulfil their role well. They have good understanding of the school’s strengths and weaknesses, and give a good balance of support and challenge to its work. Good attention is given to safeguarding pupils. All the required checks on adults who come into contact with pupils are carried out, and risk assessments are thorough. Procedures for child protection are rigorous and staff training is up to date.

Outside partnerships have a very positive impact on pupils’ learning. In particular, there are excellent links with local secondary schools. Year 6, for example, have recently done exciting work on animation with the adjacent secondary school, and this has motivated and inspired staff and pupils alike. The school engages well with parents, making every effort to try to involve them in their children’s education and provide them with information in the most user-friendly ways. The next step is for the school to overcome the barriers to regular attendance.

The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion, particularly within the school community and at local level. It works hard to help parents who are new arrivals to the country to settle and feel a sense of belonging. The school also plays a prominent role in drawing the different cultural groups within the community together. It understands the importance of helping pupils to understand the complex picture of communities within the United Kingdom, and is beginning to establish links with other schools across the world.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

As a result of good leadership, the outcomes and provision for children are good. The key features of the Early Years Foundation Stage are as follows:

- The unit is well organised so that it runs smoothly in the absence of the Early Years Foundation Stage leader. Teamwork is strong.
- Staff provide a good range of activities covering all the areas of learning in spacious, stimulating and word-rich surroundings.
- Children make good progress from low starting points. They are particularly weak in their personal, social and emotional development, and in their communication, language and literacy when they enter the unit.
- Staff interact well with children and offer good role models for behaviour to promote their personal development.
- There are good opportunities for children to have a go at writing for a purpose, particularly in the role play areas frequently chosen by boys, such as cars or construction. This is encouraging boys to write.
- Staff take every opportunity to build children’s vocabulary and speaking skills through careful use of questioning and repetition of new words.
- There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, both indoors and outside. However, the Reception classroom does not have ready access to the outdoor area.
- Parents are welcomed into the unit, and staff encourage them to get involved in their children’s learning. Regular coffee mornings help to foster good relationships.
- Assessment is careful and thorough, and children’s records are well kept, indicating what they have achieved and what the gaps in their learning are.
- Welfare requirements are met, and good attention is given to children’s daily care and safety.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Twenty-nine parents responded to the questionnaire, which is a small proportion of all parents. Of those who responded, the overwhelming majority of those expressed satisfaction with the school and what it offers their children. A very few felt that their children were not well prepared for the future, that unacceptable behaviour was not dealt with effectively, or that the school did not take account of parents’ suggestions and concerns. Inspectors did not uphold these views. The school prepares pupils carefully for moving from one stage of their education to the next. Unacceptable behaviour is dealt with firmly. The school regularly consults parents to hear their suggestions, and teachers are happy to talk to parents on a daily basis if they have any concerns about their children.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Riversdale 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 29 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 212 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	79	6	21	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	19	66	9	31	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	22	76	7	24	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	62	11	38	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	18	62	10	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	19	66	10	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	52	14	48	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)	12	41	12	41	2	7	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	19	66	10	35	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	45	13	45	3	10	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	45	13	45	3	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	52	12	41	0	0	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	20	69	9	31	0	0	0	0

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

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 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>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.



27 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Riversdale Primary School, London SW18 5JP

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently and for helping us with the inspection. We really enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and sharing your lessons.

We found that your school is giving you a good education, and that there are many good things going on. These are the things we liked best:

- You enjoy your learning and make good progress as you move through the school.
- You behave well and show a great deal of respect for one another's different backgrounds.
- You make a good contribution to the school community, particularly those of you in Year 6.
- You are well taught and have some great opportunities to try new activities in school.
- You are well looked after and get extra support if you need it.
- You feel safe and secure in school, thanks to the efforts of the staff.
- Your school is well run and senior staff know how to make it even better.

To help the school improve further, we have asked to the staff to:

- make sure that you all do as well as you can in your writing
- work with your families to make sure that you all come to school every day.

You can help by trying to write as much as you can and having confidence in yourself as writers. Don't be afraid to ask if you need help with spelling or don't know the right words to use. You can also help by making sure that you only miss school if you are ill and asking your parents not to take you on holiday in term time.

Yours sincerely

Jane Chesterfield
Lead Inspector

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