

Roydon Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114901
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	326088
Inspection dates	24–25 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Sandra Tweddell

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	188
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Anne Sleep
Headteacher	Mrs Marilyn Opara
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 December 2005
School address	Epping Road Roydon Harlow Essex CM19 5HN
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average taking children from a wide area. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is similar to that of most schools. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage at the age of four with attainment that is broadly in line with that expected. They come from mainly White British backgrounds with a few from a European heritage, mainly Italian. Some of these children are at early stages of learning English. A small number are from other heritages, including children from Traveller communities. A smaller proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities than in most schools, predominantly moderate learning or emotional difficulties. The school has National Healthy School status and has held Activemark for sports for a number of years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'My child has loved the time spent at Roydon school. I am really pleased that I made the decision to send my children there'. This is just one of the overwhelmingly positive comments made by parents and pupils at the school. They are right, it is a good school and many aspects of its work are outstanding. It has gone from strength to strength since its last inspection because the headteacher is an excellent and inspirational leader who has created a common purpose amongst all adults who work in the school. Leadership and management are good overall. However, the senior leadership team is very strong and the results of its work are clearly to be seen in rising standards and improved progress. The school motto, 'Thinking, Learning and Caring' underpins all the school's work and is one of the reasons why pupils' personal development is outstanding. All staff take responsibility for leading an aspect of the school's work and they do this effectively.

Pupils make good progress throughout the school. Progress between Years 3 and 6 has improved over the past two years due to the actions taken as a result of the rigorous monitoring by leaders. Standards of work are now high at the end of Year 6 but there is still some variation in the progress pupils make in different classes. Adults treat all pupils equally and carefully track the progress of all groups of pupils. As a result, there is no difference in the progress of different groups. Attendance has improved over the past year although a small number of parents insist in taking their children out of school for holidays. This number has reduced significantly over the year due to the school's rigorous systems for tackling poor attendance.

Teaching and learning are good and often outstanding. Teachers plan effectively and an area that was identified for improvement in the last inspection, assessment and its use to raise standards, is now a key strength across the school. The curriculum is rich and varied and makes an excellent contribution to pupils' enjoyment. Care, guidance and welfare are exemplary and parents and pupils regard this as an exceptional feature of the school. The school has come on in leaps and bounds over the past four years. The close teamwork from the staff, their willingness to do their absolute best for the pupils and the good support from governors, gives it excellent capacity to improve even further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children in the reception class are very well cared for. Adults thoroughly enjoy their work so children are enthusiastic and highly motivated to do their best. Children enter the class with differing starting points but overall in line with national expectations. They make excellent progress because learning is exciting and enjoyable with the result that by the time children enter Year 1, almost every child meets the early learning goals that are expected for their age and a number are working beyond this. Teaching is thorough and assessment used very well to consolidate learning by matching work to the needs of the children. Photographs of children working have evaluative comments about the impact of the activity upon their learning. The new curriculum for the early years is being introduced well, although teachers are still coming to grips with different assessment systems.

Adults plan effectively, often introducing an air of mystery into the lessons, such as the very attractive bag from which objects are pulled to reinforce the teaching of reading. This year, a number of children lacked independence and are now confidently using the new systems that were brought in to develop skills of decision making. The curriculum is broad and is made relevant to children, for example, a time line links photographs of themselves to pictures of children in the past. Very effective links with the pre-school group and with Year 1 are exploited to prepare children to enter the reception class and for the next stage in their education.

Leadership is reflective and analytical. A key strength comes from the headteacher's insistence on examining the consequences of actions upon children's learning. The school has skilfully maintained the excellent provision from the last inspection by constantly questioning what it does.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that progress of pupils in Years 3 to 6 in all subjects is equally good.
- Work with the small number of parents who continue to take their children out of school for holidays.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The pattern over the past few years of good progress and high standards by the end of Year 2 has continued and has been strengthened because information from assessment is used very well. In Years 3 to 6, progress has fluctuated so standards have varied, although the trend is upwards. The school is correctly working on raising standards in writing as they have found this to be a weaker area, and, in some classes, raising standards in mathematics. The work is starting to bear fruit and standards have risen significantly, particularly at the end of Year 6 where standards of work are high. Presentation of work has improved but there is more to do on spelling. Last year, a small group of pupils lost ground because they had emotional difficulties. A programme to tackle this was introduced to the whole school and these pupils are now making satisfactory gains in their learning. As a result, progress across Years 3 to 6 has improved over the past eighteen months although there is still some variation. Pupils who find learning difficult make good progress because their work is closely monitored and they receive very good support. The school works very closely with the service for children and families from Traveller communities, so these pupils make good progress. Pupils from Italian families, some of whom are learning English, achieve well because the school goes out of its way to find resources in Italian to support both the pupils and their families.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' outstanding personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is underpinned by excellent relationships based on mutual trust and respect. Adults and children thoroughly enjoy their shared experiences with lots of smiles and laughter in lessons and around the school. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others, as for example when supporting those who find learning difficult or

when acting as playleaders. They have a very clear understanding of their own and other cultures as a result of the high priority the school gives to developing an awareness of the global community. They develop into mature and responsible youngsters who make an excellent contribution to the smooth running of the school by, for example, managing a healthy tuck shop. Most pupils attend regularly but the small, and decreasing, number of parents who take their children out of school for holidays affects attendance. One pupil summed up Roydon's 'Thinking, Learning, Caring' ethos with the comment, 'we have all come together as a school to sort out behaviour'. Another said, 'basically, we have eliminated bullying'. As a result behaviour is exemplary. All of these factors as well as their good basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) ensure they are well prepared for future learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

All lessons are based on thorough planning to ensure that teaching meets the learning needs of different groups of pupils. Good teamwork between teachers and skilled teaching assistants makes an important contribution to the good achievement of all pupils including those who find learning difficult. Pupils work hard and enjoy the lively teaching. They develop good learning habits and are confident that teachers will help if they do not understand the work. They are good at sharing ideas and supporting each other's learning. Teachers share examples of outstanding practice with colleagues in order to further improve the overall quality of teaching and learning. For example in the best lessons teachers demonstrate a clear understanding of the different ways that children learn and employ a range of different strategies to ensure all are fully engaged. They ask challenging questions encouraging pupils to explain their thinking. The school has rightly identified the need to strengthen the way in which teachers use success criteria with pupils in subjects apart from English, mathematics and science.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Pupils love coming to school because the curriculum is rich and exciting. This is one of the reasons why their personal development is so good. The curriculum focuses strongly on personal development of the pupils. A Year 6 class, for example, discussed the dangers of alcohol abuse with great maturity. Pupils' learning is extended through the very well planned half termly themes that link learning across subjects, as well as themed weeks and days, such as the Global Learning Day, which made an excellent contribution to promoting pupils' understanding of others' lives. Another example is the Sound Garden that pupils designed and built using their learning from a wide range of subjects. Good progression in French across the year groups comes from excellent use of professional development. The curriculum is carefully tailored to each pupil, especially those from different cultures. Pupils spoke very warmly of the huge range of enrichment activities that many attend with great enjoyment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school takes excellent care of its pupils ensuring they are safe and happy. In addition all pupils including the various minority groups and those who find learning difficult are given outstanding academic support. As a result they develop into well-rounded young people who achieve well. They say they know how to stay healthy because teachers give them very clear guidance. Initiatives such as the 'I Need to Talk Box' are very effective in supporting pupils' social and emotional development. Attendance has improved because the school is vigilant and active in expecting high levels of attendance. Arrangements for checking and tracking progress are excellent. The quality of marking and feedback to pupils is good and often exemplary. Older pupils in particular are aware of their progress through the National Curriculum levels. Procedures for safeguarding and child protection are robust and are implemented by all staff.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

'What is the impact of that upon children's learning?' is a frequently heard question in the school. Visionary leadership by the headteacher supported by close analysis of the success of new approaches has focused the entire staff on how children learn. The headteacher is widely respected in school and in the local community. The leadership team plays its part excellently and all adults are developing roles as leaders. Monitoring systems by senior leaders are robust and data is used well to change the direction of the school. Self-evaluation is extremely accurate and has input from staff, pupils, parents and governors. Targets set by the school are challenging and are met although this work is yet to have a major impact on the consistency of standards in Years 3 to 6. Governors are supportive and effective in their monitoring and evaluation role and are well led. Their self-evaluation has pointed out how they can improve their work and this is underway. The school has worked very successfully to promote all aspects of community cohesion and evaluates the impact of the work. Adults enjoy their work and the very strong team spirit supports the very good ethos.

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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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Annex B



26 March 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Roydon Primary School, Roydon, CM19 5HN

You may remember that we visited your school recently to see how well you are doing. Thank you for being so welcoming and willing to talk to us about your work. A special thank you to the School Council for giving us your views about your school. We were pleased to be invited to your assemblies and to hear the high quality of your singing. We were particularly impressed by the large number of younger children who in their assembly were eager to say a prayer for the day.

You and your parents are very proud of your school and have good reason to be. Your school is good and many parts of its work are excellent. We could see how much you enjoy learning and it was very clear why you told us how well you are cared for. You make good progress in school and the standards of your work in English, mathematics, science and ICT prepare you well for your next schools. This is because Mrs Opara is an excellent headteacher who has worked very hard with other leaders and staff in the school to make sure that you do as well as you can. Your teachers plan interesting lessons and you help by working hard to achieve the targets that are set for you to improve your work.

Good schools like yours can get even better so we discussed with Mrs Opara what are the next steps. These are:

- Standards of work in Years 3 to 6 have risen recently because your teachers have been looking closely at the best ways to help you to learn well. All teachers are going to use these new approaches to make sure this continues and so you always make good progress.
- A small number of you take holidays during school time and this can affect your work. Mrs Opara is going to work with your parents to see if there are ways around this.

It was a great pleasure to meet you all. We wish you every success in the future.

Sandra Tweddell
Lead inspector