

# Rookery School

Rookery Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, B21 9PY

## Inspection dates

3–4 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Children enter school with skills and understanding well below those expected for their age. By the time they leave, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly in line with the national average.
- Teaching is good overall with some outstanding. Most teachers have strong subject knowledge, high expectations of pupils and use other adults well to support learning.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a positive start to school life. The very effective help and exciting and interesting things they do rapidly improve their language and communication skills.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Everyone involved in the school takes pride in its work and all trust and respect each other unequivocally.
- The partnership between the headteacher, leadership team, staff, governors and pupils has created an environment where pupils feel safe and know how to stay safe.
- Governors play a major part in checking the school's work. They use their skills well and are an integral part of the school's leadership.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are outstanding. They are highly enthusiastic about learning and care deeply about their work and each other.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet consistently outstanding. In a few lessons, pupils' progress slows because the pace of the lesson is too slow. This results in pupils not always being challenged effectively.
- Teachers do not consistently provide work which matches the needs and abilities of the pupils.
- Marking of books does not always help pupils know and understand how to improve their work.
- Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to express their views and be more involved in their own learning.
- Pupils' targets are not sufficiently taken into account either in teachers' planning and/or during lessons.

## Information about this inspection

- Twenty five lessons were observed and every class was visited. Seventeen visits to lessons were undertaken as joint observations with the headteacher and other members of the leadership team. Inspectors looked at pupils' work in their books and the range of activities on offer to pupils. Inspectors listened to some pupils in Year 1 and Year 6 read.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders and the school's improvement officer. Discussion took place with a group of pupils to gather their views about the school and talk to them about their work.
- A meeting was held with several members of the governing body.
- As there were insufficient responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) to generate any analysis, inspectors took account of the 125 returns to a recent school parental questionnaire and the responses from 30 members of staff to the Ofsted questionnaire.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's plans for improvement, data and information on pupils' progress and minutes of governing body meetings. The school's records of monitoring teaching and the management of performance were analysed.

## Inspection team

Ronald Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Dennis Brittain

Additional Inspector

Enid Korn

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is a much larger than average-sized primary school.
- Rookery School converted to become an academy on 1 August 2011. When its predecessor school, under the name Rookery School and Children's Centre, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well-above average, as is the number of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is well-above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well-above average. This is extra government funding provided to schools to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The school has a 17 place resource base for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, which formed part of this inspection.
- There is a local authority run children's centre on the school site which was not inspected at this time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Raise the amount of outstanding teaching by making sure:
  - teachers consistently match work to the pupils' needs and abilities
  - that all lessons have a greater pace to learning and so challenge pupils further
  - teachers' written feedback to pupils allows them to fully understand how to improve their work.
- Raise achievement further by making sure that:
  - all teachers provide greater opportunities for pupils to express their views and be more involved in their own learning
  - all teachers take account of pupils' targets both in their planning and during lessons and so allow pupils to further raise their rates of progress.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the school with skills and understanding well below those usually expected for their age, particularly in language and communication. Teachers plan exciting tasks, which capture their imagination and make sure they make good progress as they move through the Early Years Foundation Stage. A large percentage of children enter the school with no experience of speaking English. However, they learn their new language quickly through activities that are fun and supported by well-trained staff. They settle quickly into school, learning the routines and meet the high expectations of their teachers.
- Pupils of all abilities continue to learn well in response to good teaching in Key Stage 1. Although pupils achieved lower than their peers nationally in the national phonics screening check, they go on to become enthusiastic and confident readers. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in 2012 was below average by the end of Year 2, but school data show this picture is improving rapidly.
- The disappointing Key Stage 2 results in 2012 were due to this group of pupils having a larger than average number of pupils whose attainment at Key Stage 1 was significantly below that expected. The school's detailed tracking documents show that the current Year 6 pupils are on track to be at least in line with national and many above.
- The progress of pupils entitled to support from the pupil premium is similar to that of other pupils. In 2012 these pupils were one term behind their classmates in both English and mathematics. School data show that this gap is narrowing as a result of greater progress resulting from small-group sessions and one-to-one tuition, with a clear focus on each pupil's needs.
- Pupils make good progress in reading because of the good teaching and the opportunities teachers provide for pupils to practise their skills. This is also having a positive influence on pupils' writing and reducing the variation in standards between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Pupils achieve well in both English and mathematics due to teachers making sure they use subject language accurately and develop their understanding of the subjects' skills and knowledge well. Generally teachers plan lessons well, but they do not consistently take into account pupils' targets or refer to these during lessons and so opportunities are missed for pupils to speed up their learning further.
- In a Year 6 mathematics lesson seen, pupils were carrying out a mini business enterprise task. Pupils were fully engaged in their learning and the teacher constantly asked for their views on how well they were learning and how it could be improved. This led to outstanding progress and pupils acquiring a wide range of skills not normally expected for their age. However, this is not a consistent feature of lessons across the school and so opportunities are missed for pupils to express their views on learning and how they could improve.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well provided for and especially the pupils in the unit. Targeted programmes to develop pupils as readers and writers help pupils catch up rapidly. The other adults who support learning provide good support to pupils in lessons and in catch-up programmes. Practical approaches and a wide range of resources allow pupils to access planned activities in lessons, helping pupils achieve well. Over half of the pupils in the unit are integrated into the main school and the support provided means

they are hardly distinguishable from the other pupils.

- In the unit itself pupils are taught effectively and staff have developed excellent relationships, which result in pupils making excellent progress in their personal and social skills, hence their ability to attend the mainstream school setting. This clearly demonstrates the determination of all leaders and managers to make sure there is no discrimination within the school and the closing gaps between groups of pupils demonstrates their commitment to equality of opportunity.
- In lessons pupils show excellent concentration, persevere at tasks and listen attentively to teachers. Even when lessons lack imagination, pupils keep up their enthusiasm for learning. They cooperate exceptionally well and are at ease working independently, in pairs or in group situations. This prepares pupils well for their next stage of education.
- Parents, pupils and staff all feel that pupils make good progress in the school. All pupils spoken to were very positive about their learning and how much the school helped them.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- The consistently good teaching is characterised by warm and friendly relationships, which develop in pupils a lasting desire and eagerness to learn.
- Teachers know individual pupils well and generally take account of pupils' starting points and needs in lessons, but this is not consistent. In the best lessons teachers clearly focus on where the pupils are and what they can do, but in some lessons such as a mathematics lesson on shapes the teacher did not match the work to the needs and abilities of the pupils and so little progress was made.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well taught. For example, in a mathematics lesson, the unit pupils made good progress in understanding time because tasks were very closely matched to their abilities.
- Teaching is strong in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where a wide range of activities and resources for children to choose from help develop their skills. The children have many opportunities to learn by exploring and finding out for themselves. This builds their confidence and independence.
- The teaching of letter sounds and words, 'phonics', is taught well through regular, ability-matched sessions that allow pupils to make good progress in reading and writing.
- The pace of most lessons in the school is good, but in some lessons teachers either talk too much and/or do not challenge pupils sufficiently by expecting work done quickly enough and so pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable.
- Some teachers' marking and especially in pupils' English books is detailed and helpful. It gives pupils a clear idea of how to improve their work. Marking generally though, gives less clear advice. This results in pupils not being able to improve their work and so slows their progress.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. An exceptionally friendly and polite atmosphere filters through the entire school. Pupils have excellent relationships with each other and with adults, as two younger children stated, 'the older pupils look after us and teach us games'. Pupils enjoy school and are extremely keen to learn.
- Pupils respond extremely positively to the high expectations of them in lessons. Their behaviour and attitudes make a particularly powerful contribution to their own learning.
- The highly inclusive nature of the school is shown by the way in which the staff, pupils and parents warmly and openly welcome the pupils from the unit into the school.
- Pupils are very quick to help and support each other in classes and around the school. Older pupils were regularly seen helping and supporting younger children in a variety of situations.
- Pupils are highly confident, mature and knowledgeable about their own needs and the needs of others. Independence is fostered right from the word go. Even the very young children carry out activities, follow instructions and complete tasks by themselves in a trustworthy manner. These early routines are developed throughout the school.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of different types of bullying. They say it is extremely rare and any problems are quickly dealt with. Pupils have a very thorough understanding of how to stay safe, including e-safety.
- Pupils act safely and feel very safe in school. Parents and staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school's ability to keep the children safe.
- Pupils' attendance has improved markedly and is now average because they thoroughly enjoy coming to school.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher, supported by her leadership team, is determined to bring about further improvements to the school. The focused, thoughtful and relaxed style of leadership has developed trust among the staff and wider community. These characteristics are complemented well by the various skills of the rest of the leadership team.
  - The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well through the wide programme of planned activities to check on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. This information is shared fully with both the staff and governors.
  - The Early Years Foundation Stage has improved as a result of good leadership and children receive a good start to their education.
  - Leaders and managers reacted quickly to the results in 2012. The revised school improvement plan is mature, ambitious and reflects a deeper understanding of learning. Its success can be seen in the improved quality of subject leadership in English and mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). Staff training is considered crucial in helping to improve teaching, demonstrating the school's good capacity for further improvement.
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- The subjects pupils are taught are constantly adapted and their depth and richness are developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness outstandingly well. The school takes full advantage of visitors to the school and also a wide range of trips. The extra subjects and learning opportunities provided, such as the wide range of musical instruments and languages taught, make an outstanding contribution to the pupils learning.
  - The monitoring of the performance of teachers, strong support and appropriate training for teachers makes sure that teaching continues to improve. Challenging targets that are linked to the school improvement plan priorities, the Teachers' Standards and pupils' achievement have raised expectations and improved teaching, which is now mostly good or better. Teachers are aware of the relationship between performance management, promotion and salaries.
  - As an academy the school is outside the control of the local authority, but the school does use its resources and training opportunities effectively to support school development. The school also use external advice and moderation to make sure it stays on track to improve. Direct support from the school improvement officer has strengthened the quality of leadership in the school. Advice and support to school leaders to learn from outstanding practice have improved the quality of teaching. Training provided to governors is helping them interpret school data effectively and carry out their performance management, monitoring and support duties well.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - The governing body is skilled and effective. Governors strengthen the overall leadership of the school well. Governors have a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are highly ambitious for further improvements. They use the good quality information provided for them to ask searching questions about the performance of different groups of pupils. They make sure the pupil premium funding is well spent and check that the pupils entitled to the funding are benefiting from its use. Governors are fully supportive of the school, but also consistently challenge its performance. They carryout visits to the school to gain first-hand evidence, which helps inform them of the effectiveness of school improvement plans. Consequently, governors are aware of how good teaching is in the school and how priorities set in the school improvement plan are helping to make it even better. They know that an even sharper focus on the progress of all pupils will help the school become outstanding.
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## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137168
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	412355

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	477
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Geoff Rees
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tracy Stone
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 4644221
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