

Ravensthorpe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107699
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	377629
Inspection dates	29 February 2012–1 March 2012
Lead inspector	Clive Moss HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	407
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	K Rawson
Headteacher	C Lockwood
Date of previous school inspection	24 June 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Clive Moss
Stephen Docking
Nick Flesher

Her Majesty's Inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 30 lessons taught by 16 teachers, made a series of short visits to lessons, observed small-group and one-to-one sessions and assemblies, and listened to pupils reading. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors, and members of staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, spoke informally with some parents and carers during the inspection, and looked at 217 questionnaires returned by parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at the school improvement plan, school policy documents, external reports on the school's work, the school's data on pupils' progress and attainment, records of the school's own monitoring of the quality of teaching, and records relating to pupils' behaviour. Questionnaires completed by 97 pupils and 35 members of staff were also analysed.

Information about the school

The school is much larger than average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic groups, very largely from Pakistani backgrounds. Almost all speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils supported at school action level is well above average; the proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average; their needs are mostly moderate learning difficulties, or in speech, language and communication. The school serves an area with well above-average levels of social deprivation. The school exceeds the current floor standard, whereby the government sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- Ravensthorpe is a good school. The school enjoys a high level of confidence amongst parents and carers because the pupils are cared for and taught well. Its overall effectiveness is not outstanding currently because:
 - the pupils' achievement is good, including for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, but the rate of progress made by these pupils varies
 - the levels the pupils reach in their reading, writing and communication skills are average and, combined with their very positive attitudes to learning, mean that they are prepared well for the next phase of their education, but not exceptionally well
 - the proportion of teaching that is outstanding is not sufficient for teaching to be better than good overall.
- The pupils make good progress over the course of their time at the school. The progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. It increases towards the end of their time at the school, however, and is not as strong earlier on.
- The quality of teaching is good overall. Lessons are very structured and that promotes learning very effectively, but there are not sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their skills as independent learners. Furthermore, the teachers' responses to the pupils' oral contributions in lessons do not routinely challenge the pupils to improve their speaking skills or deepen their thinking.
- Relationships at the school are very strong and contribute significantly to good behaviour by the pupils.
- Leaders and managers have established a very strong ethos at the school and a deep-seated sense of common purpose rooted in a comprehensive understanding of the needs of the pupils and the local community. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the work of the school, managing the performance of the staff, and providing for the staff's professional development are straightforward and very effective.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure consistently good rates of progress by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs throughout the whole of their time at the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop skills as independent learners, including through more widespread use of information and communication technology (ICT)
 - providing feedback to pupils about their oral contributions in lessons, in order to improve their speaking skills and deepen their thinking.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils enter the school with skills levels that are consistently well below average. By the time they leave the school, their attainment is broadly average, including in reading. There are no significant differences in the rates of progress made by different groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language. These latter groups make better progress than all pupils nationally and similar pupils in other schools. However, the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs varies a little in Ravensthorpe itself, with pupils making the fastest progress in Year 6.

Pupils work very conscientiously in lessons. They sustain good levels of concentration and maintain a good work rate. The readers heard by the inspectors demonstrated good technical skills in sounding out texts and the more able used higher-order skills well to interpret the text. Almost all of the parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire believe that their children make good progress, including in developing their communication, reading, writing and mathematical skills, and most of the pupils think so too. A comment from one parent summed up these views. 'I am well pleased with my daughter's progress. She is very eager to learn, especially in maths because she enjoys doing the Minute Maths and wants to race ahead to the next level. It is an excellent challenge for her.' The inspection evidence supports such views.

Quality of teaching

The inspection evidence supports the views of parents, carers, and pupils that teaching is good. The best lessons observed by the inspectors were fast-paced, enjoyable, and linked closely to the pupils' learning needs. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson, pupils were enabled to produce very good writing by the teacher's creative and well-structured approach, which balanced input from the teacher with opportunities for them to take control of the activity. Generally, lessons promote the learning of basic skills well. In the lessons that were satisfactory, rather than good, there was more time devoted to the teacher's input, rather than opportunities for pupils to learn actively.

Most lessons incorporate a variety of activities. Some work by pupils revealed good opportunities for their social, moral, spiritual, and cultural development; examples included

work on what it means to be helpful; poetry beginning 'what if..', in which pupils wrote about friends and families; and social and global issues such as divorce and war. Pupils talked with good levels of interest about reading books by a range of authors. They told the inspectors, however, that they had few opportunities to use ICT other than in ICT lessons and the inspectors saw few examples of such activity.

The teachers question pupils frequently. They offer much encouragement and praise to pupils and this ensures good levels of motivation and a desire to learn. The teachers use 'target cards' effectively, with the result that pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do. Marking is kept up to date and is focused on providing helpful comments.

However:

- they do not use questions systematically to check on pupils' progress and adapt the lesson accordingly
- the teachers tend to accept the first answer pupils offer and do not challenge it to improve the pupils' modes of expression or prompt them to think more deeply about something
- the pupils were not confident about the levels of their skills in reading when asked about them.

Generally, the teaching ensures that the pupils acquire skills in reading, writing, and mathematics securely. Carefully targeted interventions enable pupils who are at risk of falling behind to make progress. Skilled teaching assistants are deployed well and enable pupils who might struggle otherwise to keep pace with the lesson.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

One parent wrote: 'The school has a lovely welcoming atmosphere and always greets you with a smile.' The inspectors found that to be true of both staff and pupils. The pupils were very keen to talk with the inspectors and did so very courteously and politely, often with an exuberance that reflected their desire to demonstrate their liking for the school.

Pupils are proud of their school and of their contribution to it. Their pride was very evident in the way they carry out a range of responsibilities that support the school. Many take part; the inspectors were impressed particularly by the 'centurions', who make a very significant contribution to the good behaviour evident at breaks and lunchtime, and the 'chair monitors' who turn up to school routinely at 7:30am and help to ensure classrooms are prepared for learning. The authority of the centurions, both boys and girls, is respected by all of the pupils.

The very good facilities and grounds at the school are enjoyed and respected very well by pupils, who behave very sensibly around school and show awareness of how to be safe in different places. Some of them had misconceptions about issues to do with e-safety and use of the internet, however.

There have been no short-term or permanent exclusions from the school for a considerable time and the school's records of behaviour incidents show them to be rare. The vast majority of parents and carers reported through the inspection questionnaire that any instances of bullying are dealt with effectively. The pupils insist that there is little, if any, bullying and have great confidence in the way the school deals with any behaviour issues.

Levels of attendance are low overall. The school uses an appropriate range of techniques to promote good attendance and this has led to some improvements, particularly with individual pupils, and attendance was above average at the time of the inspection. The school continues to experience difficulty, however, in sustaining such levels over a full year and in preventing some parents and carers from taking their children out of school, sometimes for extended periods of time. The school tries to compensate for the impact of such absences on the learning of the pupils involved, but is unable to do so fully.

Leadership and management

There is a strikingly high level of commitment to and clarity about the school's aims among the staff. It is the result not only of clear and effective management systems, but a testament also to the quality of the relationships engendered by leaders at the school. The approach taken is resulting progressively and systematically in improvements to the quality of teaching, including through opportunities for professional development. As a result, pupils' results in national tests have improved over time from being well below average just before the last inspection to average now. The school has demonstrated good capacity for improvement.

The school has built up very good relationships with parents and carers progressively over a long period. This is seen in the fact that over half of the parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaire, which is well above average, and it is now customary for a very large majority of them to attend parents' evenings. Parents' and carers' views of the school are very positive.

The curriculum provides pupils with a good range of opportunities for learning and for their personal development. It includes a good range of regular extra-curricular activities and is enriched by a variety of memorable educational visits much enjoyed by the pupils. The work of the learning mentor is an example of how the curriculum is adapted to meet the particular needs of some pupils through activities including creating vegetable plots and growing produce and looking after chickens. The school is a keen participator in sporting activities. The social, moral, spiritual, and cultural development of the pupils is central to the ethos of the school. The impact is seen most clearly in the relationships at the school, the high regard of parents and carers, and the very positive attitudes of the pupils.

The governing body supports the school steadfastly and has been instrumental in ensuring safeguarding requirements are met. The school and its grounds are maintained in very good order. They provide a very pleasant environment that supports learning well and contributes significantly to pupils' good behaviour and safety. Policies and plans for promoting equalities are in place, but it is the deep regard staff exhibit for pupils as individuals that has most impact and results in high levels of mutual respect between pupils and staff.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



2 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ravensthorpe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School, Dewsbury, WF13 3AS

Thank you for talking to my colleagues and me and making us welcome when we visited your school recently. The inspectors spoke with you, looked at your work, read the results of questionnaires filled in by you, the staff and your parents and carers. We also spoke with some of your teachers. Here is a brief summary of the main findings, which I hope will be of interest to you.

- Ravensthorpe provides you with a good education.
- You make better progress than might be expected given your starting points when you join the school. That includes those of you with special educational needs. The progress of these pupils speeds up towards the end of their time at the school.
- Your attendance is low overall, although it was much better at the time of the inspection. It would help the progress you make and the levels you reach in tests if you could keep that up.
- Your behaviour is good. The inspectors found you to be very friendly, polite, and courteous. You are very happy at school. You get on together very well, which makes the school a very pleasant place to be.
- You enjoy learning and work hard in lessons. The quality of the teaching is good.

I have asked the staff and the governing body to make sure that more lessons help you learn to work independently, including through using information and communication technology, and to challenge you to give the best answers you can when speaking in lessons. I would like them to make sure also that those of you with special educational needs make good progress every year.

Yours sincerely

Clive Moss
Her Majesty's Inspector

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