

St John's CofE VA Primary School, Rishworth

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107553
Local Authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	287851
Inspection dates	26–27 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Jim Griffin

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	128
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jane Shelton
Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Lawley
Date of previous school inspection	21 January 2002
School address	Godly Lane Rishworth Sowerby Bridge West Yorkshire HX6 4QR
Telephone number	01422 822596
Fax number	-

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school with five mixed age classes. Only a few pupils are entitled to free school meals. Nearly all are of White British heritage and all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around one third of the national average, whilst no pupil has a statement of special educational need.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with outstanding features where pupils achieve well academically. Staff and governors are fired by a common belief in providing a well rounded education for all pupils. As a result the school provides excellent care, guidance and support for pupils and their personal development is outstanding. Parents are very positive about all that the school provides and achieves, with a typical description being 'it's both a happy and purposeful place'. The quality of the school's self-evaluation is excellent, although somewhat modest in its judgement of the quality of leadership and management, which is outstanding. The school's recent excellent work to improve writing is a tribute to the effectiveness of its leadership and management.

The school's care for pupils and their personal development are major strengths. Parents find that staff are very approachable and helpful when difficulties or concerns arise. Pupils' good attitudes to work and exemplary behaviour make major contributions to the very pleasant atmosphere that prevails. Pupils really enjoy the learning experiences they get as well as the social side of school. This is reflected in outstanding attendance figures. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with moral and social development particularly strong features. Most pupils are polite, caring, confident and independent individuals long before they leave Year 6.

Pupils' academic achievement is good. This is largely because the quality of teaching and learning is good. The work of teachers is well supported by the impressive system to track pupils' progress. As a result staff and pupils are very well informed on where pupils are in their learning and what they need to do to improve. Nevertheless, in a minority of lessons, there is still some room for improvement in providing a good level of challenge for all abilities. Children generally enter the school with standards that are typical of four-year-olds, albeit with some variations between year groups. They make good progress during the Foundation Stage with many exceeding the levels expected for pupils by the end of this stage. Standards are above the national average at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2, for most cohorts. The curriculum is good, including the quality and standards in the Foundation Stage.

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. The headteacher provides an ambitious vision for all, centred on maximising the learning opportunities for pupils. The school is already excellent at bringing about improvement in selected areas, such as writing. To move along the path to excellence overall, the key remaining challenge for the school is to develop the capacity to raise pupils' progress from good to excellent across the core subjects. The levels of teamwork and common purpose among the staff are very good. Governance is effective, providing a good combination of support and challenge for the highly capable school team.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' progress so that it becomes excellent, across the core subjects.
- Raise the overall quality of teaching and learning to the level of the best and ensure it provides a good level of challenge for all pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The achievement of all groups of pupils is good, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children enter the Reception class with knowledge and skills that are typical of

those expected of four-year-olds. They make a good start so that by the end of the Foundation Stage standards are usually somewhat above expectations in all areas of learning. By the end of Year 2 results are above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils continue to make good progress, in Years 3 to 6, to achieve results that are above average overall. Pupils' progress has been good for some time in reading, mathematics and science. The big recent improvement has been in writing so that it now matches the good progress already achieved in other subject areas. Despite this recent good progress, the writing standards of older pupils are still catching up with standards in other curriculum areas, reflecting pupils' lower achievement in this area in earlier years of their education. The school meets its challenging targets in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are proud of their school, which they enjoy attending: this is reflected in excellent attendance. They value the very positive relationships with adults and among pupils. Pupils' excellent behaviour is evident in lessons and in the strikingly calm, social atmosphere that prevails in the dining hall. Pupils have confidence in adults to resolve any rare, minor incidents of misbehaviour. Pupils' attitudes to work in lessons are good. Pupils are keen and interested and give of their best and this contributes to their good progress.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. They are respectful and courteous and most work well in pairs and small groups. They gain an important awareness of world faiths and cultures through subjects such as religious education, history and geography. For example, the school's link with a school in Spain is a real source of interest to the pupils as they compare their lives with the lives of pupils in that school. The school has an important place in the lives of the local community with pupils, parents and staff attending events organised by the parents group. Pupils take seriously their responsibilities as monitors and as members of the school council. Pupils know about the importance of staying safe. They are very knowledgeable about healthy eating and lifestyles and this is reflected in the recent awards of Healthy School and Activemark Gold status. Pupils are well prepared to make a positive contribution to society and the workplace in later years, based on good academic standards and excellent personal qualities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Strengths in all classes are the very good relationships between pupils and teachers and the purposeful atmosphere that prevails. The teaching emphasis for younger pupils is on phonics and speaking and listening. As pupils progress the teaching emphasis is placed on sentence construction and organisation of writing. Older pupils have more opportunities to write in other subjects and those that find handwriting 'a pain', mostly boys, have extra support. Pupils are clear on what they are learning because teachers share the learning objectives with them. Teachers strike a good balance between teacher talk and time for pupils to learn through individual or small group work. The closing part of lessons is usually used well to assess what pupils have learned during the lesson. The additional support provided by teaching assistants is effective. Good use is made of additional resources, especially information and communication technology (ICT), to enhance learning.

Nevertheless, in a minority of lessons the set work does not always provide a good level of challenge for all learners. The quality of marking is mostly good. In English, teachers' comments guide pupils on how to make improvements; this emphasis is not yet well developed in marking in mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides a good balance between promoting pupils' basic skills and practical and creative activities that enhance their enjoyment. The school is systematically reviewing the curriculum in the foundation subjects to provide a more consistent and progressive curriculum across the school. This has already significantly improved ICT, design and technology, history and religious education. Provision in ICT, which was an issue in the previous inspection, is now a strength. Key Stage 2 pupils now also enjoy lessons in French. Personal, social and health education and citizenship makes an important contribution to pupils' excellent personal development. There is a good range of, and good levels of participation in, out-of-school activities, which include football, netball, choir, mathematics and computer clubs. There is a good range of visits and visitors that play an important part in opening pupils' eyes to a wider world.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school is successful in ensuring that pupils feel safe and secure through its very good arrangements for pastoral care. Very positive relationships mean that pupils are happy to talk with adults about issues and problems and know they will be listened to. Appropriate procedures are in place to promote health and safety, including child protection. Additional support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very well managed and very effective. Academic guidance for pupils is excellent. Information on how pupils are getting on and what they need to do to improve is regularly shared with pupils and their parents. The practice of recognising, with the award of certificates and badges in assemblies when pupils have achieved their targets, is an exemplary feature. This practice ensures that achieving targets is important to pupils and promotes a consistency in approach across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Improvement areas are very well chosen, few in number and centred on pupils' progress and curriculum improvements. The headteacher is exceptionally adept in the use of data both to identify areas for improvement and to track pupils' progress thereafter in a rigorous way so that pupils' personal qualities are excellent and the curriculum is also much improved. As a result, the school is working in an atmosphere where all improvement measures are carefully assessed and, where necessary, refined. As a result, current pupils' progress in writing has improved from scarcely satisfactory to good in all year groups in the past two years.

The simple, clear, annual plan, capturing all of the school's monitoring and self-assessment activities, is an exemplary feature. The high involvement level of all staff in activities, such as curriculum development, is important both in building teamwork and ensuring consistent implementation of what is agreed. Performance management is well established for all staff

and they are positively encouraged to develop their roles. As a result, non-teaching staff are making an increasing contribution to the school's success.

The governing body brings a range of professional and other skills to its work. It is effective in both supporting and challenging senior staff and in contributing to the longer-term development of the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

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 disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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 the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for welcoming me to your school and for being so friendly and helpful. It was useful to hear that you like your school. I really enjoyed my visit and want to share with you what I found out. I found that yours is a good school, with some excellent features.

What I liked most about your school.

- The school cares and guides you very well, based on treating you all as individuals.
- Those in daily charge of the school are excellent at their jobs.
- Your behaviour is excellent in lessons and around the school.
- Your attendance is excellent.
- You are happy and feel safe at school.
- You particularly enjoy the after-school clubs, trips, visits and practical subjects.
- You mature very well, so that most of you are ready and looking forward to secondary school by the end of Year 6.
- Your parents and carers are very pleased you come to this school.

What I have asked your school to do now.

- Improve your progress so it can be raised from good to excellent.
- Make all teaching and learning as good as the best.

You are a credit to your school. Keep working hard and making the most of your time in school. I wish you every success in the future.