

Rakegate Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104304
Local Authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	363686
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Ceri Morgan HMI

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	386
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Ian Claymore
Headteacher	Steve Harris
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2010
School address	Rakegate Close Wolverhampton WV10 6US
Telephone number	01902 558608
Fax number	01902 558609
Email address	rakegate.primary@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2011
Inspection number	363686

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Every teacher and 23 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. Several meetings were held with the headteacher, senior managers, representatives of the governing body and local authority and groups of pupils. Inspectors also carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work and key strategic documentation. The documentation included the school improvement plan, records of various meetings and local authority monitoring visits. The inspection team looked also at the full range of the school's work including pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes and breaktimes. Questionnaire returns from 49 parents and carers were also considered.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The pace of improvement in the attainment and achievement of all pupils, but in particular, the relative performance of boys in reading and writing, pupils from White British heritage and more-able pupils.
- The deployment of additional support, including the use of teaching assistants, support activities, such as one-to-one tuition, and the impact of various curriculum initiatives.
- If teaching is sufficiently challenging for all, but particularly for pupils of high ability.
- Whether leadership is demonstrating the capacity to sustain improvements, particularly at middle leadership and governing body levels, given previous inspection concerns.
- How well parents and carers are involved in the life of the school.

Information about the school

Rakegate is larger than most primary schools. Two thirds of pupils come from White British heritage, while the remaining third come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups, the largest of which are White and Black Caribbean and Indian. One in ten of the pupils speak English as an additional language, but few are in the very early stages of learning the language. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is twice the national average and, although very few pupils have a full statement of special educational needs and/or disabilities, the proportion which has such needs is very high. There is before-school and after-school provision which is run privately and was not part of this inspection. The school was given a notice to improve in June 2010 as a result of inadequacies in some aspects of the statutory requirements regarding safeguarding and the promotion of community cohesion. The school was monitored by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors in October 2010 and was judged to be making satisfactory progress in improving those aspects. Since the last inspection a Chair of the Governing Body and an Early Years Foundation Stage leader have taken up appointments. The Deputy Headteacher had taken up the post just before the previous inspection.

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: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Rakegate has continued to make steady improvement since the last inspection and offers a satisfactory and improving standard of education. Safeguarding procedures and risk assessments are satisfactory. The governing body and staff promote a secure understanding of the diversity of cultures in the wider UK community. Consequently, they prepare pupils better for future life. Attainment in English and mathematics is now in line with national averages and has continued to improve year on year for four consecutive years. As an example, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels at the end of Key Stage 2 in both English and mathematics has risen from 53% in 2008 to 72% in 2010. The school's own data, now accurate, indicate that the 2011 results may be similar to those in 2010. Those levels are comfortably above the minimum required levels set by government. There are some differences emerging in the relative performance of pupils, with boys performing below girls in literacy in many year groups and fewer pupils than average reaching the higher levels. However, there is no significant difference in the performance of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds with all making satisfactory progress, as do those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Teaching has also improved in the last year. Although satisfactory overall, there is an increasing proportion that is good. During the inspection, no inadequate teaching was observed, although not all teachers question the pupils skilfully. Relationships between adults and pupils are caring, constructive and respectful. Additional support for pupils who show signs of making slow progress is deployed thoughtfully via a strong team of teaching assistants and individual and small-group sessions. The support is helping to maintain satisfactory achievement for all. A key improvement is the way the school keeps and uses accurate data on the progress of individual pupils. The progress is monitored at least half termly and often more frequently. Behaviour is satisfactory, with some that is good. Pupils' attitudes to learning tend to mirror the quality of teaching, but pupils are very keen to learn. There is fuss occasionally, distracting other pupils from their learning, but aggression and bullying are very rare and dealt with well. Despite the occasional distractions, pupils mix well across all groups and enjoy the opportunities to take responsibility and play sport, helping to develop a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and social skills. Attendance is satisfactory, despite some high levels of absence in the Reception class.

The capacity of leadership to sustain improvement has increased by greater involvement of phase and subject leaders in school monitoring and the appointment of new staff in key positions. Some of the strategic documents, such as the school improvement plan and monitoring reports, remain too broad in tone and content and lack specific targets. The

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

lack of specific direction makes it harder for the governing body, although supportive and encouraging, to challenge the school precisely on its performance or for monitoring to go deeper than broad judgements about performance. Despite such limiting factors, self-evaluation is accurate and the school knows its strengths and weaknesses. Although the school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory currently, it is ambitious to improve beyond this and has demonstrated the capacity to sustain the improvements made already.

Pupils enjoy school and recognise the efforts being made on their behalf. They know they are cared for, kept safe and looked after well, but indicate that behaviour is not always as good as it might be. Similarly, parents and carers are supportive of the school, but express a wish to be kept better informed about their children's progress and to be more involved in the life of the school.

Up to 40% of school whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the level of challenge and pace in lessons, especially for more-able pupils, by:
 - providing greater opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning
 - ensuring boys get more time to write at length on themes that are of interest to them.
- Improve the proportion of good teaching by:
 - asking more open and challenging questions of pupils and responding more frequently to what pupils say to better assess their understanding
 - shifting the focus in some classes from teachers presenting information to ensuring that pupils engage in their work more promptly
 - sharing teaching skills more widely across the school to spread best practice.
- Develop monitoring at all levels of leadership by refining practice to match the school's priorities better by:
 - ensuring strategic planning is developed by the school in response to its own analysis of the newly accurate data
 - reporting more frequently and with greater clarity the outcomes of such monitoring to parents and carers and the governing body
 - setting more measurable performance targets in key strategic documents.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children start at the school with language skills levels lower than are typical for their age. They are encouraged to play together and speak well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make satisfactory progress. That rate of progress continues throughout the school and, by age 11, pupils are achieving satisfactorily, leaving school with average levels of attainment, which have risen for the last three years. Pupils perform better in reading than in writing and the number of pupils reaching the higher levels is lower than expected.

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

Standards are improving, however, and some pupils' progress is now close to good. However, more-able pupils and all those with additional special educational needs and/or disabilities and boys make satisfactory progress. The progress made is variable between classes, reflecting the quality of teaching. Achievement is satisfactory.

In English, pupils show a willingness to write at length, can produce some imaginative writing and develop a love of books. There are some common limitations, including fragile sentence construction, weak spelling strategies and pupils do not always use sophisticated vocabulary. Presentation of work is variable, sometimes due to inappropriate use of resources. Attainment in mathematics is usually stronger than in English, but, here too, there are some limitations. They include a weak understanding of place value and number facts, which makes problem solving more difficult as pupils do not know which method to choose. Not all pupils - or adults - use precise mathematical vocabulary, leading to misunderstandings. Here too, casual presentation leads to errors in calculation.

Attendance is satisfactory, despite some significant variation. It is lower in some year groups, including Reception Year, and 26 pupils show persistent absence levels which are unacceptable. The school gives frequent rewards for good attendance and takes appropriate sanctions, including referral to court action, when needed. Pupils are given good advice and guidance on how to live healthy lifestyles, including frequent opportunity to play sports, eat wisely, look after mental well-being and understand the risks of smoking and internet use. As a consequence, older pupils are especially reflective, with some delightful examples seen of insightful writing about what makes us 'feel guilty'. The after-school clubs are well attended and many pupils enjoy the dance studio. The school's modest but successful rounders team exemplifies a winning approach to competition and healthy lifestyles.

Pupils are polite, welcoming and happy to talk to visitors. Behaviour is satisfactory overall, but better in some classes, with exemplary attitudes to learning in a few. In one lesson, fuss and distraction were caused by a delay in starting work, as the pupils were keen to learn. There is no evidence of racist behaviour and pupils from different groups mix well together. The school does not lightly exclude or punish pupils. However, pupils say they are distracted occasionally by some of their peers. Usually, it is fuss and distraction rather than anything more serious. The school has put in place additional opportunities to help, including the popular 'Chillax club' which gives pupils the chance to do something constructive during the lunch hour.

Pupils contribute to the wider community via charity collections and a Year 6 choir, but opportunities are customary rather than innovative. Pupils engage readily with the opportunities provided. They show good levels of social and moral development a keen awareness of their wider community.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory, but with an increasing proportion that is good. Common strengths are good relationships between adults and pupils, clear learning objectives and links to prior learning, imaginative use of resources, including new technology, and the use of mini targets so pupils know what is expected of them. All lessons had helpful starter sessions for revision of core skills such as mental arithmetic. Despite such strengths, there are some common limitations leading to the judgement that teaching is satisfactory. They were evident in a majority of lessons to differing degrees. Expectations are still low, especially in Key Stage 1. There are few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own work, despite their willingness and readiness to do so. Adults and, consequently, pupils use language imprecisely, especially in mathematics, leading to misconceptions. The key barrier was the limited use of questioning to assess or challenge pupils' thinking. Some questions are too broad, asked of the whole class, leading to multiple responses and, on occasions, the focus was on the teacher rather than allowing pupils to get on with their work independently. Teachers do not follow up answers frequently enough to assess what the pupil understands or to promote higher-level thinking. That caps what the more-able pupils are capable of achieving. Pupils who need it get good support from a strong team of teaching assistants, although the teaching assistants have a tendency to do too much for pupils at times, completing the work set rather than developing thinking.

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

The curriculum meets statutory requirements, broad, balanced and appropriately emphasises core skills. It lacks an element of challenge for high-ability pupils and for boys to develop their writing. It is enhanced suitably by additional visits, visitors and good use of the computer suite. In one example, pupils planned, designed and produced their own mini-pizza packages using technology. Pupils were proud of their mini boxes and one pupil said 'We could make mini pizzas to go in them.' Although they were aware that pizza boxes did not necessarily sit easily with the school's emphasis on healthy lifestyles, all were enthused greatly by the activity. Enterprise activities help prepare pupils for their future economic well-being, alongside a satisfactory emphasis on core skills, punctuality and attendance.

Pupils get good support at transition times, such as moving from the Nursery year to Reception class and from Year 6 to high schools. The school has a strongly supportive ethos in general and has plans to develop this further by the appointment of a learning mentor who will start in September 2011 to support pupils when they need it.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership is secure. The headteacher has extensive experience and knows the pupils well. Parents and carers and pupils alike respect his professional integrity and he is supported well by a senior leadership team that is ambitious for continued improvement. The capacity of wider leadership has been increased by greater monitoring and evaluation of teaching by subject leaders and the appointment of additional colleagues. Although monitoring is informative, the outcomes of it are overly broad and generic. That means that the school is aware of the relative performance of teachers and pupils, but does not refocus its monitoring as the school improves and good practice is not shared widely.

The governing body is always supportive and encouraging and has resolved the issues with how well it promotes community cohesion and safeguards pupils. Consequently, pupils show a keen awareness of cultural diversity and increasingly engage in activities such as visits to places of worship to better understand different faiths or to exchange e-mails with pupils in schools in Africa. Leaders have ensured the school is itself a cohesive community. The school generates accurate data, but the reporting to the governing body is sometimes imprecise, restricting its opportunities to challenge more. The school sets itself appropriate targets for pupils' performance, but acknowledges that the pace of change is steady rather than brisk.

The school strives to ensure there is equality of opportunity for all, but the differences in the relative performance of some pupils - for example, the more able - mean this is not

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

above satisfactory, despite the recent improvements in cultural awareness and the absence of racist behaviour in school. Parents and carers express a desire to contribute more to school life in general. The school engages them appropriately, but not innovatively or frequently enough. Currently, levels of engagement are infrequent and the methods mundane. Safeguarding and value for money are satisfactory.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy their learning, are well behaved and cooperate well with each other. Adults manage a broad variety of activities, both structured and free choice. Children are safe and well looked after. As a result, they are active learners, although the balance of activities means they do not develop their creative or critical thinking as quickly as other attributes. The outdoor area has improved since the last inspection and the new leadership of the phase has plans to develop it further. Resources are deployed well and ensure children are well prepared for transition to Reception class.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

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

Views of parents and carers

Inspectors received 49 questionnaires from parents and carers, which is a small return for a school of this size and type. In general, parents and carers are supportive and content with the quality of education received by their children. The only areas in which the level of positive response dipped slightly was when they expressed a wish for the school to take more account of their views or how well the school manages unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found behaviour to be satisfactory and well managed, but found that the school could take a more pro-active approach to seeking and then acting on parental opinion and suggestions.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rakegate 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 49 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 386 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	51	20	41	4	8	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	28	57	20	41	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	20	41	24	49	5	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	35	31	63	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	20	40	28	56	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	33	28	57	5	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	37	31	63	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)	20	38	30	58	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	49	22	47	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	35	23	47	6	12	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	28	27	54	5	10	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	18	36	28	56	2	4	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	44	22	51	2	5	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



30 June 2011

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Rakegate Primary School, Wolverhampton, WV10 6US

You will remember that I visited your school with some colleagues to inspect it recently. That is because, a year ago, your school was asked to improve some things such as the way you are taught about different cultures and faiths and also the way you were kept safe. I am pleased to say that those things have improved and your school is now satisfactory with some aspects that are good.

The inspectors were impressed with the behaviour of most of you, although some of you said that you are distracted by others around you too much. They observed that and it means learning is not always as rapid as it could be. Your teachers care about you and are keen to help you succeed. To help with this, I have asked your school to think about three key areas it could improve.

I have asked your teachers to ask more questions and more often challenge all of you, especially those of you who learn quickly. I have also asked those who lead and manage the school to be more precise in what they set as important next steps. Alongside this, the inspectors think also that, although you all make satisfactory progress, the leaders and managers could help boys with their writing more than they do.

I wish you well with this and hope that you all play your part in improving behaviour and attending well. Your teachers are keen that you all feel a pride in your achievements. I wish you well for the future

Yours sincerely

Ceri Morgan

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.