

Richard Hill Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120205
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	379978
Inspection dates	26–27 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Marion Thompson

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 of pupils on the school roll	137
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patrick Kelly
Headteacher	Coleen Shepherd
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, who saw 13 lessons, observing the work of six teachers. Inspectors held informal discussions with a sample of parents and carers who accompanied their children to school. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspection team observed the school's work, went on a curriculum walk and looked at the school's documentation. This included the school development plan, assessment information, samples of pupils' work and documentation relating to school self-evaluation and safeguarding. Inspectors analysed the responses on 88 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, and took account of the views expressed in staff and pupil questionnaires.

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

- The impact of teaching and the curriculum on the progress and achievement of middle and lower attaining boys in Key Stage 2, especially in writing.
- The progress children make in the Reception class, especially in relation to communication skills and social development.
- The impact of self-evaluation and planning on the pace of progress, especially in Key Stage 2.

Information about the school

Richard Hill is a small school where the vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Several minority ethnic groups are represented by small numbers of pupils. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is low and the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. Since 2006, the school has been federated with Woolden Hill Community Primary School, which has been inspected separately. The schools are overseen by a single governing body. The headteacher is responsible for the leadership and management of both schools and the leadership team is common to both. Some senior and other posts are shared between the two schools.

Richard Hill Church of England Primary School has been through a period of considerable turbulence in staffing over recent years. This has included a reduction in the number of staff and a decrease from seven classes to five, some of which are now mixed-age classes. The governing body is responsible for the provision of a breakfast club on the school site; it was included in this 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

2

Main findings

The school provides a satisfactory education for pupils of all backgrounds. It has successfully addressed issues which led to underachievement in Key Stage 2 during a period of turbulence. Attainment in the current Year 6 has risen sharply and pupils reach above-average standards. This represents satisfactory progress and achievement from their skills on entry to the school, which were above those expected for their age. Pupils’ progress in Key Stage 2 is accelerating. It still varies, but is good or outstanding in a growing number of lessons. Pupils achieve well in reading, where standards have risen sharply throughout the school.

The school’s self-evaluation and planning are good. The robust actions taken by the federated leadership team have resulted in improvements to pupils’ academic progress and aspects of personal development. While teaching has remained satisfactory overall, skilful coaching and well-targeted development, making the best use of staff skills in both schools, have ensured that an increasing proportion is good or outstanding. The curriculum is satisfactory and is increasingly matched to pupils’ needs. Pupils’ attainment and progress are very closely tracked, enabling more rapid intervention when pupils fall behind. Simultaneously, vigorous actions have successfully been taken to address a significant shortfall in the school’s budget. These improvements at a time of considerable disruption demonstrate that the school has good capacity for further improvement.

Pupils have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They eat balanced meals and take an active part in the large number of extra-curricular sports the school provides. Parents and carers are confident that their children are kept safe because safeguarding is good and site management is excellent. Children are prepared well for the future by their above-average skills in literacy and numeracy, above-average attendance and good social skills.

Despite these improvements, progress in writing is sometimes too slow, especially for middle- and lower-attaining boys, who are not always stimulated to write by the subject matter they are given. While the quality of teaching is improving, it remains inconsistent in matching the work to the wide range of pupils’ needs, especially in providing sufficient challenge for middle- and lower-attaining pupils. The pace is at times too slow and pupils are not always provided with the time to follow up on marking. Teachers do not always use questioning well to extend and develop pupils’ thinking.

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In the Reception class opportunities are missed to extend children's thinking and language skills during free-choice activities. In addition, children's social skills sometimes are not developed as well as they should be. Children find it difficult to listen to others and follow classroom conventions because staff are not consistent in maintaining routines when children contribute to lessons. Activities are broadly satisfactory, but at times they are not closely matched to children's specific needs, especially outdoor activities.

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By October 2012, ensure that pupils, especially middle- and lower-attaining boys, make consistently good progress in writing by providing topics which stimulate them to write.
- By October 2012, improve the consistency of teaching so that the large majority is good or better by ensuring that:
 - work is planned which provides challenge to pupils of all abilities, including middle- and lower-attaining pupils.
 - the pace of lessons is brisk
 - skilful questioning helps pupils to extend their thinking
 - time is provided for pupils to follow up on advice given through marking.
- By October 2012, ensure that children's thinking, language and social skills are consistently developed well in the Reception class by ensuring that:
 - activities are planned to match children's specific needs more closely, especially in the outdoor area
 - questioning is skilful and helps children to extend their thinking and develop their language, especially when they are engaged in self-initiated learning
 - the management of children's responses is consistent, especially in listening to others and following classroom conventions.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils' rate of progress varies across the school and is satisfactory overall, as is their achievement. In mathematics pupils sometimes find difficulty in applying what they have learnt when they solve mathematical problems, but this is improving. Reading skills develop well and pupils read fluently, with expression and understanding. Writing is not as strong and varies considerably from class to class. Higher-attaining pupils make good progress across the board and frequently produce extended writing of quality and depth. However, even when content is good, punctuation, spelling and handwriting are not as good as they should be for middle- and lower-

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attaining pupils, especially boys. Learning is sometimes passive when teachers do not plan activities that involve pupils in making a full contribution. Pupils particularly enjoy active learning where they are responding to a high level of challenge and are involved in a range of activities. For example, Year 6 pupils collaborated very effectively to muster arguments on whether chocolate should be taxed. During the formal debate they listened closely to arguments and presented cogent and well-phrased counter-arguments, using sophisticated language. They read body language effectively, recognising when they needed to rephrase or to press a point. They understood the power of argument to change viewpoints, including their own. This high level of engagement does not happen often enough.

Pupils with a statement of special educational needs make good progress, because their needs are very specifically identified and specialist support is provided within school and by external agencies. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties settle well and make the same progress as their peers, because their behaviour is managed sensitively.

Behaviour is satisfactory. Pupils display positive attitudes which support their learning, behave safely and show consideration for each other. Occasionally, they are a little boisterous in the playground. A few parents voiced concerns over the management of unacceptable behaviour. However pupils say they confide their worries to adults on the few occasions when bullying occurs and feel it is dealt with swiftly and well.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school community, for example by acting as members of the school council. Their contribution to the local community is not quite as strong. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. While social and moral development is good, knowledge and understanding of the range of faiths and cultures in Britain and the impact these have on people’s lives, while improving, is more limited.

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	2
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	2
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

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

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The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is characterised by good subject knowledge and respectful relationships which motivate pupils to learn. However, the activities teachers plan often lack challenge, especially for middle- and lower-attaining pupils. Questioning does not always move pupils' learning on as it often does not require them to think in sufficient depth. As a result, the pace of learning is often slow, and teaching is satisfactory. Sometimes pupils are not given the time to follow up on marking. There are good features in many lessons and a growing number of lessons are outstanding. For example, in a mixed Years 3 and 4 lesson pupils made rapid progress and found real enjoyment in understanding the relationships between metres, centimetres and millimetres, using them confidently in problem-solving. This was because the tasks were active and extremely closely matched to the wide range of pupils' needs. The pace was demanding and expectations were high for pupils of all abilities. Tasks required pupils to work independently as well as collaboratively, to record their findings clearly and to justify the methods they had used. Skilful interventions through open-ended questioning helped pupils to clarify their ideas.

Much closer tracking of progress enables the school to identify and meet pupils' needs more effectively and to help them to catch up on previous underachievement. The thematic curriculum and a range of educational visits, for example to a residential experience in Wales and enrichment activities like a visit to a Tudor manor house motivate pupils to learn. However the curriculum does not consistently stimulate boys' interest in writing. Recent initiatives, such as 'boy-friendly' topics in Year 6, have begun to rectify this while retaining the interest of girls.

The school provides a safe and welcoming environment where pupils feel secure. Parents and carers commented positively on transition arrangements which are sensitive to the needs of children and families. Good liaison with local secondary schools enables children to settle well, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school works well with the small number of pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, so that they overcome barriers to learning and settle happily into school. The breakfast club provides a calm and nourishing start to the day for those who attend.

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

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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?

The headteacher sets high expectations for pupils’ progress and these are transmitted through challenging but realistic targets for pupils. She is supported well by a capable senior team which shares expertise across both federated schools. Federation has made a positive contribution to improvements. Self-evaluation is thorough and accurate, especially in relation to the monitoring of pupils’ progress. Teaching has been improved by skilful coaching and development. Attainment is rising and aspects of pupils’ personal development have improved. The federated governing body provides good support to the school. Personal expertise is used well in areas such as finance, where governors are beginning to make inroads into addressing significant financial difficulties. Monitoring and challenge of the school’s work by the governing body is satisfactory and improving.

The governing body performs its duties in relation to safeguarding well. Site management is excellent and the site is very secure and well maintained. Awareness of health and safety has been integrated well into the curriculum, so pupils are conscious, for example of firework and cycle safety. However, parents and carers are not yet routinely involved in reviewing the effectiveness of health and safety policies. Parents and carers value the positive changes the headteacher has brought about, but a small minority do not feel well-informed by individual staff, for example about the progress their children make. The school is addressing this issue effectively. Good partnerships across the federated schools and with external agencies are accelerating pupils’ progress and improving the well-being of the pupils in potentially vulnerable situations.

The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory. The school works successfully to ensure that all pupils are fully included. Discrimination is tackled determinedly on the few occasions it occurs. However, there are still differences in the progress made by different groups of pupils. The school’s promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory through, for example, the provision of a breakfast club. There are long-standing links with Africa, which promote an understanding of a different culture. Understanding of and links with more diverse communities in the United Kingdom, while improving, are at the early stages.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the	3

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school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
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 enter the Reception class with skills above those expected for their age, but their communication and social skills are broadly as expected. They make satisfactory progress because teaching, assessment and the curriculum are satisfactory. They generally enter Year 1 with above-average standards. However, communication and social skills remain broadly average.

Children have had a disrupted start to the year and are beginning to settle to classroom routines. They are confident, secure and settle happily because adults show them care. However opportunities are missed to develop their independence, for example assuming responsibilities as classroom monitors. During whole-class sessions they are interested and keen to contribute. For example, during a session on Diwali, children’s interest was engaged and they asked questions freely about the good range of resources brought in by a member of the school staff. However, at times they find it difficult to listen to others and are slow to respond to classroom instructions because their behaviour is not consistently managed.

The curriculum provides a satisfactory balance of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. The outdoor area provides opportunities for children to explore all areas of learning, but not all are closely matched to children’s needs. Transition arrangements are good and on-going links with parents and carers are satisfactory. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The federated leadership team has a clear awareness of strengths and areas for further development and is taking robust action to address them.

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

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Views of parents and carers

The high percentage of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire was supportive of the school's work. The vast majority agree that children enjoy school, that the school helps their children to have a healthy lifestyle and keeps them safe. This reflects the views of the inspection team. A small minority of parents and carers have concerns about the way unacceptable behaviour is dealt with and the extent to which their views are taken into account. The inspection team looked into these matters and their findings are within the report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Richard Hill Church of England 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 88 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 137 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	56	64	30	34	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	66	75	19	22	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	37	42	43	49	4	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	36	46	52	7	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	35	40	48	55	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	41	47	39	44	6	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	40	45	46	52	2	2	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)	40	45	32	36	7	8	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	39	44	42	48	5	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	31	47	53	11	13	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	42	41	47	6	7	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	44	50	34	39	4	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	47	53	36	41	4	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



28 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Richard Hill Church of England Primary School, Leicester, LE7 7JA

Thank you for the welcome you gave us when we visited your school. Your views helped us to come to our decisions. Your school is improving and provides you with a satisfactory education. You get off to a satisfactory start in the Reception class and you make satisfactory progress through the school.

Across the school we were impressed with:

- the improvement in standards, especially in Year 6 and the improvements in reading throughout the school
- your good attendance and your knowledge of how to keep safe and keep healthy
- your enjoyment of learning and the good care the school provides for you
- the close tracking of your progress and the improvements to teaching and the curriculum.

The headteacher, governing body and staff are working hard to make sure the school continues to improve. We have asked them to make sure that you always have interesting subjects to write about, especially those boys who find learning difficult, to raise standards in writing. You can help by making suggestions to your teachers about things that interest you. We also want staff to make sure that work is challenging for all of you, that lessons are brisk, and that questions help you to develop your thinking. We would like you to have time to follow up on the advice you get through marking. You can help by checking that you understand marking and try to follow the advice you are given in your next piece of work. In the Reception class we have asked staff to make sure children listen more carefully to each other and follow classroom rules. We have also asked them to plan activities, especially outdoors, that match their needs and get them thinking more.

We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Marion Thompson
Lead Inspector

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