

Rishton Methodist Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119396
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	379791
Inspection dates	8–9 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Geoffrey Yates

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	157
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geoffrey Bennette
Headteacher	Paul Whaling
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Fourteen lessons were observed, taught by seven members of staff. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils and took part in informal discussions with parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at the tracking of pupils' progress and documents relating to the school's monitoring, self-evaluation and planning for improvement. The inspectors analysed 44 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work looking in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well pupils achieve as they move through the school, especially the more-able pupils.
- How well the Early Years Foundation Stage is planned and organised to meet children's needs.
- How successful the school is in ensuring consistently good teaching, especially in the use made of questioning and other forms of assessment.
- How well the school provides for pupils' personal development.

Information about the school

This is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average as is the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school has gained awards, including the Bronze Eco School's award. Since the last inspection, there have been major changes in staffing.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It has improved well since the previous inspection, following a period of turbulence caused by a high turnover of staff. Accurate self-evaluation and good development planning ensure that weaker aspects of provision and pupils' progress are being successfully addressed. Highly skilled leadership and management have fostered excellent commitment and teamwork among the staff and governing body. The positive impact of senior leadership is very evident in the improvements made in pupils' progress, in the good links established with parents and carers, and in pupils' behaviour. In previous years, up to 30 pupils were excluded and this year there is none. Pupils behave well and their enjoyment of school is evident in their good attendance and commitment to learning. They have a good awareness of how to live a healthy and safe lifestyle and contribute well to school and community life. Pupils are well cared for.

Pupils' achievement is good overall. They start school with skills below those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and, as a result, enter Year 1 with skills that are typical for their age. In the rest of the school, pupils' learning and progress have been variable in recent years but are now good. This is because the quality of teaching has improved and is now good overall. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also good. Progress in developing pupils' writing skills has improved but is still limited because higher-attaining pupils are not given sufficiently challenging opportunities to use and develop their writing skills. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 has varied in the years since the previous inspection. Overall standards in English and mathematics are now broadly average and on an upward trend.

Strong features in all classrooms are the very good relationships between staff and pupils and the good use made of teaching assistants to support pupils' learning. Teaching is good overall, but there is variability in its effectiveness. For example, questioning is not always used well and at times too much teacher talk at the beginning of lessons limits the time pupils have to complete the work they are set. The school has good assessment procedures to track pupils' progress. However, marking does not always provide a clear indication of what pupils need to do to improve further.

The leadership team, with the good support of the governing body, has a clear focus on school improvement. There are clear improvements in pupils' achievements as a

result of a successful leadership initiative. This, together with the steps taken to tackle and successfully halt the falling standards of previous years, the improved involvement of staff in monitoring and self-evaluation and the improved links with parents, indicates that the school has good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing and accelerate the progress of potentially higher-attaining pupils by:
 - matching work more closely to pupils' needs
 - providing challenging opportunities for pupils to write at length and to use and develop their writing skills.

- Ensure teaching is consistently good or better by:
 - making marking more effective
 - making sure introductions to lessons are not over long so that pupils have enough time to finish the work they are asked to do
 - making better use of questioning during lessons.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils say how much they enjoy school. Their positive attitudes and good behaviour contribute strongly to good progress overall in lessons, good achievement and rising attainment. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the challenges set by their teachers, use their initiative and are keen to succeed. Older pupils responded well to the challenge of talking and writing about a memorable moment. They were all keen to offer their recollections. One pupil stated his best memory as, 'having butterflies in my stomach when I went up to receive a trophy I had won'.

Pupils' progress is good overall. As a result, by the time pupils leave, their attainment is average in English and mathematics. The school's most recent national test outcomes showed that Year 6 pupils' progress in both English and mathematics was well above that expected nationally from the end of Key Stage 1 to the end of Key Stage 2. Inspection evidence confirms that current attainment is average in English and mathematics but issues relating to high attainment in writing still remain.

Pupils are justifiably proud of the good contribution they make to the school and wider community. Whether they are engaged as reading buddies, or in school council work or other activities, they are highly committed to improving the school and their local community. Most pupils say they feel very safe in school. Pupils thoroughly enjoy a wide range of sporting activities and have a good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and reflected in their very caring attitudes.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good overall. Lessons are mostly well planned to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers make good use of explanations and resources. For example, in an English lesson, the teacher used very well recollections of his visit to China, plus some articles from the visit, to motivate pupils to reflect, talk and write about their favourite memories. Teachers do not always match writing tasks closely to pupils' needs, especially for those pupils who are potentially higher attainers. Very good relationships at all levels ensure pupils are committed to their learning even when, as in satisfactory lessons, there is too much teacher talk and not enough effective questioning. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning through their effective interactions with small groups and individuals. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive well-focused support. Marking is inconsistent and does not provide sufficient pointers to help pupils improve their own work. The school has improved its systems to track pupils' progress and the information gathered is used well to ensure pupils' progress is good.

The curriculum plays an important part in ensuring pupils' personal development is good. There is good attention to cross-curricular links but not enough is done to ensure higher-attaining pupils are consistently challenged to use their writing skills well. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the many extra-curricular activities they can attend which contribute well to their enjoyment of school.

Staff know the pupils very well and are keen to provide any help that is required. There are good induction systems in place to enable pupils to settle into school quickly. Staff are committed to ensuring possible vulnerable pupils have the personal support they need and parents and carers are fully involved. There are effective links with external agencies which provide additional help if required. Attendance is monitored closely. The school is rightly proud of pupils' good attendance. Parents and carers are very positive about the support they and their children receive.

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

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

This school is well managed and led by a highly effective headteacher. He has nurtured and developed a culture of self-improvement. The good quality of leadership and management found throughout the school is reflected in the thoroughness of the school's self-evaluation and in the attention to detail in its development planning, which is firmly aimed at driving improvement. The senior leadership team has high expectations of what pupils can achieve. It has worked hard at improving pupils' learning and progress, ensuring pupils' behaviour is good but also ensuring that pupils take a great pride in 'their' school. Pupils are given equal opportunities to succeed but there is scope to ensure potentially higher-attaining pupils achieve well. Any very rare instances of discrimination are tackled effectively.

The governing body fulfils its duties well, holding the school to account on important decisions. It also plays an effective strategic role, especially in targeting resources to support pupils despite a decline in pupil numbers which has had an adverse impact on the school's budget. Safeguarding policies and procedures are regularly updated and rigorously applied, with required training for this aspect fully up to date. Pupils and their parents and carers are fully confident that pupils are safe and free from harm at all times. The school has developed a highly positive relationship with parents and carers, keeping them well informed about their children's development and encouraging them to support their children's learning in different ways. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire are confident that the school always takes account of their suggestions and concerns. The school's work in promoting community cohesion is good. It has built up good links with the local and wider community, which it uses well to develop pupils' understanding of the immediate world around them. Pupils have a good appreciation of the diversity of cultures and beliefs in the wider national community.

These are the grades for the 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 school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start school with skills below those expected for their age. They make good progress in all areas of learning and, as a result, are working within the age-related expectations by the time they move to Year 1. High quality care, careful induction procedures and very good relationships ensure children make a happy start in school. They settle quickly, eager to investigate all the exciting activities on offer. For example, good use was made of the outside area to develop children’s understanding of the importance of the fire service with children highly involved in putting out imaginary fires. Both inside and out, children clearly feel safe and secure, work hard and behave very well, sharing equipment and taking turns. They gain in confidence, select activities and materials independently and concentrate well on their tasks. The team of ‘vets’ was keen not only to look after and help toy animals in the role-play surgery but were in no doubt that their services did not come cheaply! Good teaching, from both the teacher and well-qualified teaching assistant, ensures a well-planned range of activities. Developing children’s early reading, writing and numeracy skills has a high priority and children make good progress in these areas because of well-targeted support and opportunities to develop these skills. Good leadership ensures all welfare and Early Years Foundation Stage requirements are fully implemented by an experienced team with very good knowledge of children’s learning needs. Progress is carefully monitored to plan the next steps in learning, and to ensure the needs of every child are met.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A small minority of parents and carers completed and returned the questionnaires, with some parents and carers completing one questionnaire for more than one child. The team also had access to information from the school’s own parents’ questionnaire survey. Almost all questionnaires indicate strong support for all aspects of the school’s work.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rishton Methodist 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 44 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 157 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	68	13	30	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	68	14	32	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	26	59	18	41	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	59	18	41	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	57	18	41	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	55	20	45	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	57	18	41	1	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)	22	50	20	45	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	50	20	45	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	52	19	43	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	43	22	50	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	30	68	14	32	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	32	73	12	27	0	0	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.



10 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rishton Methodist Primary School, Blackburn, BB1 4JF

Thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. It was good to see you getting on so well with each other. We really enjoyed our visit, especially joining you in lessons. We agree with your school that you receive a good education. Year 5 pupils told us how much they enjoyed doing lots of practical work that really helps them understand the topics they are studying. The role-play fire fighters in the Early Years Foundation Stage will receive my 999 call if there is ever a fire at my house!

We agree with you that all the adults working in your school take good care of you all. You work hard in lessons and behave well. You are very polite. You told us that you feel very safe in school and that if problems occur an adult will sort them out quickly when you tell them about them. I have asked your school to make sure those of you who are really good writers make faster progress and reach higher levels. I have also asked the school to make sure that all the teaching you receive is at least good.

I hope you all keep on working hard so you can continue to play a big part in making your school even better.

Keep up your good attendance record!

Yours sincerely

Geoffrey Yates
Lead inspector

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