

Ruishton Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123022
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	380378
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Stephen Lake

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	150
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nikki Owsianka
Headteacher	Neil Dalton
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2009
School address	Newlands Road Ruishton Taunton TA3 5JZ
Telephone number	01823 442032
Fax number	01823 443664
Email address	Sch.289@educ.somerset.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed 12 lessons or parts of lessons seeing six teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's own evaluation of its work, reports from the School Improvement Partner and the school development plan. They also looked at records of pupils' attainment and progress and documents relating to potentially vulnerable pupils. The questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and 60 parents and carers were analysed. Additionally, the views of a sample of parents and carers were gained from interviews at the start of the school day during the inspection.

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

- Pupils' achievement in English, especially writing, to determine if teaching is sufficiently challenging.
- The provision for pupils deemed gifted and talented.
- The use of assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The effectiveness of the school development plan as a tool to support school improvement.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average school serving the village of Ruishton although a majority of pupils come from outside the immediate area. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The vast majority of pupils are White British with a well below average proportion from other ethnic groups. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The school houses a learning resource base for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who are fully integrated into classes. The overall proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average but because pupils often join the learning resource base during Years 5 and 6, in some years the proportion in Year 6 can be above average. Pupils' identified needs are mainly speech and language difficulties. Several pupils have severe and complex needs and disabilities. Over the last year, impending retirements and maternity leave have resulted in many changes in staff responsibilities, including senior and middle management roles. The headship is currently shared: the substantive headteacher works three days a week and the deputy headteacher acts as headteacher for the remaining two days. Other key middle management leaders are new to their roles. The school has been awarded Healthy School Plus status. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a mixed-age class alongside some Year 1 pupils. A pre-school and after-school care are provided on the site by an independent provider and are subject to separate 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

This school provides a satisfactory education. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory progress to attain broadly average standards at the end of Year 6. There has been some improvement since the previous inspection, especially in writing in Year 2 and mathematics in Year 6, but attainment by the end of Year 6 is not improving significantly because of inconsistencies in teaching. Teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes good but there is too little consistently good teaching to improve pupils' progress and raise attainment further. Lessons do not always challenge pupils well enough because work set for pupils is not matched closely enough to their assessed individual needs. As a result, some pupils, especially the more able, find the work too easy, while some find it too hard. The rich and broad curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. Although sound strategies are in place to improve writing, these are not fully embedded and this holds down the effectiveness of an otherwise well-planned curriculum to satisfactory.

Pupils' good spiritual, social and moral development and good behaviour help make the school a friendly and welcoming place to learn in. Good care, guidance and support enable pupils to feel very safe and secure. Safeguarding arrangements are good. Attendance has improved and is now outstanding. The school engages well with parents and carers who are very positive about almost all aspects of its work. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy and keep fit and make a good contribution to the school and local community. Community cohesion is good and strong partnerships with external agencies provide valuable additional support for pupils with additional needs, such as those attending the learning resource base.

The school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. All areas for development are correctly identified and incorporated into a comprehensive school improvement plan. The governing body is influential in determining the strategic direction of the school. It has correctly identified that the effectiveness of the improvement plan, although satisfactory, is limited because it is not sufficiently focused upon the few key priorities that are most important to improving pupils' achievement rapidly. The improved assessment procedures can be seen in the detailed records of the progress of individual pupils. The provision for outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved but the new leader has identified inconsistencies in the assessment procedures that make it difficult to judge outcomes accurately. Strengths judged in the last inspection in personal development, pastoral care and certain aspects of the curriculum have been maintained. Action to address all of the

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issues identified in this report has already started but it is too early to see the full impact. These factors indicate a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools 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?

- In order to improve pupils' attainment and progress, improve the quality of teaching by December 2012 so that a large majority is good or better by:
 - ensuring that information on how well pupils are doing is used more effectively to plan lessons that are matched closely to the individual needs of pupils at all levels, but especially those who are more able
 - embedding securely the strategies for improving writing across the curriculum to ensure consistency of approach
 - improving the pace of learning by ensuring that pupils spend less time listening to teachers at the beginning of lessons
 - improving the quality of marking so pupils understand clearly how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- By 31 July 2012, improve the procedures for assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage to enable more accurate assessments of outcomes.
- By 1 September 2012, simplify the school development plan to ensure that it:
 - focuses on the few most important issues in priority order
 - provides clear criteria for success with a timeline for completion
 - identifies who will judge the achievement of the success criteria.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enjoy school very much and attend regularly. They are keen to learn and respond well to their teachers. Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills similar to those normally found at that age. They build satisfactorily upon these skills to start Year 1 with broadly average skills. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is improving steadily, especially in mathematics where pupils are on track for above average attainment and good progress. The school is good at teaching pupils to read but attainment in English was held down by lower writing skills. A focus on the teaching of writing is already resulting in improvements, especially in Years 1 and 2. Good learning takes place when tasks are matched well to pupils' assessed needs and when those pupils requiring extra help with learning are well supported by high quality teaching assistants. In these lessons, all pupils make good progress, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. In an outstanding English lesson, pupils made excellent progress as they investigated the ways in which the suffixes '-hood' and '-ness' could be used. Pupils at every ability level suggested ways in which they could convey a message by adding this suffix to a word or even to someone's name. Excellent questioning enabled them to focus on small manageable steps to develop their

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understanding. Lessons such as this are contributing to improving achievement in writing. Nevertheless, this quality of learning is not widespread and pupils, especially the more able, are not always challenged enough and do not always make the progress they are capable of. For example, in a satisfactory lesson, pupils were challenged effectively in the introduction to use connectives to make more complex sentences. The tasks that followed were less challenging and not matched closely enough to the needs of pupils to enable good progress.

Pupils say they feel very safe in school and there is no bullying. They trust the adults and feel confident approaching them with any concerns. They undertake a wide range of responsibilities such as school council representatives or eco-helpers. Their excellent understanding of how to keep fit and healthy can be seen in the high take-up of sporting activities and the award of Healthy School Plus status. Pupils make many good quality contributions to the wider community. Particularly notable is the small enterprise group that has a small sum to buy materials with which they make toys, games and decorative items to sell, with the profit going to charity. The wider personal skills pupils gain from these activities together with their satisfactory literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills and much improved attendance prepare them satisfactorily for their future lives. Pupils clearly know right from wrong. They show respect for themselves and others and show curiosity in the world about them. However, their cultural development, although satisfactory, is a comparative weakness.

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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

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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Teachers make good use of ICT to stimulate and motivate learning. Strategies to improve teaching and raise attainment include improved systems for using information on how pupils are learning in order to plan challenging lessons that focus on the next steps in learning. The impact of these strategies is not consistent across the school. Teachers talk to pupils about what they have done and how to make it better, but marking in pupils’ books does not always explain to pupils what they need to do in order to improve their work. Some lesson introductions are overlong and do not always take into account the differing abilities of pupils. In too many lessons, while work is set at the right broad level for the class, further improvement to achievement is limited because not enough attention is given to the differing abilities of pupils. For example, in a satisfactory English lesson planned around a stimulating theme on Jamaica, after a good introduction, pupils then remained sitting on the floor with all completing the same task, which was not challenging enough for around one third of the class which had a negative effect on their progress.

The curriculum makes a very strong contribution to pupils’ personal development. Very good opportunities for sport with other schools, and the many after-school sports clubs, support pupils’ understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. Those pupils identified as gifted and talented are supported satisfactorily through good links with other local schools. Visitors and visits, including a residential trip, broaden pupils’ experiences well and provide a wide range of opportunities for learning. Appropriate strategies to support improvement in writing by focusing on key elements such as exciting vocabulary, connectives and punctuation are beginning to prove effective, especially in Years 1 and 2. Nevertheless, teachers are not using these strategies consistently or to maximum advantage to develop and extend pupils’ writing skills beyond satisfactory.

Pastoral care is strong, especially for potentially vulnerable pupils and those with additional needs. Pupils’ progress is suitably tracked and recorded to enable easy identification of where support is needed. Good partnerships with external agencies ensure that the additional needs of those pupils deemed potentially vulnerable are met well. Child protection procedures are detailed and well known to all staff. Good support for parents and carers has led to pupils’ improved attendance.

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?

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The substantive headteacher and the acting headteacher work together effectively to ensure all staff, including those new to their posts, have an ambition to improve the school and raise pupils’ attainment. This vision is shared by the governing body. In order to enhance their work in this area, governors are undertaking training to gain a clearer understanding of how to use effectively the analysis of key performance data in order to raise achievement. Staffing turbulence and changes in middle management responsibilities have temporarily slowed down some of the improvements planned, particularly in teaching and learning, although the pace is now picking up again. The monitoring of learning through regular lesson observations by senior leaders has improved, although those new to middle management responsibilities are developing this aspect of their roles.

The school takes suitable steps to prevent discrimination. Detailed records on the progress of individual pupils are used effectively to monitor equality of opportunity. Regular training for staff and governors and close monitoring by the governing body ensures safeguarding requirements are met well. Governors support the school well. They have effective procedures and strategies for obtaining the views of parents and carers. The governing body is proactive in managing the many changes taking place in school leadership and staffing and has good strategies for succession planning, supported by high quality budget management. Strategies for improvement have been correctly identified in the school development plan, but the precise detail of what will be done and by when is not defined clearly enough. The governing body has already identified this and discussions have started with senior leaders about how the plan can be improved. Community cohesion within the school is strong and good steps are taken to extend this to the wider community. Governors and senior leaders continually seek ways to extend this further and are aware that evaluation of the impact of these strategies is important.

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	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Strong links with parents and carers and the on-site and other pre-school groups, together with well-established routines, help children settle in quickly and get a secure start to their education. The welfare and needs of the children are met well through strong teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants. Children achieve satisfactorily overall but make good progress in early writing skills in line with the whole school strategy to improve writing. The sound management of the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures smooth systems and a well-organised and attractive environment. The curriculum is planned to provide simulating opportunities for children. Teachers and other adults usually ensure a good balance between direct teaching and opportunities for children to learn through purposeful play. Recent building improvements have improved the quality of the outdoor area. Children make satisfactory use of this area and are usually given access to the same learning opportunities indoors and outdoors. Most whole-class activities are planned well and often enable more-able children to join in with Year 1 activities when they are ready, ensuring children are suitably prepared for learning when they start Year 1. Nevertheless, in line with the rest of the school, inconsistencies in the way assessment information is used to match tasks to the individual needs of children sometimes limit the pace of learning. Children are assessed frequently and regularly but the new Early Years Foundation Stage leader has identified inconsistencies in the way some of these assessments are conducted that limit their reliability and is starting to improve this.

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

Views of parents and carers

An average proportion of parents and carers completed questionnaires about the school. Most were positive. Just under half chose to add comments. Typical of the positive comments was: 'Ruishton is a warm and friendly school; we are particularly impressed with the music education.' A few parents and carers were concerned about progress and the leadership and management. Inspection evidence shows that progress is satisfactory and that leadership and management are satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ruishton 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 60 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 150 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	67	18	30	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	72	15	5	2	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	22	37	30	50	5	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	40	21	35	8	13	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	23	38	28	47	3	5	1	2
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	25	42	27	45	6	10	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	65	19	32	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)	24	40	26	43	3	5	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	28	47	23	38	5	8	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	33	30	50	3	5	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	33	34	57	5	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	31	52	20	33	8	13	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	38	63	18	30	4	7	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.



21 November 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Ruishton Church of England Primary School, Ruishton
TA3 5JZ**

Thank you for making us welcome when we came to visit you. We enjoyed talking with you about your school. You behave well and look after each other like a family. Yours is a satisfactory school which is improving due to the effective work of your teachers. You reach standards similar to those attained in most schools. Here are some of things that we liked about your school.

- You thoroughly enjoy school as seen by your outstanding attendance.
- The school looks after you well and makes sure that you have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to stay fit and healthy.
- You make a good contribution to your school and the local community. I was impressed by your work to raise money for charity by selling items you have made.
- There are good links with your parents and carers and with other schools and organisations that all help your learning.

To help your school continue improving we have asked the headteacher and governors to:

- ensure that when teachers plan lessons they use the information they have on how well you learn to make sure that the work they give you to do is not too hard or too easy
- make sure that when teachers mark your work you always know how well you are doing and what you have to do to make your work better
- improve the way teachers check on how well children are doing in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- look at the plans for improving the school and focus on a few areas at a time.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Lake
Lead inspector

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