

St Mary's Rawtenstall Church of England Primary School

Haslingden Old Road, Rawtenstall, Rossendale, Lancashire, BB4 8RZ

Inspection dates 3–4 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- The school's ability to sustain improvement and move forward is hindered because some features of leadership are not strong enough.
- Leaders have not ensured that staff have a clear enough understanding of what represents good progress for pupils.
- Expectations of pupils' progress are not always high and so targets are not always challenging enough for all groups of pupils and for the performance of staff.
- Leaders do not ensure that some essential school policies are implemented. This results in inconsistencies in the quality of marking and its impact on learning.
- Procedures for recording pupils' progress are inefficient. This inhibits the ability of leaders, staff and governors to identify the relative achievement of different groups of pupils and make sure all do as well as they can.
- The targets for improvement are vague which limits the ability of leaders and staff to check that each has been achieved.

The school has the following strengths

- The vast majority of pupils display a very positive attitude to learning, behave well and feel safe.
- Children get an excellent start to school in a vibrant and stimulating Early Years Foundation Stage setting.
- Most children achieve well. Those who speak English as an additional language receive effective support and make good progress.
- Teachers are dedicated and, together with skilled teaching assistants, they work hard to help pupils in their classes.
- The school successfully promotes spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Innovations, such as the 'Wonderful Things' programme, broaden pupils' experiences very successfully.
- Parents are unanimous in recommending the school to others.
- The school is working hard to work with families so that they feel secure in getting involved with their children's education.
- Governance has improved. Governors are now well placed to hold the school more effectively to account.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 13 lessons and part lessons.
- The inspectors observed many aspects of the school's work, including the support for pupils who need extra help. They heard pupils read and conducted discussions with pupils to establish their views of the school. Inspectors examined pupils' work in their exercise books and that displayed in classrooms and around the school.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents. These included: records of notable incidents including bullying, the tracking of individual pupils' progress, the school's plan for improvement, the use of additional funding for supporting pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, the impact of the primary school sports fund, safeguarding and child protection arrangements and pupils' attendance records.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, to evaluate their impact on the pupils' achievement.
- Meetings were held with the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the manager of provision for pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs and also with the school sports coordinator. A discussion was held with four governors, including the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body, and there was a conversation with the local authority representative.
- Inspectors evaluated the overall views of parents. Informal discussions were conducted with four parents on the second morning of the inspection. An evaluation was made of the 19 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, alongside responses to a questionnaire conducted by the school at its recent parents' evening.
- The views of staff were gathered by analysing the views of 19 questionnaires returned by staff and discussions with them during the inspection.

Inspection team

David Byrne, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Juliet Demster

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of Bangladeshi heritage. There is a small minority of pupils from Pakistani heritage and small minority from White British backgrounds. A well-above average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- An above average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard. This is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- During the inspection there was a temporary teacher in post covering the unavoidable illness of a member of staff.
- The school offers an out-of-school club at the beginning and end of the day. Ofsted inspects this separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, in order to strengthen the ability of the school to sustain and bring about further improvement and raise the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement from good to outstanding by:
 - working with staff to establish a clear understanding of what constitutes good progress so that targets are always challenging for all groups of pupils and for the performance of staff
 - making sure crucial school policies related to marking and feedback to pupils are implemented consistently across the school
 - developing an efficient system for tracking and recording the progress of groups of pupils so that their comparative performance can be established and the impact of spending evaluated by leaders and governors
 - establishing precise targets for school improvement with clear criteria to identify the success or otherwise of reaching them.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Given pupils' individual starting points, achievement is good. From starting points that are lower than those typical for their age when they start school, children make rapid progress in the Reception Year due to excellent teaching. The proportion working at levels expected for their age varies and is currently average. In some years, children start school with a very poor understanding of English and, where this is the case, fewer reach a good level of development by the start of Year 1.
- In Key Stage 1, progress is good. The school's focus and effective teaching of the sounds that letters make (phonics) is bearing fruit. For the last two years, the number achieving the expected standard in the national reading screening check has exceeded the national average. In 2013, attainment at the end of Year 2 was broadly average in reading and mathematics but below average in writing. The actions by teachers and teaching assistants have ensured that attainment is improving overall and is doing so quickly in writing.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils achieve well overall. In Year 6 in 2013, for example, an above average proportion of pupils, in all groups, reached the nationally expected Level 4 overall in reading, writing and mathematics. Similarly, an above average proportion of pupils reached the higher Level 5 in mathematics and writing and this shows that the most able pupils typically make good progress. However, the proportion reaching this higher level was below average in reading because progress was not as good. Inspection evidence and school data show that pupils currently across Key Stage 2 are making good progress, including in reading.
- Swift action by the Key Stage 2 leader has boosted the emphasis on reading. Standards in reading are rising. Pupils now read more often and explore a wider variety of authors. They report that they have been inspired to read by meeting Cathy Cassidy a British author of young adult fiction. Current standards in writing across the school are higher than previously because pupils are now given plenty of opportunities to use and apply their writing skills across the subjects they study and not just in English lessons.
- The school is committed to equal opportunities for all its pupils, regardless of gender, background or belief. The large majority of pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well. Given considerable weakness in speaking English when many start school, pupils do well to reach average and in some cases above average standards by Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The small proportion of pupils from White British backgrounds also achieve well. All pupils in Year 6 in 2013 reached the nationally expected Level 4 in reading, writing and mathematics and a much higher proportion reached the higher Level 5 than similar pupils did so nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets because their needs are well led and managed by an effective coordinator and they are taught well.
- Across the school, pupils eligible for the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, are making good progress. By the end of Year 2 in 2013, for example, the attainment of eligible pupils was about one term ahead of similar pupils nationally and slightly above their classmates. Although the attainment of eligible pupils in Year 6 in 2013 were about four terms behind their classmates, inspection evidence and school data show that this gap has now narrowed because staff ensure that effective additional support for every pupil is put in place.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers are a dedicated team. There is some individual flair, for example in music and sport, and pupils are enabled to enjoy learning in a wide range of subjects.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children thrive on an exciting and skilfully organised range of activities. They benefit from regular opportunities to work with adults, for example in

developing their ability to recognise the sounds that letters make, and also get many opportunities to make their own choices for play. Children get an excellent foundation for learning when they move into Key Stage 1. Children who speak English as an additional language, in particular, receive high-quality support. Skilled bilingual staff work to help children develop the basic skills of English so that they can be fully involved in learning.

- In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils develop the ability to work for a sustained period. They listen intently to their teacher and because they know what is expected of them, they work hard and with good focus. At times, such as when all pupils are expected to do the same or a similar task, teachers planning is not sufficiently detailed to enable some pupils, especially the most able, to learn as fast as they could.
- Pupils usually know the purpose of their lessons. They are enabled to reflect on their performance and progress in each lesson, although at times they are not clear about how they can improve their work. Teachers and their teaching assistants work closely together to enable pupils needing additional support, for example in reading and writing or English as an additional language, to make good progress and learn well across the subjects.
- The teaching of reading is good and has improved in Key Stage 2 since the results of 2013. Reading now has a high profile and, consequently, pupils read more confidently. Pupils are encouraged to write more often and in different subjects and examples of best writing are displayed around the school to raise pupils' aspirations. Pupils learn the basic skills of mathematics well although they are less skilled at transferring their knowledge to solve practical mathematical problems.
- While marking is regular, there are inconsistencies. The school's policy for marking and feedback is not always followed. As a result, not all pupils improve their work consistently because they do not always receive precise enough guidance about how to move forward.
- Staff know the ability of each pupil and regularly assess and evaluate their progress. Each term, a review with senior leaders is undertaken of how well each pupil is progressing and targets set for future progress. Expectations for progress set by leaders are not consistently high enough which reduces aspects of achievement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They strive to do their best in lessons and are keen to answer teachers' questions. They usually respond quickly to teachers' requests and instructions, for example to stop whatever they are doing and listen.
- While the vast majority of pupils are proud of the school and their contribution to it, this pride is not always reflected in their work. The work in some books is untidy and not consistently presented with due care and attention to detail.
- Around the school and in the playground, pupils from different backgrounds relate very well to one another, taking good care of younger and disabled pupils. They learn to appreciate difference and diversity, and discrimination of any kind is virtually unknown.
- Pupils respect the school environment. They take pride in their school garden and in working to protect the school and local environment. The accreditation of the Eco-Schools silver award is recognition of their achievements.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All parents who responded to Parent View, those who spoke to inspectors and the pupils themselves agree that this is the case.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying, such as cyber-bullying, and what to do if it happens. However, they are adamant that this does not happen and a review of school records confirms this.
- Attendance has improved steadily since the previous inspection when it was noted as an area for improvement and in 2013, it was above average. A bout of illness among pupils has reduced attendance this year.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management are not good because while there are many good aspects to the school, some features of leadership, including expectations of staff and pupils are not strong enough to secure sustained improvement.
- Leaders are not making sure that all teachers follow advice and guidance in school policies quickly. Crucial school policies, such as the marking policy, are not being implemented strongly enough to ensure that all pupils get the same quality of guidance, advice and feedback.
- The school has not responded fully to one crucial area for improvement identified at the last inspection. The systems for tracking the progress of all groups of pupils lack precision and access of the information is inefficient. This reduces the ability of leaders, staff and governors to plot, review and compare the achievement and progress of different groups of pupils, such as pupils supported by the pupil premium funding. This makes it difficult for leaders to review the impact of such spending decisions on improving pupils' achievement.
- Leaders regularly check on how well teachers are doing and encourage staff to work together to develop their skills. Annual reviews by senior leaders of the performance of staff result in targets to secure progress for pupils. The expectations for how much progress pupils are to make, at times, are too low and, as a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could.
- Nevertheless, some improvements are evident. A whole-school focus on the teaching of phonics and spelling, grammar and punctuation, for example, has raised standards. Strong leadership of the provision for pupils with disabilities and special educational needs enables good inclusion of such pupils in school life. Other subjects, such as mathematics, literacy and physical education are well managed and contribute to the good curriculum provided.
- The headteacher and other leaders annually review the school's performance. While this evaluation is mostly accurate, it misses some weaknesses such as the need to secure consistency in marking. Leaders are yet to make sure that staff have a clear understanding of what constitutes good progress so that targets enable pupils to make the best possible progress and to strengthen the performance of staff even further. This reduces the school's ability to sustain the current improvements underway. The targets for improving the school lack precision about what exactly is needed. This restricts the ability of the staff to evaluate whether or not the school has successfully achieved them.
- The curriculum makes a good contribution towards the pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development with sport, music and ecological and outdoor learning being particular strengths. One pupil is the 'Young gardener of the year', an award given by the National Horticultural Society. Activities encompassed by the 'Wonderful Things' initiative demonstrate great innovation in enabling pupils to experience a wide range of activities that would otherwise be unavailable to them.
- The local authority provides suitable challenge to improve the quality of teaching and secure the accuracy of the assessments of the pupils' attainments. It provides detailed, high-quality analyses of the data gained by pupils in the national tests and offers effective training to the governing body.
- The school is implementing plans to secure the effective use of the primary school sports funding. This has enabled more pupils to participate in swimming and for pupils to develop skills in a wider range of sports. The funding has paid for links to a local sports provider, which is developing the skills of staff in teaching aspects of sport. It is too early to measure the impact of the new initiative on the pupils' well-being and health.
- The school is working hard to raise its profile in the community. The appointment of a community support worker is an excellent initiative, which is enabling reluctant parents to get involved in school life. Parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, are especially pleased that their children are happy and appreciate the quality of care provided.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body benefits from strong leadership by a dedicated Chair and vice-chair who took up post since the previous inspection. As a result, the governing body is now taking more responsibility for holding the school's performance to account. Governors are aware that

expectations for pupils and staff are not always high enough.

- Governors' ability to assess the effectiveness of the school from reviewing the school's own assessment data and comparing the school's performance with other schools has strengthened quickly. As a result, they are better placed to check how well the pupils are achieving and identify where further improvement is possible.
- A watchful eye is kept on the school's finances. Governors know how the extra pupil premium and sport funding is being spent, although they are not yet fully informed about the difference the funds are making to pupils' achievement. They are acutely aware of the need to make sure pay rises for the headteacher and staff are linked to evidence of their impact on the pupils' achievement.
- Governors ensure that requirements with regard to safeguarding pupils are fully met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	119368
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	444037

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	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Girling
Headteacher	Ian Holden
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2010
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