

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **RICE LANE INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL**

Walton

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 104586

Headteacher: Mrs Lyn Robinson

Reporting inspector: Frances Forrester

11590

Dates of inspection: 12 – 13 March 2001

Inspection number: 196002

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Lynwood Road Walton Liverpool
Postcode:	L9 3AE
Telephone number:	0151 525 9776
Fax number:	0151 284 7321
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J.M. Hayward
Date of previous inspection:	3 March 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
11590	Frances Forrester	Registered inspector
9843	Sarah Drake	Lay inspector
4483	Jean-Pierre Kirkland	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

HeadStart & Associates

Higherland Bridge  
49 West Street  
Gargrave  
Skipton  
North Yorkshire  
BD23 3RJ

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33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Rice Lane Infant and Nursery School is situated in Walton, to the north of Liverpool. It is a popular, well subscribed school. The building has been extended since the last inspection to help with overcrowding. The nursery has 120 part time places. Nursery children are organised into two separate classes, with different groups of children attending in the morning or afternoon. There are a further 88 children in the three reception classes. The number on roll has increased over the last four years and there are now 237 pupils. The school organises its classes into year groups. The local community reflects a wide variety of socio-economic backgrounds, of which a small percentage can be classed as high social class households. Most pupils have below average standards when they first start school. There are no pupils with statements of special educational needs but 65 pupils have some identified special educational needs, because they are at risk of falling behind their peers. This is a high percentage for a school this size. Twenty six per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. Two pupils are at an early stage of learning English, but the school does not receive funding to support them. However, the school does receive additional funding from the Education Action Zone and from the New Opportunities Fund.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Rice Lane Infant and Nursery School is a very effective school with high standards, very good teaching, and strong leadership from the headteacher and senior management team. The school has successfully maintained its high standards and it gives very good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Pupils benefit from a wide range of rich learning experiences and, by the time they are seven, many achieve high standards.
- The leadership and management from the headteacher and senior management team are outstanding.
- Pupils have very good attitudes and behaviour.
- The quality of the teaching is very good.

#### **What could be improved**

- Play equipment in the playground, to keep pupils productively occupied.
- The number of supervising adults, when several classes join together for an activity.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school's very successful development since the last inspection in 1997 has been sufficient to maintain, and further improve, the good standards pupils achieve. The report was good but the building was judged then to be cramped and having a negative impact on the quality of learning provided. It has since been extended and the staff makes full use of every space to successfully promote pupils' learning. The standards of work in English, mathematics, science, art and design, and information and communication technology are now even better, and often very good. Pupils' handwriting was tidy in 1997, but is now much better, and is very good by the time they are seven; most pupils write confidently and spell correctly. The quality of the provision for the youngest children in the nursery classes and reception classes is also much improved, and children now enjoy many, very stimulating activities. The range of learning opportunities throughout the school has been improved and this is now outstanding. As a result, pupil attitudes and behaviour are very good. The school's leadership was judged good in the first inspection, but it has been improved further and it is now a great strength. Governors give very good support. The school has outstanding arrangements for monitoring and evaluating quality of teaching and learning. The quality of teaching is also improved, and is very good. Teachers plan in great detail, and their procedures for assessing pupils' work are outstanding. Staff are totally committed to school improvement, and the school has an excellent capacity to succeed.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by seven year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	A	A	A	A*
Writing	B	A	B	A
Mathematics	C	B	A	A

**Key**

Very high A\*

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The school has continued to maintain its high standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science. Results are carefully analysed in order to monitor trends and identify strengths and weaknesses. Although children often start school lacking confidence, and with a limited vocabulary, they quickly progress. By the time they move to the reception class, their speech is more fluent and they listen well. By the end of the Foundation Stage when they are five years old, they already attain good standards for their age group. This very good foundation for learning is successfully built on over the next two years. By the time pupils are seven years of age, their standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. The work pupils were doing during the inspection confirmed these standards. Pupils' good handwriting, computer skills and their high standards of art were also noted. Members of staff work hard to ensure pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve their full potential. The fact that the school provides an excellent range of learning opportunities ensures pupils achieve well in a number of different subjects. The school matches lesson activities to pupils' individual needs. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from this approach and make good progress.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes, and they are eager to learn. They are proud of their school and present their work tidily. Pupils are curious and they enjoy investigating and working independently.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils are very well behaved. They develop very good relationships and work and play happily with each other. In assemblies and in the best lessons, behaviour is exemplary.
Personal development and relationships	The school successfully promotes good relationships and pupils' personal development from children's first days in the nursery.
Attendance	The school has successful procedures for promoting good attendance, and figures are in line with national averages.

The school has no weaknesses in these areas. This is a reflection of the excellent school ethos.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	n/a

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

The consistently high quality of teaching throughout the school is a great strength. Fifty per cent of the lessons observed were very good or excellent and over a third of the teaching was good. Two lessons were satisfactory. In English and mathematics, teachers always ensure the skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught. They insist on pupils having good handwriting and tidy work. The school is committed to giving every pupil equal opportunities; it does all it can to support all pupils and to promote an understanding of the world's cultural diversity. The high quality teaching successfully promotes pupils' learning, and helps them to acquire a good knowledge and understanding in all subjects. Teachers manage their classes well, and they appreciate their pupils' infectious enthusiasm for their work. The pupils who have special educational needs are successfully motivated and they make good progress. The very few children in the school who are learning English as an additional language have good support from their teachers. Every opportunity is given to help them to understand and to make good progress in their acquisition of English.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides an excellent range of rich learning experiences for its pupils. Teachers often link different subjects skilfully through lesson topics. In addition, visits to places of interest, and regular cultural experiences, enhance the provision.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good support is provided for pupils who are at risk of falling behind their peers, so that they make good progress. Regular praise for effort ensures pupils have a high self-esteem.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The teachers and class assistants provide good support for the very few pupils who are learning English as an additional language. Parents are also encouraged to help with translation.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Personal development is fundamental to the school's work and is a great strength. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good, and are fostered throughout school life.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school very successfully makes the safety and protection of pupils a priority. The procedures for assessing pupils' progress and personal development are excellent.

There are no weaknesses in the curricular and other learning opportunities offered to pupils. Teachers successfully plan their work to make their activities interesting and, in the best lessons, they have an imaginative approach to their teaching and generate fun. The school meets all legal requirements.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school's leadership and management are excellent. The headteacher and senior management team have an outstanding vision for their school; a very good governing body successfully supports them.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are enthusiastic and proud of their school, and they fulfil their responsibilities efficiently.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Key members of staff have introduced very good evaluation systems. These are proving effective in the maintenance of high standards.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent use is made of all available resources. The school efficiently deploys support staff; it enlists responsible volunteers to work with specific groups of pupils. This promotes pupils' learning successfully so that they achieve very well according to their individual potential.

The headteacher and senior management team work very hard to monitor and evaluate the standards of teaching and pupils' work. Governors are enthusiastic and knowledgeable. The school has an appropriate number of staff and good accommodation. There is a good range of learning resources. The school very successfully applies the principles of best value to all its work.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The leadership of the headteacher</li> <li>The standards of pupils' work</li> <li>The good standard of behaviour</li> <li>That teachers provide good role models</li> <li>The quality of information for parents</li> <li>The school's focus on healthy eating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A few parents do not like being informed that their child is at risk of falling behind other members of their class.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views, but they do not agree with the parents who are unhappy with the school's procedures for keeping them well informed. The school is legally required to keep parents well informed about their children's progress, and also to provide additional support when any pupil is at risk of falling behind their peers. The school has excellent assessment procedures, which keep teachers fully aware of individual children's levels of ability. This means that teachers are quick to notice when pupils have difficulties with their work. This efficiency, and the teachers' attempt to forge closer partnerships with parents of children at risk of underachieving, is beneficial.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

#### **The school provides rich learning opportunities for its pupils**

- 1 As soon as children start school in the nursery classes, they benefit from a wide range of rich learning opportunities. The nursery organisation is imaginative and versatile. Children work in groups on a focused activity, and they also have plenty of opportunities for a free choice of play activities. The walls of the nursery classes have attractive displays that act as useful information for visitors and parents. Activities are often carefully planned to promote an awareness of environmental issues. For instance, in role-play in an imaginary park, the staff simulated an untidy environment by dropping empty crisp packets and soft drink bottles. The teacher explained to the children that some of the staff had forgotten to tidy away their lunch. On entering the park, some children acted as park keepers, sweeping up the rubbish. A simulated rainy day included splashing in an imaginary puddle, and gave the children the opportunity to compare umbrella sizes. This successfully promoted their mathematical understanding. In the reception classes, teachers continue to plan interesting topics for their children. For example in a topic on 'Bob the Builder', the children practised number skills when they pretended to be an estate agent, adding up simple prices and giving change. They used the computer to design a town for Bob to live in. Reception children successfully cover early National Curriculum work, which is carefully planned to suit their level of maturity. A good example was seen when children successfully developed early mapping skills in a lesson to promote a knowledge and understanding of the world. Using a very simple map of their classroom, and other areas of the school, children searched for hidden treasure.
- 2 As pupils move through the school, this very good foundation is most successfully extended. Imaginative opportunities motivate pupils so that they are eager to learn. In English, pupils write for a wide range of audiences. These include shopping lists, stories, accounts of activities, menus, and letters. In mathematics in Year 2, pupils learn about coordinates through interesting topics. These varied in difficulty, from a simple grid for pupils to arrange farm animals on particular squares, to designing a treasure map and listing coordinates as instructions to discover the treasure. The teachers ensure pupils have lots of opportunities to develop creativity and aesthetic awareness. The school encourages enquiry and experimentation. Pupils ask questions confidently, and they consider the reasons for the results of their experiments. Regular opportunities are given for pupils to appreciate and listen to a wide range of music. A local folk singer regularly visits the school to develop this further. In art, throughout the school, ample opportunities are provided for painting and drawing from observation, and pupils use a wide range of media. As a result, pupils are confident to express themselves and, during the inspection, this was very evident in an aborigine mural painting, and paintings and drawings of spring flowers. Design and technology is another example of imaginative, stimulating ideas promoting good standards of work. Puppets, designed and assembled by older pupils, were evaluated by the class and improvements suggested. The school is truly successful in its aims to develop pupils' initiative and creativity. It uses every opportunity to enhance learning through visitors to the school and visits to local places of interest.

#### **Overall, teaching is very good or excellent in half of the lessons**

- 3 The consistently good quality teaching is having a very significant impact on pupils' learning. It is a great strength of the school's provision. Throughout the school,

teachers prepare their lessons thoroughly by identifying precise learning objectives, grouping their pupils carefully, varying their activities, choosing the best methods to use and making the very best use of resources. They do all they can to provide equal opportunities and to include all pupils in class discussions and other activities. This was very evident in a reception class where the children were considering the story of the 'Little Red Hen'. The teacher had planned a bread-making activity to link with the story, but a child who suffered with eczema was unable to mix the dough. The teacher compensated for this by choosing this child to be her special helper. Teachers ensure support staff are fully aware of the aims of the lessons, and they provide helpful notes to guide their work with different groups of pupils. The lessons proceed at a good pace, which keeps pupils interested. These features, together with the teachers' enthusiasm and their great commitment to their work, contribute to the high standards achieved and the good progress pupils make.

- 4 An excellent science lesson is a good example of imaginative planning to promote independent learning and scientific enquiry. The pupils experimented in a variety of different ways to find the most effective way to move a small car or cotton reel at speed. Some pupils used a computer program, others created their own experiment using planks and boards. Pupils could express their own ideas about finding solutions and, with some assistance, they carried out tests, recognising and explaining why they were fair.
- 5 Teachers try to introduce exciting activities where they can. A good example was in a reception class where the teacher sings with the children as they practise their handwriting. For instance, they sing, 'Amber the apple, AAA, 'Dog in the dustbin, DDD, skip to me loo my darling'. In another reception class, children created a design for the front of a T-shirt, and their teacher arranged a fashion show. Children paraded their T-shirts to a background of taped music. In a good poetry lesson, the teacher encouraged her Year 2 class to compose a rhyme about transport. The pupils contributed their own ideas and agreed on words that they thought rhymed well.

'Here comes the train,  
Driving in the rain.  
Here comes the aeroplane,  
It's going to Spain.  
Here comes a bus,  
Everyone's in a fuss.  
Here comes a car,  
With a big pink star.'

- 6 Teachers work very hard and they regularly give up their free time to work with individual children or small groups. Occasionally it is necessary for a whole year group to work together, for instance for music or a story. When this is the case, while there is always another adult, nearby, the level of adult support is not sufficient to ensure all pupils concentrate fully on the activity.

**The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior management team are outstanding.**

- 7 The school was judged to have a good ethos in the last inspection. The headteacher had a strong sense of purpose and good leadership; governors had a clear understanding of their roles. The school had only recently taken over its own financial management, and it was judged to give only satisfactory value for money. Since 1997, all these areas have been significantly improved.
- 8 The excellent teamwork and educational vision of the headteacher and her senior management team are having a very significant impact on the school's improvement, and the promotion of good standards. Members of staff are very committed to improvement, and the school has an excellent capacity to succeed. Very good procedures are in place for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance. Regular lesson observations by the senior management team, reviews of pupils' work, the monitoring of resources and their use, and scrutiny of teachers' planning are all an essential part of the school's procedures. The teachers' performance is appraised annually, and the school sees this as the foundation for its policy for performance management. The governing body is very good. Governors review the school's development, and play an important role in monitoring and evaluation, for instance by discussing draft policy documents. They monitor and evaluate the impact of any action planned as part of the school development plan. In this way, they keep well informed and are knowledgeable about national initiatives.
- 9 The school's work reflects its mission statement, "Achieving Through Partnership". Members of staff work hard to develop their own, and others, professional skills. For instance, they provide mentoring support to students and take advantage of additional funding to offer short term contracts to unemployed people who intend to work with children in the future. As a result, the school has been awarded 'Investor In People' status three times, most recently in 2000. The same year, the school was awarded the 'Basic Skills Quality Mark' and the 'Healthy Schools Award'. The latter award is one that parents truly value. Educational priorities are strategically planned within the current school development plan, and grants from national initiatives such as funding through the local Education Action Zone and the New Opportunities Fund are efficiently used and regularly reported as part of the school's self evaluation. The impact these initiatives have on raising standards is evaluated. The school is very successfully promoting high standards, very good teaching, good pupil attitudes and behaviour. It gives very good value for money.

**WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**In the playground, there is no play equipment to keep pupils productively occupied**

- 10 The playgrounds are a reasonable size, but nevertheless cramped when all pupils play outside at dinnertime. The school building is vulnerable to vandalism, so it is difficult to provide permanent playground fixtures. Although pupils play well together, because there is very little to do outside, most play chasing games or run around aimlessly. The dinnertime break is long, lasting an hour and a half in total. This is used to good effect, with the teaching staff using the first hour to work with individual children and to prepare for the following session. Although there are sufficient numbers of dinner supervisors, pupils have no play equipment to keep them productively occupied. The space for playing is fully used and hence there are no quiet areas for pupils who wish to sit and talk quietly together.

### **The numbers of adults who supervise, when several classes join together for an activity**

- 11 The school tries hard to ensure pupils have a wide range of different learning experiences. Very occasionally this means a whole year group joins together for an activity. Although the person directing this may be a teacher, and there is always someone in earshot if pupils lose interest, the activity loses its impact. For instance, in a satisfactory music lesson, the teacher provided a piano accompaniment, and it was difficult for her to manage three classes at the same time. Some pupils were restless and lost their concentration; this meant that a potentially good experience was not successful.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

In order to maintain the high standard of provision the school should now:

- (1) consider ways to improve the playtime experience, by ensuring pupils have access to small play equipment, books or other items to keep them productively occupied.
- (2) ensure there is enough adult supervision in the room when several classes join together for activities.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	24
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	3

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	46	42	8	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	60	237
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	55

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	20	65

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	4.9	School data	0.3
National comparative data	5.2	National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

### ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1***

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	42	33	75

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	40	40	42
	Girls	32	32	33
	Total	73	75	75
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (95)	96 (94)	100 (98)
	National	84 (82)	85(83)	90(87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	41	42	41
	Girls	32	33	33
	Total	73	75	74
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	99 (97)	100 (97)	99 (95)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	176
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	26

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	325

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	10

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000
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	£
Total income	526011
Total expenditure	515876
Expenditure per pupil	1863
Balance brought forward from previous year	38604
Balance carried forward to next year	48739



## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	280
Number of questionnaires returned	111

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	26	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	32	2	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	61	38	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	49	23	5	1	23
The teaching is good.	70	26	1	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	32	6	2	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	19	0	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	23	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	61	34	3	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	68	30	0	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	30	2	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	23	7	8	26

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Parents generally did not understand the school's Code of Practice for special educational needs provision. The parents felt there was a gap in communication, but they acknowledged that the school gives pupils good support.