



Rakegate Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104304
LEA Wolverhampton
Inspection number 277125
Inspection dates 24 January 2006 to 25 January 2006
Reporting inspector David Carrington AI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Renton Road
School category	Community		Wolverhampton
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		WV10 6UP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01902 558608
Number on roll	417	Fax number	01902 558633
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Councillor Christine Irvine
Date of previous inspection	13 November 2000	Headteacher	Mr Steve Harris

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Rakegate Primary is a large school with a nursery. The school opened three years ago and has not been inspected before. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, though there are small numbers of pupils from other minority ethnic groups. The pupils come from an area where there are a lot of economic and social difficulties. Over a quarter of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is above average. A large number of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities. Over half the pupils do not complete all of their primary education in the school; a few spend a very short time there because they move in and out of the area quickly. The attainment of children when they start in the nursery is well below average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it reasonably is expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' standards and achievement.

Recently the school has taken some positive steps to raise standards and improve pupils' progress following the fall in standards during its first three years. In 2005 standards were well below average and progress was inadequate. The pupils did not achieve the targets set for them at the end of Year 6. For these reasons, the school gives inadequate value for money. Whilst standards are still well below average at the end of Year 6, progress is improving. The school's targets are now more challenging, though they are on the low side. Children settle well in nursery and they make steady progress through the Foundation Stage, though most do not reach their learning goals. Whilst pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2, because they have so much ground to make up, standards are well below average. The school has incomplete systems to assess and evaluate pupils' progress. The tracking of progress is inconsistent and not sufficiently rigorous. Changes have been made to these systems, but they have not yet bedded in. In general, the school judges standards and achievement realistically, though some of its own judgements are rather generous and do not fully tally with those of inspectors. School leadership is now satisfactory. The headteacher has been successful in improving behaviour and relationships, so that they are strengths. Teaching has been improved too, and is satisfactory. There is still work to do to raise teachers' expectations further, improve the pace of work and to ensure that there is consistent challenge for all pupils. All staff and the governors are committed to raise standards. The school has the potential to build on recent improvements, but senior leaders rightly recognise that the pace of improvement has to be faster.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve progress by continuing to improve teachers' expectations, the pace of work and the challenge provided for all pupils.
- Improve the assessment, progress tracking and evaluation systems to ensure that underachievement is identified and eliminated quickly.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards are not high enough and progress is too slow and inconsistent. Senior leaders recognise these things but have not been quick enough to address the weaknesses in the past. However, progress is improving and standards are rising this year because there is now a firm focus on raising achievement. Nonetheless, there is much work to do to ensure that the school targets are ambitious enough, are met fully, and that all pupils do consistently well in their work. There remains some underachievement in

school, particularly in the junior years. Starting levels in the nursery are well below average, especially in children's personal, social and emotional development and language skills. Good teaching in the nursery ensures that children settle well and develop confidence in their own abilities so they are well prepared for learning. They make steady progress, which is maintained in reception, standards are still well below average by the time they join Year 1. Progress is satisfactory in the infant classes, but pupils have a lot to learn and standards are still well below average by the end of Year 2. Progress is inconsistent in Years 3 to 6. School records show there are times when progress accelerates but others when it almost stands still. Recent improvement to teaching is beginning to bring more consistent progress, but the work is not yet complete. The local authority is giving effective intensive support to improve achievement. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are set work that is satisfactorily matched to their needs. However, there are times when higher attaining pupils are given exactly the same work as all the others, which does not demand enough of them, slows their progress and leads to underachievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory overall. Many children start school with significant emotional and personal difficulties that affect their behaviour and learning. However, pupils establish good relationships with both adults and other children and gain confidence in their own abilities. Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes to their work. They are enthusiastic about the many after school activities provided for them. Most pupils behave well and show care for each other. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. The school celebrates the range of cultures within the school community and pupils show respect for the ideas and beliefs of others. Pupils respond well to opportunities to take responsibility. The school councillors have successfully put forward ideas to improve playtimes. Pupils of all ages have a secure understanding of how to keep safe and develop healthy lifestyles. Although basic skills in literacy and mathematics are weak, pupils are developing independence and the skills that will adequately support their future education. Attendance is well below the national average. A few families do not ensure their children attend school regularly. However, the school has introduced a full range of measures to improve attendance and these are beginning to show results.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The school has eliminated the unsatisfactory teaching of the past that led to pupils' inadequate progress. Currently, teaching is satisfactory overall in school. The improvements made to the quality of teaching are beginning to show through in the way that pupils' progress is beginning to accelerate. Expectations could be higher still. They have been raised successfully overall but there are periods of slack progress for

the more able, whose work does not always set them realistic challenges. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory with some strengths, especially in the nursery. There is good understanding of the children's needs and activities stimulate their interest and desire to learn. Teaching assistants are well informed and used effectively so that children are successfully supported. Children's progress is well monitored and activities build successfully on what they already know and can do. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, ensuring the pupils make satisfactory progress. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6, which is an improvement on the recent past. The best teaching in the junior years is in Years 3 and 6. Pupils say that the best learning takes place when teachers make their work fun, practical and demanding. They say that it has not always been like this, and that sometimes they had to listen to their teachers for a long time before doing much work themselves. However, they also say that there are fewer lessons like this now. Inspectors agree with these views. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported so they learn successfully. Their progress is sometimes better than other pupils in their class because systematic approaches are used to plan their learning. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are taught soundly, and make satisfactory progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum, including that of the Foundation Stage, is satisfactory overall. The improvement work in mathematics is paying dividends in terms of increased progress and pupils are enthusiastic about the practical activities they undertake. Writing is now regularly assessed and pupils are given clear guidance about how to improve. Effective use is made of computers and the development of ICT skills has been improved. The school is full of interesting, attractive displays showing that the full range of subjects is well covered. The work for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is planned carefully, though more able pupils could often be set more challenging tasks. Whilst there is some use made of other subjects to help the improvement of writing skills, this is not fully developed and this slows progress. After school provision, particularly sporting activities, is a strength of the school and much appreciated by pupils and parents. Many pupils do well in local sports and games competitions. There is a full programme of educational visits and a wide range of visitors including musicians, puppeteers and Santa to enliven lessons.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care guidance and support provided by the school is satisfactory overall. However, the school takes good steps to ensure that pupils' personal development is effective. As one parent wrote, 'the staff show great care and consideration to both the pupils and the parents.' Many pupils have significant emotional and personal difficulties that affect their behaviour and learning, but the headteacher has led the creation of a calm school environment and most pupils' behaviour is good. Child protection procedures are fully in place and pupils' safety is assured. Pupils with learning difficulties and

disabilities are well supported so they successfully participate in lessons. Good links with outside professionals are used well to guide their development. Recent strategies for involving all pupils in evaluating progress show promise. Ways to show pupils how to improve are beginning to raise both pupils' and teachers' expectations for what can be achieved. These strategies are new and not yet having a full impact on improving achievement. A considerable number of pupils do not complete all of their primary education in school. New pupils are made to feel welcome and quickly settle. Links with other schools and the local secondary school are good and this eases pupils' transition particularly at the end of Year 6.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The weaknesses from the past are being overcome successfully and the school has set the right priorities for the future. The headteacher has ensured that behaviour and attitudes have been improved well and that they are now good. Parents welcome this emphasis. However, in the past, insufficient attention was given to checking pupils' progress and ensuring that teaching was of the highest quality. This led to underachievement, especially in Years 3 to 6, and some generosity in the school's judgement of its overall success. This change in emphasis is having positive effects on pupils' achievement. The school now has a more reliable understanding of what is effective and what requires improvement, and is taking effective steps to eliminate weaknesses. A crucial recent aim has been to improve the systems for checking pupils' progress so that more ambitious targets can be set and underachievement pinpointed and eliminated quickly. These improvements have not yet had sufficient impact but early indications, particularly in mathematics, are encouraging. The school's capacity for further improvement is satisfactory. Senior leaders have made a positive start with measures to improve achievement. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is good, which is resulting in more effective learning for the children and rigorous systems for checking progress. Governors are well informed and are providing increasingly good guidance. The intensive support provided by the local authority is proving effective in boosting achievement. There is shared commitment amongst all adults in school to raise standards and the staff and governors are working together successfully to achieve this key priority.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed talking with you and finding out your opinions of the school. In our report we have written about some good things we found at your school:

- You are well behaved and get on well with each other.
- You enjoy your work and try hard.
- Children in reception and nursery make a good start to their education.
- You do well in sports and games and like the visits you make to places of interest.

We have asked your teachers to make two important improvements to help you achieve higher standards of work:

- Make some of your work harder and encourage you to work more quickly.
- Make sure the traffic light system for judging how well you are doing is used to spot your best and least effective learning.

When we talked you said you like coming to your school and that some of your lessons are fun and interesting. We are sure that you will enjoy the changes that are being made, even if some of you find your work is harder. You can help your teachers make all lessons enjoyable by continuing to work hard to meet your targets. Good luck with your work.

Yours sincerely David Carrington (Lead inspector)