



Rectory CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104797
LEA St. Helens
Inspection number 277219
Inspection dates 15 May 2006 to 16 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Mark Madeley CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Rectory Road
School category	Voluntary aided		North Ashton
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Ashton-in-Makerfield, Wigan WN4 0QF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01744 678470
Number on roll	205	Fax number	01744 678475
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr T Narayanan
Date of previous inspection	8 January 2001	Headteacher	Mrs Janet Prowse

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3 to 11	15 May 2006 - 16 May 2006	277219

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school. It serves a mixed area which has some pockets of very high social and economic deprivation. There are very few pupils of minority ethnic heritage. An above average percentage of pupils are entitled to free school meals. There is an exceptionally high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, many of whom require significant additional support.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This satisfactory school represents sound value for money and has good potential to improve further. The headteacher and assistant headteacher are improving provision through rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning and leading the drive for improvement. The impact is being seen now in improved standards in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The inspection findings agree with the school's self-evaluation.

Standards on entry are very low but children make good progress in the Foundation Stage because teaching is good. Good quality provision also results in children having an effective start to their schooling. Pupils make satisfactory progress through Years 1 to 6 and achieve satisfactorily overall. By Year 6, standards overall are below average because the school has a very high proportion of pupils who have additional learning needs. These pupils are supported well. They make good progress and achieve well. Higher attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently in some lessons, especially in mathematics, where they do not achieve as well as they could. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Where teaching is at its best it is dynamic and resources are used very well to help pupils learn. In some classes, teachers do not encourage pupils to explain their answers fully and their marking does not consistently help pupils improve their work.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils behave well and work hard in lessons. The school has good procedures for caring for all its pupils and is supported by outside agencies very well. Parents greatly appreciate the information they receive about their child's progress. The curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils like the good range of extra-curricular activities and educational visits.

Governance, leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Senior managers know their school well but new subject leaders have yet to have a major impact on pupils' progress in their subjects.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teachers' questioning techniques so that pupils are more frequently encouraged to justify their thinking.
- Ensure that teachers' marking in all classes helps pupils understand how to improve their work.
- Provide more challenge for higher attaining pupils in all aspects of mathematics lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Many pupils join the school with very low standards. All children make good progress through the Foundation Stage because teaching is effective and play activities are very well structured to meet their needs. They quickly develop their speaking and listening skills and learn how to cooperate with each other.

Although a few pupils entering Year 1 reach the standards expected for their age, overall standards are below average.

Pupils' achievement and their progress overall through Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are below average. However, standards are rising in Years 1 and 2 and the school's data indicate that achievement is satisfactory. By the end of Year 6, standards remain below average and higher attaining pupils could achieve more in mathematics. Targets are suitably challenging for each group of pupils. Though their learning is often measured in tiny steps, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress throughout the school. This is because skilled teaching assistants, who make very effective use of learning resources, support them very well during group work.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and parents overwhelmingly feel that their children like school. They take great care of each other and feel safe because they know that staff really care about them. They report that there is little bullying; upsets are usually the occasional falling out of friends. Pupils are confident that any problems will be dealt with promptly. Their attendance, which is now satisfactory, is beginning to reflect this positive view of school. In and around school pupils behave well, though some pupils are occasionally slow to settle after moments of excitement. The vast majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning and work hard in lessons. Pupils have an extensive knowledge of what to eat in order to stay healthy and understand that regular exercise is also important. They are less aware of the need to avoid dangerous substances. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There is a positive Christian ethos, which pervades the school's work and pupils' attitudes. They are keen to raise funds for charity and have a 'voice' in managing their school through the school council. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning and their ability to support and cooperate with each other prepares them well for the next stage in their learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory although there are inconsistencies that have been identified by the headteacher's monitoring. The school is working hard to improve teaching through providing additional support and training for staff. Effective teaching in the Foundation Stage provides children with a good start to school. Children love to learn through the well planned 'play activities'. There is a good balance between learning in and outside of the classroom. Staff assess children's learning frequently and accurately and use this information well to plan the next steps in their learning.

In Years 1 to 6, pupils are keen to learn and enjoy positive relationships with adults. They willingly answer questions but responses are often too brief because some teachers do not encourage them to explain their thinking fully. Higher attaining pupils could be challenged further in mathematics in some classes. The school has adopted a more consistent approach to planning lessons and this is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Tasks are now set to meet the needs of most pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities get effective support because practical tasks are well matched to their abilities. In good lessons, pupils know how to improve their work because teachers' marking offers them ways of improving further. However, this is not always the case.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and the needs of the pupils. The Foundation Stage curriculum covers the requirements of the national guidelines fully. There has been a significant improvement in the provision for information and communication technology which has resulted in pupils being much more confident in using computers. Pupils' experiences are enriched by French and German lessons and, for Years 3 to 6, the specialist teaching of music and swimming. A recent positive initiative has been themed weeks, which have excited the pupils and brought the school and community together. One such example was 'Home Front' week when pupils studied the Second World War. Individual programmes for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are effective because good use is made of assessment information. However, this is not always the case in mathematics for the higher attaining pupils.

Pupils enjoy the good range of extra curricular activities, which give them further chances to be creative as well as 'sporty'. Visits to places of educational interest are used effectively to fire pupils' imaginations for topic work. Older pupils look forward to the annual residential visit, which is used very well to help pupils raise self-esteem and develop teamwork.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This school cares particularly well for all its pupils. The induction of new pupils is very effective. Staff very successfully help the most vulnerable pupils and sometimes their parents too. The school gives good support to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and makes very effective use of outside agencies.

Regular audits assure the safety and security of the site. Comprehensive risk assessment, recruitment procedures and child protection policies are in place. Attendance has improved because the vast majority of pupils and parents have responded positively to the school's initiatives.

The headteacher's rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning and high quality analysis of data is now helping to establish challenging targets. Teachers increasingly

use assessments to monitor progress and the benefits are being seen in rising standards. However, marking is not consistently effective in offering pupils ways of improving their work.

Parents greatly appreciate the school's Christian community ethos and the good range of family learning courses in school and in the Children's Centre. They feel that they have good information from pupils' reports and the informative newsletters. The 'Rectory Forum', the school council and regular questionnaires all give parents and pupils a voice in decision-making.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Overall leadership and management are satisfactory, despite the headteacher's outstanding leadership. She feels that her pupils are entitled to the best possible education and works tirelessly to achieve this. This is an inclusive school, where provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well and very sensitively managed. The school actively promotes positive values of equality of opportunity within a Christian ethos.

The headteacher has an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school from her rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning and high quality analysis of data. As a consequence, there has been an improvement in children's progress in the Foundation Stage and standards are rising in Key Stage 1. Pupils' standards and progress are monitored closely to identify individual pupils' barriers to learning. This knowledge is used very sensitively to help pupils overcome their difficulties.

The headteacher, and the very capable assistant headteacher, are training colleagues to take on subject leader roles. However, at present they are new to their roles and their impact in monitoring the curriculum and securing improved standards is limited.

Governance is satisfactory and governors take a keen and conscientious interest in the life of the school. With the guidance of the headteacher and local authority, they are gaining understanding of the complexities of managing today's schools. This is beginning to involve them more closely in the drive to raise standards.

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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?	3	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	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	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?	2	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	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	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

Thank you very much for being so helpful and friendly to us when we visited your school. We think that your headteacher and her staff work very hard for you. One of the best things about your school is that staff care very much about each and every one of you. They help you make satisfactory progress, but the school, and we, feel that some of you could reach higher standards in mathematics. We thought that the new arrangements in the Foundation Stage helped children get a really good start to their schooling.

From your happy faces we could see that you all enjoyed school. We thought that you all behaved well and had a positive attitude towards your work. When talking to us you said that you knew how to stay safe and that you liked to stay fit and healthy. It was good that Year 6 pupils took their monitor roles very seriously and that the School Council listened to your suggestions. You told us that after school clubs and visits were really great and we agree.

The headteacher and governors are committed to providing the best for you and recognise that there remains much work to be done. These are the things we have asked the school to do to make it a better place for you to learn:

- give more challenging work in mathematics lessons to the most able pupils
- get you to explain your spoken answers more often
- make sure that teachers' marking tells you how to make your work even better.

You can help your school to improve by continuing to behave well, listening carefully in lessons and by doing your best all the time. We wish you and the staff well for the future.