



The Rackham Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110807
LEA CAMBRIDGESHIRE LEA
Inspection number 278518
Inspection dates 10 May 2006 to 11 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Dilip Kadodwala LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Main Street
School category	Voluntary controlled		CB6 2HQ
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01353 662436
Number on roll	312	Fax number	01353 662078
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs.Sandra Thompson
Date of previous inspection	6 December 1999	Headteacher	Mr. Sid Wales

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 10 May 2006 - 11 May 2006	Inspection number 278518
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. There are a small number of children from Traveller communities and a few pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, including those who have a statement of special educational needs, is below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

A high number of parents returned a questionnaire to the inspection team. The vast majority are highly satisfied and say it is a good school where children enjoy learning and are happy. Inspectors agree. It is a good school with a deserved, high local reputation. The quality of leadership and management is good and the school gives good value for money. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage because they are well cared for and taught well in a lively setting. Pupils' good progress continues in the rest of the school because senior leaders give the school purposeful direction. There is a good sense of team work which values the contribution made by teaching assistants. The school is not complacent, actively seeks the views of parents and has correctly assessed its effectiveness as good. Minor weaknesses identified in the previous inspection have been addressed successfully. In 2005, assessment and test results attained by pupils at ages seven and 11 were above national averages. In mathematics, standards were exceptionally high at the end of Key Stage 2. High quality relationships create the right climate for pupils to learn and for teachers to use their good knowledge and expertise. The evaluation of teaching ensures continuous improvement. A rich variety of activities is used to enhance pupils' enjoyment of school and their personal development. Two aspects need further improvement within this strong picture. The evaluation of teaching does not focus closely enough on what pupils are learning and their progress. Although pupils are given opportunities to use their enquiry and creative skills during enrichment weeks, these are not systematically reinforced in daily lessons. Nonetheless, the school's strengths far outnumber its weaknesses. Because the school has a good understanding of this it is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Focus evaluations of teaching more sharply on what pupils are learning and the progress they make. - Ensure that skills which pupils acquire during enrichment weeks are used more routinely in lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The pupils attain above average standards overall and their achievement is good. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well. They enter the Reception class with skills that are comparatively weak, but make good progress so that by the end of the Reception year most have attained the goals expected for their age. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. By the end of Year 6, standards are exceptionally high in mathematics and above average in English and science. The rate of progress made by the pupils between Year 2 and Year 6 is good overall, especially in mathematics. Pupils have met the challenging targets set as a result of the good teaching that they receive. There is no significant difference in the achievements of boys and girls. Throughout the school pupils with

learning difficulties make good progress. The small number of children from Traveller communities, and those who speak English as an additional language, also make good progress. This is because tasks are well matched to their needs and they are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils have extremely positive attitudes towards the school, are very well behaved, polite and have good relationships with all staff and with one another. Consequently, the school is a happy and caring place in which all children feel valued and safe. Pupils make a very positive contribution to the community through various means, including raising funds for local and national charities. The school council members are enthusiastic about their role because they know that they can make a difference. They are actively involved in deciding how to spend their allocated budget. Pupils are very clear about what constitutes a healthy diet and readily drink water throughout the day. At lunch times, all the children are involved in purposeful exercise, playing creatively with the excellent resources and equipment provided by the school. They also take part in many sporting activities. This excellent provision was recognised through a national sports award. Attendance is just above the national average and the school is working to make it even better. Whilst pupils' moral and social development is exemplary, the promotion of their understanding about cultural diversity is not as well developed. The school recognises that pupils could be given wider opportunities for understanding cultural differences and for spiritual development within the curriculum. By the end of Year 6, pupils' very good communication and social skills, together with competence in literacy and numeracy, have prepared them very well for their future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. In all classes, teachers and pupils have very good working relationships. Consequently, pupils enjoy their learning, are hard working, well behaved and eager to succeed. Teaching is good in Reception with children learning through a good variety of interesting and carefully planned practical activities. Within the rest of the school, teachers' secure subject knowledge underpins similarly well planned lessons. Tasks are well matched to the needs of the pupils so that all, including those with particular needs, are able to engage fully. Teachers are making increasingly good use of the interactive white boards to enliven lessons and motivate the pupils who respond well. The effective deployment of teaching assistants and support staff contributes well to the good progress made by pupils with learning difficulties. Whilst work planned for the higher attainers is challenging, particularly in English and mathematics, the school recognises this as an area for further development. Assessment procedures are effective. The pupils respond to the extensive feedback that they get

on their work and improvement is seen as a result. Pupils' self-assessment is developing well. Most are able to say whether or not they have understood the work that they have done. Some pupils are less secure in this respect and staff are taking steps to help them to develop a clearer understanding of how well they are doing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school judges the curriculum to be outstanding. Whilst inspectors consider that some aspects are outstanding, the overall judgement is that the curriculum is good. The broad and balanced curriculum meets requirements and the interesting curriculum in the Foundation Stage links the areas for learning well. The school enriches the curriculum further by providing two separate innovative weeks that enable pupils to experience and use enquiry and creative skills. However, the skills pupils gain during this time are not yet systematically built upon in everyday lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties are well provided for, with good support from teaching assistants. The curriculum is effective in guiding the pupils towards being safe and healthy and to contributing to the local community. There is an exceptional range of enticing enrichment activities such as art, music, drama and sports clubs, which are extremely well supported by both pupils and staff. These, together with a good number of visits and visitors, plus the enrichment weeks during the year, make a very positive impact on the pupils' personal and social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school takes excellent care of pupils and makes sure that they are safe. This first rate level of care makes pupils feel very well looked after. Teachers and support staff know the pupils very well. Child protection arrangements are in place and understood by all staff. The school works effectively with outside agencies to ensure that all pupils receive the support and guidance they need. For example, the local authority's Traveller support service provides an excellent level of support for Traveller pupils, who are fully integrated into the life of the school. The staff make very effective use of the checks made on an individual pupil's progress to identify the next steps that need to be taken. Parents provide much help at home and in school that benefits pupils' learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher is particularly effective in giving the school good direction which successfully promotes high standards and pupils' outstanding personal development. He and the deputy headteacher have complementary skills and this has created an atmosphere where teachers and managers have the confidence to be self-evaluative. This ensures that the school has a good capacity to improve. Senior leaders work well as a team and teachers receive good

professional development. The school's investment in teaching assistants is a well-judged strategy because it is successful in promoting pupils' progress. Parents and pupils are consulted regularly and their views help to inform school self-evaluation which is strong at all levels. Routine monitoring of teachers' planning and pupils' work by subject leaders is good because the evaluations lead to continuous improvement. Assessments of the quality of teaching are accurate overall, but are insufficiently focussed on pupils' progress. The school's plan to improve the quality of teaching and learning further is being implemented well but needs to be more closely tied to how it impacts on pupils' progress. The governing body provides strong backing for the school and are good ambassadors for the school in the community. It is effective in its role as 'critical friend' and has improved its approach to evaluating how well the school implements its priorities. Financial planning is secure and carefully monitored.

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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?	2	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	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?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	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	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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 the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We think your school is a friendly and happy place and we particularly liked the following things: - You enjoy coming to school and being with your friends. - You try hard and do very well in your work. - You behave very well and show care and kindness for one another. - You like to be healthy and take part in lots of games and activities. - The grown-ups in your school work hard to keep you safe and make sure that you get the most out of being at school. The people in charge of the school run it very well. They know how to make it even better. We have asked them to keep a close check on your learning in lessons and to make sure that you get many more chances to use the skills you show during your exciting 'discovery' and 'arts' weeks. We think that you and your parents are right to feel proud of your school. It is a credit to you and the staff who work hard because they want the best for you. Thank you again for helping us with our work.