



Ruardean Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115647
LEA Gloucestershire
Inspection number 279644
Inspection dates 5 July 2006 to 5 July 2006
Reporting inspector Peter Callow AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Ruardean
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Gloucestershire GL17 9XQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01594 542461
Number on roll	116	Fax number	01594 542461
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Sue Mann
Date of previous inspection	22 May 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Jane Watkinson

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Ruardean is a rural, mixed village community with some indicators of below average social and economic circumstances. Most pupils who attend the school come from the village, but a Communication and Interaction Centre is based at the school which serves the surrounding area. The Centre has up to ten places for pupils with severe speech and language impairment or whose needs relate to the Autism Spectrum Disorder. Pupils from the Centre are on the school roll and all have statements of special educational need.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ruardean is a good school. Although pupils generally enter school with standards that are below those expected and there is a high proportion with statements of special educational need, all groups of pupils make good progress. Standards steadily rise so that by the time pupils leave the school in Year 6 they are usually above average. This confirms the school's view that its effectiveness is good and that it provides good value for money.

Provision for children in Reception is good because they are taught well and the curriculum meets the needs of these young learners. They make good progress so that standards are at least broadly average by the time they begin in Year 1.

The headteacher leads the school well and ensures that staff and governors have a good understanding of both its strengths and areas for development. She has created a special atmosphere where achievement, which is good, and the personal development and well-being of pupils, which are outstanding, share high priority. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are exemplary. They really enjoy coming to school, particularly because of the exciting learning opportunities that they are given. The curriculum is considerably enhanced by the emphasis on personal, social, health and citizenship education and an excellent range of extra activities.

Teaching is good overall and some is outstanding. However, inconsistent use of assessment information is limiting a few pupils in making better progress. The school recognises this and also the need for more rigour in its checking for consistency. Similarly, the quality of marking varies across the school and, where it does not indicate next steps in learning, limits the progress of some pupils.

Since the last inspection good progress has been made in improving the school. Strong leadership and a very capable and committed staff team provide the school with good capacity to improve even further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure, through careful checking, that teachers use assessment information consistently to challenge all pupils to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Ensure that marking clearly indicates to pupils what they have achieved and what they need to do next to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good overall. Pupils with learning difficulties and those with statements of special educational need, including those who are on the roll of the Communication and Interaction Centre, generally make good progress because work is carefully matched to their needs and they are well supported. More able pupils too, generally make good progress, particularly as the result of the arrangements made for these pupils to work

in groups appropriate to their needs, rather than their age. A small number of pupils, of all abilities, do not always make the progress of which they are fully capable because their work does not build sufficiently well on what they already know, understand and can do.

Pupils generally enter Reception with standards that are below those normally expected. Often there are particular weaknesses in speaking and listening and mathematics. However, pupils are well taught and make good progress so that by the time they leave Reception their standards are broadly average. Those groups of pupils who sometimes enter school with standards that are at expected levels also make good progress; they are above average when they start Year 1.

The standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 vary, but are above average overall because of the challenging targets that are set and reached. Unconfirmed assessment information for pupils taking Year 6 tests in 2006 show that they reached higher than average standards in all subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Their attendance is only satisfactory, mainly because a few pupils take holidays in term time. However, all pupils say how much they enjoy school, particularly because of the exciting lessons and extra opportunities.

As a result of high expectations and the care that adults show, pupils are confident, have high self-esteem and demonstrate exemplary attitudes and behaviour. They show a very high degree of respect and consideration for each other, staff and visitors. Pupils contribute significantly to the community, both in and beyond the school. They are keen to undertake extra responsibilities and to help each other, for example the School Council organises a range of events and pupils act as playground buddies and monitors. They are knowledgeable about their Kenya link school and take pride in supporting it. The pupils know how to keep safe and healthy, showing a particular awareness of healthy eating and the importance of regular exercise. The high quality of pupils' personal development means that they are learning to be good citizens who are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and there is some that is outstanding. Relationships are very positive in all classes and contribute to the pupils' exemplary behaviour. Teachers provide a clear focus at the start of lessons, and summarise and consolidate learning well at the end. There is a good emphasis on practical activity, particularly in mathematics, which helps pupils to both enjoy and understand their learning.

Pupils with learning difficulties and those with statements of special educational need are well supported by good individual action plans and adult support, either in class or as part of a group withdrawn for specific teaching. As a result they make good progress. Well planned work and extension activities provide challenge for the more able so that they too generally make good progress.

Whilst there are some good examples of assessment information being used extremely well in Years 5 and 6 to ensure that planned activities build carefully on all pupils' prior learning, this good practice is not consistent across the school. As a result, a small number of pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable. There is inconsistency too in the quality of marking and not enough indicates to pupils what they have achieved and what they need to do next to improve. Again, this limits the progress for some.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good overall with some outstanding features. Good attention is given to developing pupils' skills in English and mathematics. There is also a strong focus on personal, social, health and citizenship education which makes a significant and highly effective contribution to pupils' outstanding personal development.

Another strength is the very wide range of extra learning opportunities that are provided. These are both regular and integrated well into the life of the school and so enrich the curriculum considerably. They include, for example, a focus on the environment as well as the involvement of local artists and the use of dance and drama activities.

The use of information and communication technology (ICT) has improved since the last inspection. The school is aware however, of the need to embed the system for assessing pupils' progress and to monitor and evaluate the impact of the use of ICT across the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good and there is an extremely high standard of pastoral support. This support enables pupils to feel safe, cared for and valued. It contributes significantly to their great enjoyment of school and their outstanding personal development. Staff are vigilant about child protection and health and safety procedures.

Support for pupils with learning difficulties and those with special educational needs is good. For example, The Communication and Interaction Centre has a good success rate in integrating pupils into mainstream classes. Support for other pupils is good too, but for some pupils of all abilities the inconsistencies in the quality of marking limit their progress. There are good systems for tracking pupils' progress but not all teachers make sufficient use of the assessment information gained to ensure that each pupil is helped to make the progress of which he or she is capable.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a clear focus on raising standards and achievement for all pupils. She is doing this successfully whilst ensuring that the personal development and well-being of pupils are also of high priority. Her concern to have happy and motivated pupils who are keen to learn is very much in evidence throughout the school.

There are good systems in place for checking and evaluating the performance of the school. The headteacher recognises however, that these need to be even more rigorous to ensure consistently good teaching and learning that enables all pupils to make good progress. The roles of subject leaders, which have improved since the time of the last inspection, and governors in monitoring and evaluation procedures, is well defined. Their roles contribute effectively to the good quality of the school's self-evaluation, which is extremely well led by the headteacher. It is accurate in identifying both strengths and weaknesses, and means that strategies to bring about improvement are thoughtfully considered in the School Improvement Plan, which prioritises actions well. The school actively seeks the views of parents as part of its evaluation and the introduction of homework books for pupils is just one example of the school's good response.

The governing body is well led, fulfils all its statutory requirements and supports the work of the school very effectively. The strength of the leadership and management, supported by the commitment and skills of the staff team, provides the school with good capacity to improve further.

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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	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	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	2	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?	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?	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 for being so friendly and polite when we visited your school recently. We were very impressed by your excellent behaviour and attitudes to your work.

You told us how much you enjoy being at school because of the exciting and practical activities which help you to learn. We agree with you that your school is a good school. This is because the headteacher, supported by the staff and governors, want you to make good progress in your work and also to grow up to be kind and responsible citizens.

Your personal development is outstanding and most of you make the progress of which you are capable, but a few of you could make greater progress. The teaching you receive is good and some is outstanding. We have asked your teachers to make sure that they all use the assessments of how well you are doing to plan your work carefully. We have also asked that they mark it in such a way that you always know how well you have done and what you need to do next to improve.

Your headteacher leads your school well so that you have a happy place, where each one of you is cared for and encouraged to learn. We are sure that with her leadership and the good staff team the school can improve even more.