



Rowlands Castle St John's Church of England Controlled Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116310
Local Authority Hampshire
Inspection number 279789
Inspection dates 1–2 November 2006
Reporting inspector Michael Pye

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Whichers Gate Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Rowland's Castle
Age range of pupils	4–11		PO9 6BB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02392412095
Number on roll (school)	198	Fax number	02392413730
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Sue DeGuisa
		Headteacher	Mrs Kay Pennicotte-Henrie
Date of previous school inspection	27 September 1999		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is of average size and serves an area of mixed housing. The numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. There are above average numbers of pupils who enter or leave the school other than in Years 1 and 6. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average, but there are below average numbers of pupils with a statement of special needs. The school has experienced a recent period of serious staffing problems. This is now ended and a new head teacher was appointed this year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

The school fails to provide a satisfactory standard of education for a significant number of its pupils in Years 1 and 2. This is partly due to a recent, prolonged period of staffing problems, which included the appointment of a new headteacher. The various changes introduced by the new headteacher have not had sufficient time to bring about an improvement in standards and achievement, particularly in Years 1 and 2. However parents and pupils correctly recognise that the care for pupils is good and their personal development is progressing well. This caring approach is very evident in the good Foundation Stage, for example, where the pupils settle quickly and progress well.

Standards in 2005 in the national tests were significantly above average. Partly as a consequence of staff and pupil upheaval, results in 2006 appear likely to be broadly average, reflecting satisfactory achievement. In Years 1 and 2 there has been a pattern of slowly declining results since 2003. In 2005 results were in line with the national average but given their starting points the pupils made inadequate progress. In 2006 it appears likely that results in writing will be well below average and in mathematics below average, particularly for high attainers. This is linked to the teachers not using assessment data sufficiently well to plan work that is sufficiently challenging for all pupils.

The new headteacher has been quick to identify where improvement is needed. Regular monitoring of teaching now takes place and is well linked to performance management. It is bringing improvements, for example in the teaching of phonics. The school acknowledges that more work is required to tackle inconsistencies in the use of specific learning objectives to guide pupils' learning, and in raising teachers' expectations. The school now has some good assessment systems that help track pupils' progress more carefully. The management structure is undergoing change to give managers more responsibility. The full impact of this change has not yet been seen although subject action plans are now in place to guide future development, and this has already resulted in a new handwriting scheme being introduced. There is a secure capacity to improve the school.

The school has established good links with a wide range of external bodies which support learners well. Thriving links with a local secondary school result in French and mathematics lessons being provided for older pupils. Pupils enjoy school, behave well and there are good opportunities for them to discuss issues affecting their lives. Pupils make a good contribution to the running of the school through the school council. The curriculum is enhanced by some good visits and visitors.

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 could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to standards and achievement in Years 1 and 2.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in Years 1 and 2, particularly by raising teachers' expectations of pupils
- Ensure that all assessment information is fully used to plan work that challenges all pupils
- Ensure that teachers in all lessons make use of learning objectives that focus clearly on what pupils are expected to learn.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

By Year 2 the teachers assess the pupils' attainment as well below average and pupils make inadequate progress. Children join Reception with skill levels above those normally expected for their age. They make good progress, and the majority leave Reception having achieved the expected learning goals, and with a significant proportion exceeding them. In Year 6, test results are broadly average and achievement is satisfactory. Although the results in 2005 were well above average, the 2006 results reflect a dip in performance, with results in mathematics below average. Year 6 performance in 2006 has been adversely affected by the significant number of pupils joining the school at different times, including some with learning and behavioural difficulties.

The weaker performance in Years 1 and 2, and the dip in standards by Year 6, can be partly explained by the numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and the considerable changes in staffing, leadership and management in recent years. Unless the school's predictions for the end of the current Year 2 are exceeded, achievement and standards here will remain inadequate for significant numbers of pupils, with particular weaknesses in the achievement of higher attainers.

The development of curriculum managers, the emphasis on speaking and listening and the introduction of a phonics programme is starting to show an improvement in pupils' reading and writing standards. However, these actions have yet to have a substantial impact on achievement across the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. A good range of sporting activities, employing the use of a sports coach, encourages pupils to be physically active and pupils have a good understanding about healthy lifestyles. Pupils feel safe at school and say that adults deal quickly with any problems. Most pupils say they enjoy school. As one pupil said, and;quot;l would recommend the school because it's a happy place where you are helped to learn welland;quot;. Attendance is average but is improving as a consequence of school actions. Behaviour is good and very good relationships are quickly established. Pupils contribute well to the life of the school. Older pupils enjoy supervising and playing with younger ones. School council discussions

have brought about improvements to playground equipment and toilets. Pupils work very well together, show independence, and have very positive attitudes to school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Visits to different places of worship and class discussions help them to respect people who are different from them. They are satisfactorily prepared for future life and learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning throughout the school are satisfactory. There are current improvements resulting from the regular monitoring of lessons. In an outstanding lesson older pupils made the most of many good opportunities for becoming independent learners. A good working 'buzz' is established as pupils settle well to their work, reflecting very positive relationships and pupil attitudes. In some work there are examples of good on-going assessment that result in appropriately challenging work being set. However progress slows, as in Years 1 and 2, where this has been inconsistent. Some teachers are uncertain about using assessment data to plan work, and assessing the levels at which pupils are working. This adversely affects teachers' expectations of pupils and their ability to set appropriately challenging work. As a consequence the pupils' make slower progress. Teachers inconsistently set clear learning objectives that allow pupils to assess how they have progressed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and effective changes have been made in the planning for phonics and handwriting. There is a good range of additional activities to support pupils' learning, for example, in sport and French. Pupils benefit well from a good range of additional activities such as in music, and there are particularly active links with the local village. When pupils study topics such as the 'Polar Bear', teachers provide good opportunities to make links between subjects. These help to reinforce pupils' learning about healthy living for example. An effective personal, social and health education, together with class discussions in circle time helps ensure that pupils learn social skills. The school has insufficient information to track the delivery of information and communication technology (ICT) across the school. The good Reception curriculum balances teacher-led activities with opportunities for the children to work and play independently.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Child protection procedures, risk assessments and health and safety procedures are robust and well implemented. Parents and pupils feel that the school knows its pupils well and provides a high level

of care. Good relationships are established and as one pupil said, 'We trust all of the teachers and staff'. The school carefully prepares children for entry into the Reception class and consequently they settle in well. A good range of external agencies are used that help support individual pupils and their families. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress, benefiting from the support they receive from good classroom assistants. Pupils are now regularly assessed and targets are set. There are inconsistencies in the extent to which teachers use such assessment information to plan future work for pupils of different abilities. Most, but not all pupils know their targets and understand how they can be used to help them improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. There are also strengths, for instance, the very competent headteacher, and the committed governing body have coped well with a period of great change. They have done so whilst maintaining a high quality of pupils' personal development, well-being and care. Good behaviour and positive pupil attitudes exist.

Monitoring, involving all staff and governors is now embedded. The new headteacher gave priority to the development of a clear and relevant school development plan, which is shared and understood by all. Some developments, such as the introduction of more speaking and listening opportunities in lessons are having an immediate effect on pupils' vocabulary and writing. Others, such as the introduction of new assessment procedures and the new handwriting scheme have yet to have a significant impact on standards and achievement. For instance, the use of assessment has yet to be sufficiently developed to the point where all teachers are consistently using the information to plan appropriate work for all pupils. Performance management targets are set. The introduction of the new regular assessments to track pupils' progress has been one positive outcome. A further development has been the very recent appointment of managers who now have responsibility for their subject areas. This has resulted in more shared involvement in monitoring and evaluation and the drawing up of subject development plans.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection particularly with regard to pupils' presentation of work and the Reception outdoor area. The governing body is increasingly able to hold the school to account. Taken with more recent developments a secure capacity for further improvement is indicated.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

You may remember our visit. We enjoyed meeting you and listened carefully to what you had to say. Thank you.

Your school has some good features but it is failing to provide a satisfactory standard of education for many pupils in Years 1 and 2.

We particularly liked:

- The many changes which your new headteacher has made
- That you are benefiting from the new way that the school teaches word and letter sounds and handwriting
- How well you behave, and that you get along well together and care for each other
- Your enjoyment of school and that you feel your ideas are valued
- You said that the school cares very well for you and gives you good opportunities to talk and listen about issues that concern you
- The way you benefit from visits, and visitors - you obviously enjoyed the fire engine!

We have asked that:

- All teachers give you work that challenges you
- The school improves your work and how well you progress in Years 1 and 2.

Perhaps you could help your teachers by telling them when you are uncertain about what you are expected to learn in lessons.

Thank you again for all your help. I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Pye

Lead inspector