



# Rode Methodist VC First School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 123823  
**LEA** Somerset  
**Inspection number** 281569  
**Inspection dates** 27 September 2005 to 27 September 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Michael Burghart RISP

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

<b>Type of school</b>	First	<b>School address</b>	Rode
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Frome
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 9		Somerset BA11 6NZ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01373 830523
<b>Number on roll</b>	50	<b>Fax number</b>	01373 830523
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	4 December 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Carolyn Tommey

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 9	<b>Inspection dates</b> 27 September 2005 - 27 September 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 281569
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a small rural first school with two mixed-age classes. In the morning, Reception children are taught separately. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is well below average. Fewer than average pupils have learning difficulties. Most children attend some form of pre-school group before starting the school. Children start Reception with above average levels of attainment. The school is a Healthy School and holds the Arts Council Gold Artsmark Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school, with some outstanding features, which provides good value for money. This is consistent with the school's view of itself. Since the last inspection, improvement has been good. Pupils achieve standards that are well above average, although there have been fluctuations in writing and mathematics results. Pupils are successfully helped to build on the good provision in the Foundation Stage to make good progress. Good teaching and support help pupils of all abilities to achieve well and enjoy learning. The school takes excellent care of pupils. Personal development is outstanding. Pupils enthusiastically take advantage of the high quality learning environment and very good extra-curricular opportunities.

Good leadership and management are based on an accurate understanding of what works and what needs to be improved. This comes from good self-evaluation which is extremely well led by the head and shows that the school's capacity to improve is good. There is an excellent team spirit which includes pupils, staff, governors and the wider community. The curriculum is good, but the school has already identified the need to further improve planning for the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects, and the reporting of pupils' performance to parents.

Grade: 2

### What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure standards in writing and mathematics are consistent year on year
- Improve planning for ICT to increase its use in the teaching of a range of subjects
- Improve the quality of pupils' reports to show how well pupils are doing compared with national expectations.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science have been well above average for several years. There are variations year on year; for example, in 2004, mathematics results were better than those in writing, but in 2005 the opposite was true. However, pupils' achievements are nevertheless good, with the majority of pupils, including potential higher attainers, making good progress. The school is already targeting, as areas for further improvement, writing and problem solving in mathematics.

Children start Reception with skills which are better than are normally found in this age group. However, there are variations between year groups. By the end of Reception, children reach all the goals expected nationally. This solid start is effectively built on throughout the school.

Pupils with learning difficulties do well, making good, and sometimes very good, progress against the challenging targets set for them. In 2005, all pupils reached the

national average levels in reading and writing, and all but one in mathematics, showing how successful support is.

The limited evidence of this inspection points to pupils' success in other subjects. For example, pupils achieve well in ICT, and in art as shown by lots of examples of two- and three-dimensional work around the school.

Grade: 2

## **Personal development and well-being**

**Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. The school extremely successfully encourages pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles. Pupils learn to take care of themselves and stay safe. Independence and responsibility, and progress in literacy, numeracy and ICT, prepare pupils well for everyday life. From Reception, children are successfully encouraged to show independence and make choices.

The school's excellent ethos is securely built on outstanding relationships and the family atmosphere that parents and pupils really value. Links with the community are excellent.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. "Teachers make everything fun!" was a Year 4 girl's comment. No one could think of any bullying or bad behaviour. Standards of behaviour are outstanding. Attendance is well above average. Pupils' development is extended through personal, social, health and citizenship education. It successfully ensures pupils appreciate that being considerate and respecting others and the environment make for a very good community spirit. The school's award of 'Silver Swap' for reducing packaging wastage is a very good example of pupils' eco-friendly awareness.

Moral and social development are of high quality. Parents are right that these are undoubted strengths of the school. The school's Christian values are reflected in pupils' attitudes. Pupils' spiritual development is good, with good opportunities for reflection and appreciation.

Grade: 1

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 2**

Evidence shows that teaching is consistently good. Teachers are well organised and plan work effectively for the different ages and abilities in their classes. They make work challenging, interesting and enjoyable. Because of this, pupils respond extremely well and make good progress.

Highlights include:

teachers' very effective questioning encourages pupils to think, and involves everyone actively in all lessons. For example, in a Years 3 and 4 religious education lesson the teacher's outstanding questioning prompted an excellent discussion about responsibility

a strong commitment in Reception to learning through play and developing independence makes particularly good use of much improved outdoor facilities

outstanding relationships; in this small school staff know pupils very well and are prepared to listen to what they have to say

very good support and teaching for pupils with learning difficulties results in nearly all these pupils achieving nationally expected standards; teaching assistants make a valuable contribution

good assessment. This is a big improvement since the last inspection and enables staff to track progress effectively. Information is used well to let pupils know how they can improve. However, parents are not told in reports how pupils are achieving compared with national expectations.

Grade: 2

## **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 2**

The quality of the curriculum is good. Good planning ensures work is enjoyable and meets requirements. The two-year rolling programme avoids unnecessary repetition in mixed-age classes. The curriculum is regularly and successfully reviewed to build on pupils' experience. Work is presented to allow for all levels of ability, particularly benefiting higher attainers and those with learning difficulties.

Recent evaluation of pupils' performance in National Curriculum assessments is leading to curriculum modifications. For example, the school is now providing more opportunities to develop pupils' writing, and is introducing more problem-solving using everyday situations.

A strength of the school is the very good enrichment of the curriculum through visits and visitors, and the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities well attended by pupils. A strong commitment to art has a good impact on pupils' cultural and spiritual development. Good improvements to ICT resources are raising standards. However, planning for ICT in other subjects is not clear enough.

The Foundation Stage curriculum is good, following a programme of major improvements. Many more opportunities to learn through play now underpin good progress.

Grade: 2

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

The school takes outstanding care of pupils and gives them very good support and guidance. In Reception, children are welcomed, settled into routines, and given an excellent introduction to school life.

There are highly effective arrangements to encourage behaviour, attendance and positive attitudes. Staff know pupils very well and have high expectations. There are good arrangements for assessing how pupils are doing. Very effective evaluations lead to good target-setting which helps staff plan for individuals' needs, showing pupils how they can improve. More able pupils are challenged well and those with learning difficulties receive good support. Staff show considerable respect for children's views and rights, and this underpins the excellent relationships and high quality pastoral care.

Governors and staff pay very careful attention to health and safety. Together with the strong support of parents, the school presents an excellent, stimulating and attractive learning environment where pupils can feel safe and become actively involved in learning. Arrangements to safeguard pupils are very good and constantly under review.

Good links with pre-school groups and the middle school ensure that pupils are well prepared for different stages of education. Parents have justifiable confidence in the school's care for their children.

Grade: 1

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Management of the school is good. The headteacher's outstanding leadership makes everyone feel valued and draws people together as an excellent team. The school has a good, shared educational direction. The headteacher sets a very good example and is extremely effective in motivating others. They respond with commitment and enthusiasm. This contributes to the school's excellent ethos. The school's self-evaluation is good and is the basis of its good capacity to improve.

Staff and governors have developed good monitoring arrangements. They keep good track of resources and evaluate the impact of decisions taken, resulting in considerable improvements to the Foundation Stage.

All staff make a good contribution to how well the school is led and managed. They show initiative in creating action plans which feed into the school's development priorities. Management highlights include the Foundation Stage, provision for those with learning difficulties, and assessment.

Parents were very keen to show that they are extremely happy with the way the school is run and how effective links are maintained with the community. "My children love school, they are inspired!" reported one parent. The school's documentation shows that staff have an accurate understanding of strengths and areas for improvement.

Headteacher and governors are very good at prioritising to keep the school moving forward.

In this small school, spending per pupil is understandably high; nevertheless it continues to give good value for money.

Grade: 2



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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	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	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	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	1	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

28th September 2005

Dear Children

I really enjoyed my visit to your school. You made me very welcome. What a treat it must be to have such a good building and interesting grounds. I was particularly grateful to all those children who spoke so politely to me and told me of the many things that are good about your school.

Rode First is a good school. These are some of the highlights:

You do well in your work and make good progress. This means you are well prepared for the middle school.

Teachers do their jobs well and make your work interesting and enjoyable.

Your behaviour is excellent and you are keen to come to school.

The school takes excellent care of you at work and play and makes sure there are plenty of clubs and other things to enjoy.

The headteacher, governors and staff run the school very well. They are very good at making sure you have a safe and attractive place to work in.

Improving your writing, helping you with how to solve problems, planning even more ways to make use of the computers, and improving school reports are all on the list to make your school even better.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mike Burghart Lead inspector