



Royal Cross Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 133688
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 282333
Inspection dates 1 December 2005 to 1 December 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Andrew Margerison

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Elswick Road
School category	Community		Ashton-on-Ribble
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Preston, Lancashire
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01772 729705
Number on roll	25	Fax number	01772 729866
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Gillian Hill
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs Ruth Nottingham

Age group 3 to 11	Inspection dates 1 December 2005 - 1 December 2005	Inspection number 282333
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

Royal Cross Primary School is situated on the outskirts of Preston. It provides specialist education mainly for deaf pupils. A few pupils have speech and communication difficulties or autistic spectrum disorders. Most pupils are of White-British origin, but a third come from Asian backgrounds. Ten pupils have English as an additional language and a significant proportion use British Sign Language. In 2001 the school changed from non-maintained status and became a community special school maintained by Lancashire County Council. Pupils travel from all over Lancashire. In the last five years, four experienced members left the school for various reasons and have been replaced. The school also has a resource base offering pre-school day care and other facilities for playgroups and other agencies.

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 that provides good value for money. Inspection evidence completely confirms the school's view of its own performance. The school is very well led by the headteacher who is an excellent role model for other staff and pupils. She has established highly effective procedures to evaluate the quality of the school's work so that it is continually developing its provision and extending its role as a centre of expertise in the education of deaf children. Staff, parents and governors are consulted but the school does not have similar systematic procedures to involve pupils in this process. Teaching is good and highly focused on ensuring pupils learn to communicate effectively and develop secure basic skills. The curriculum provision, including for children in the Foundation Stage, is good and reflects the different needs of pupils well. As a result, from a very low starting point, pupils achieve well. The standard of care and support provided for pupils is good so they develop very positive attitudes to learning, love being at school and behave outstandingly well. The school has good links with many external organisations and other primary schools, but there is scope to extend the arrangements for preparing pupils for moving on to the next stage of their education. The school has a good capacity to improve further.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide systematic opportunities for pupils to become involved in the development of the school and to contribute to improvement planning.
- Establish closer links with secondary schools to enhance the arrangements for the transition of pupils to the next phase of their education.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All pupils, irrespective of the nature of their learning difficulties, ethnic background or first language, achieve well. Most start school with standards that are well below those typical for their age and many struggle to communicate effectively. Initially, the school concentrates on developing this basic skill in ways that are best suited to each pupil's needs. This individual approach is at the heart of the school's ethos and, as a result, they make rapid progress. By the end of reception, they all take part in conversations and are beginning to develop basic literacy and numeracy skills. In Years 1 to 6, pupils of all abilities continue to achieve well although overall standards remain below average. Teachers place a very strong emphasis on providing pupils' with practical activities and experiences and, as result, they make very good progress in their ability to use and apply numbers, carry out scientific investigations and to discuss what they are learning about. By the end of Key Stage 2, most are confident communicators and have secure basic skills. More able pupils do well and in the 2005 national tests for eleven year olds, some pupils reached the expected level in reading and science. Overall, progress in reading and writing is satisfactory but the school rightly believes that

standards can be improved by developing pupils' ability to express their own ideas and feelings and this is a current school priority. Standards of pupils' artwork on display are high and enhance the school environment.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. In the Foundation Stage the youngest children are fully involved in school activities so they quickly learn routines and how to behave well. As pupils move through the school they learn very strong moral and social values. This is reflected in their very good attitudes to learning and outstanding behaviour. Pupils really enjoy school and are keen to take part in anything the school provides for them. Attendance is satisfactory overall, but is adversely affected by a few pupils who are absent a lot due to medical problems. The very strong emphasis on developing pupils' communication skills equips them for their future economic well-being. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and how to stay safe in different situations in and out of school. The school also makes sure that pupils take an active part in the local community and learn about their responsibilities to other people. For example, during the inspection pupils were practising for performing 'signed' Christmas carols in a local shopping centre. Pupils take responsibility for jobs around school but there are no systematic procedures for them to contribute to the wider development of the school or to express formally their ideas on how it could be improved.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning throughout the school are good. The over-riding aim is to equip pupils with the skills they need in order to be independent learners and this is achieved well. This is due to the very detailed systems in place to assess and track pupils' progress. They provide teachers with a very secure basis on which to plan activities that are well matched to the needs of each individual learner. As a result, pupils of all abilities are well challenged and achieve well. The support provided for pupils is of a very high standard because teachers and support staff work very closely together in planning and delivering lessons. A major strength of the teaching is the way that adults use a combination of different communication strategies to involve pupils in lessons and to encourage them to contribute their ideas. All pupils learn to sign and this is augmented by oral communication and symbols so that they make rapid progress in their ability to share their ideas and thoughts with adults and each other. Inspectors agree with the school that there are no whole school issues regarding improving the teaching but monitoring by senior staff has highlighted some specific areas that individual staff need to work on.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of all learners, irrespective of their age or learning difficulties. It provides pupils with opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge in all relevant subjects of the National Curriculum. It is enhanced by regular theme days on topics such as India. These days give pupils good opportunities to take part in visits and in exciting activities such as dance workshops. The curriculum is also very well enriched by activities out of lessons that many pupils take part in. Most importantly, the curriculum is innovative and reflects the aims and ethos of the school well. For example, pupils have regular lessons in Deaf Studies which aims to help them develop a positive sense of identity as a deaf person and to prepare them for independent living in the future. A good programme of personal, social and health education ensures that pupils develop a good understanding of healthy eating and the importance of taking exercise. The school uses external specialist teachers well to provide skilled teaching in physical education and has established a good link with a local primary school which provides some pupils each week to take part in these lessons. This ensures that pupils are able to experience the full range of the subject as well as to work with hearing children. However, there are no similar arrangements for staff from the secondary school to work with pupils before they transfer at the end of Year 6.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This aspect of the school's work is good overall. The level of care provided for pupils is excellent, is embedded throughout the school and evident in all activities. Good procedures are in place for child protection. Relationships between adults and pupils are very positive and make a major contribution to ensuring that the school is a safe place for pupils to learn and that they feel safe and supported. Parents unanimously praise the standard of care provided for their children and feel confident that their views are valued by the school. The school has very good systems in place to track the progress pupils are making and the information is used very effectively to set targets for improvement. The school has a comprehensive inclusion programme based on very good links with local primary schools. This enables most pupils to spend some of their time in mainstream schools with adult support if needed. However, the links with secondary schools are not as strong.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Although most of the teachers, including the deputy headteacher and several support staff, have only been at the school a short time, the headteacher has very successfully created a shared vision and sense of direction throughout the school. At the heart of this are the highly effective procedures to track pupils' progress and to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. As a

result, the school improvement plan is very detailed and sets very clear priorities for development sharply linked to improving standards. Governors and parents are involved in the process. Although pupils' views are sought informally, there are no systematic procedures to involve them directly in the process. The school places a very high priority on providing staff with the training they need to improve their skills and to help them fulfil their responsibilities as subject leaders. These are closely linked to the school improvement priorities and performance management targets. This powerful combination of highly effective self-evaluation, commitment and shared responsibility means that the school is well placed to improve further.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--	-----------------------	--------------

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	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?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	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	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	3	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	1	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	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

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE
T 0207 421 6800
F 0207 421 6707
www.ofsted.gov.uk
Ofsted helpline
08456 404045

Royal Cross Primary School
Elswick Road
Ashton-on-Ribble
Preston
Lancashire
PR2 1NT

2 December 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for welcoming me to your school this week. I enjoyed talking to you and finding out about all the things you do. You were really friendly and I would have liked to have been able to stay longer. I am pleased to tell you that I agree with you and your parents that your school is doing a good job. The things I particularly liked were:

your behaviour is outstanding and you have a very good understanding of how to look after yourselves, eat well and take plenty of exercise

the school really cares for you all equally and looks after you very well

all the adults in school work together very well so your school is a happy place to be

teachers make sure you do well in learning how to communicate with other people, how to use numbers and to carry out investigations in science

your headteacher and other staff know what your school does well and how they want to make it better.

I have asked your headteacher and the governors to make your school even better by:

giving you more opportunities to express your ideas on how your school could improve

develop more links with your secondary schools so you are really well prepared for moving on when you leave Royal Cross.

Thank you again for helping me so much with the inspection.

With best wishes

Andy Margerison

(Lead inspector)