

Rivington Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104761
Local Authority	St. Helens
Inspection number	287024
Inspection date	10 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Mark Madeley

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	255
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr B Heyes
Headteacher	Miss Glenys Chalk
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2002
School address	Tennis Street North St Helens Merseyside WA10 6LF
Telephone number	01744 678493
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This average sized primary school educates pupils who mostly live in the Windle and Queen's Park wards. The pupils are predominantly of White British heritage. There is a small number of Chinese and mixed heritage pupils, none of whom is at an early stage of English acquisition. An above average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and the school also has a higher than average proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need. The Nursery provision, which is housed in a separate building, can support 50 children part-time; currently, 48 children attend either a morning or afternoon session. About two thirds of these children transfer to the school's Reception class. The school has achieved the following awards for curriculum development: National Healthy Schools Award, Sports Activemark Gold, the Gold Artsmark, Silver Eco Award, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Investors in People and the Early Years Quality Kite Mark.

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 outstanding features in pupils' personal development, the curriculum, and the care, guidance and support given to pupils. Skilled leadership by the headteacher and governors has improved the school significantly since the last inspection. Teachers from other schools frequently visit to observe the effective use of role-play for improving pupils' writing. Most pupils are very confident to speak with adults, an ability which has been built up by effective use of praise over time. Many pupils are so confident that the school uses them to make presentations. For example, Year 2, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils presented their methods of marking each other's work to a recent assessment conference for local teachers.

The curriculum is of the highest quality in its variety, stimulating approach and extensive enrichment activities, ranging through a dance project, a mathematics week, the wonderful artwork and an 'International Week'. Pupils really like all their school has to offer and this has contributed to the rapid rise in attendance. They have very good relationships with staff and are secure in the knowledge that they are cared for very well. They know that staff would listen to them if they had a problem and promptly sort it out. Year 6 pupils who are 'Bully Busters' are well trained and capably deal with minor squabbles among younger pupils. Many other pupils take on jobs in order to help others, and carry them out very effectively. Behaviour is exemplary among older pupils, who show high levels of care and consideration for others. Some younger pupils have yet to reach these very high levels of social skill and find it difficult sometimes to work and play together sensibly. The school has outstanding partnerships with its parents, local secondary school and the many support agencies that help pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils have an extensive knowledge of how to stay fit and well. They exercise regularly, making the most of physical education lessons and the extensive range of clubs. Their understanding of what is and is not good for them is comprehensive. As pupils say, 'One packet of crisps is OK but don't have too many or you'll get fat!'

Children's skills on entry are below average and have declined from average since the last inspection because children now come from a wider area. Good provision in the Foundation Stage helps children make rapid progress, especially in their language skills. By the end of the Reception year, most reach the national expectation for their age. Effective teaching maintains pupils' good progress through Key Stage 1, where standards are above average at the end of Year 2. Pupils' progress had slowed through Key Stage 2 in the recent past. However, a three-year plan to improve pupils' language skills and engage them through more practical work has paid off. Pupils' progress has improved, standards are now very high and pupils' achievement is good throughout the school. Though the content is good, the way pupils present their work in both English and mathematics needs to be improved because it detracts from its quality.

Effective management has improved the quality of teaching through an emphasis on the question: 'What have pupils learned?' All aspects of the teachers' and teaching assistants' work are rigorously checked by senior managers and subject coordinators. This leads to senior managers having an accurate picture of the school. The school has good capacity to improve further. It gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of presentation of pupils' work in all areas of the curriculum, and especially in English and mathematics.

- Involve the staff, parents and wider community in improving further the social skills of younger pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All pupils, including the small numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups, achieve well. More children than in the past now have weak language skills and little understanding of how to play with each other when they start school. Through the Foundation Stage, well-planned and stimulating provision equips them well for learning in Year 1. Pupils make good progress through Key Stage 1, and standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 have been above average for the last five years. In Key Stage 2, standards have been above average for the last five years but this represented satisfactory progress from pupils' results in Key Stage 1. However, pupils' progress has accelerated and is now good. Their national tests results for 2007 in English, mathematics and science were very high and the very challenging school targets were exceeded. Across the school, some pupils' handwriting and number formation needs to be improved because it is sometimes hard to read.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Pupils are very proud of their school and all they do in it. They willingly take up positions of responsibility and carry them through exceptionally well. The school council is elected and is successful in passing on pupils' views to management. The Eco committee is very active in promoting recycling in school, as well as, along with the gardening club, improving the environment. The school's work for charity is very good and few opportunities are missed to raise funds. Overall, behaviour is good. However, some younger pupils find it hard to respond quickly to the teachers' signals for attention or to get along with each other. Attendance is above average and has improved markedly since the last inspection, another indication that pupils enjoy school very much. Older pupils working in the 'enterprise club' plan very successful activities, like discos and rugby tournaments. All Year 6 pupils have been trained in leading sports activities with younger pupils. They are extremely well prepared for their next school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The school has some outstanding teachers and their influence is helping to improve the quality of learning across the school. Teachers' planning is of high quality because they make rigorous use of their assessment information to provide tasks which meet the needs of pupils of differing ability. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics class most pupils, some with adult support, found all the possible combinations of ordering three objects. The more able pupils had four and later five objects to order. In most lessons the pace is brisk, but it occasionally slips and pupils have too little time to consolidate their understanding. While teachers' marking is often of high quality, some teachers' comments do not do enough to encourage pupils to present their work neatly. Staff deal very calmly and sensitively with occasional behaviour problems. Outdoor activities are planned exceptionally

well in the Foundation Stage. Skilled intervention by staff gets children to talk about what they are doing or to try something new.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum meets the needs of the pupils exceptionally well. The very effective use of role-play in all classrooms and the focus on improving pupils' vocabulary have raised standards in English. The school makes very effective use of 'special weeks' to engage pupils and to get their parents to share in their learning. Pupils say they enjoy school because of these weeks and because they do a great deal of practical work in mathematics and science. The range and quantity of extra clubs are excellent and give all pupils ample opportunity to stay fit, and for those with sporting talents to compete against other schools. The provision for pupils' personal development is very strong. Year 6 pupils recall vividly a visit to 'Crucial Crew' where they learned many things, not least the difference between medicines and drugs. An excellent dance project brought pupils closer to the community and taught them life skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

All pupils are very well cared for. Staff are well trained in care matters and know the pupils and their families very well. Safeguarding procedures are in place. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good, enabling them to make good, and sometimes excellent, progress against their targets. All pupils have an excellent understanding of how to improve their work further. They also are very aware of what qualities to look for in their own work because they regularly review each other's work. Pupils also write their own individual learning targets, and this leads to them trying that little bit harder to achieve them. Arrangements for introducing children to the school are thorough and those for preparing pupils for joining secondary school are excellent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Staff, governors and parents share in, and work purposefully towards, the aims for the school. Good teamwork, with everyone capably led by the headteacher, is the key to the school's continued success. One element of this is the way the school carries out its future planning, consulting all staff and governors. Senior managers are keen to involve the wider community in all that they do, and successful parent workshops have been run. Pupils' progress is checked carefully and any pupils who are not making enough progress are quickly identified and support measures are put in place for them. Governors fulfil their responsibilities well. The recently established links with subject coordinators are starting to give governors a greater insight into how the school works and the impact of their decisions on pupils' learning.

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Annex A

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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

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

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

It was a joy to visit your vibrant school and colourful classrooms recently. I enjoyed meeting with you and was pleased that you spoke very confidently to me. I listened carefully to what you had to say before making my judgements. You, your parents and the staff told me how good the school is and I agree. It is really good and has some excellent features. It helps you all make good progress in English, mathematics and science because teaching is good, and sometimes outstanding. Teachers help you develop as young people and you respond to their work in an excellent way. For example, the work that you do for each other in the school council and as activity leaders is of a very high quality. Also, you know a great deal about eating healthily and take up every opportunity to exercise and stay fit.

The good work of the headteacher and staff has enabled the current Year 6 to reach very high standards in their national tests. Staff have concentrated on improving your vocabulary and using role-play to improve your writing skills; this has paid off. However, your work could be presented in a neater way. I found that you are able to attend an excellent range of extra clubs. Also, the school takes you on many trips to see places of interest or invites experts into school to share their work with you. The school cares for you all very well and most of you look after each other very well too. In this respect the work of older pupils is excellent. Some of you pointed out that younger pupils do not always get along with each other well and I recognise this too.

Even in such a good school there is room for improvement. I have asked your headteacher to do two things which will improve your school further:

- make sure that your final draft or finished work is neatly presented
- help younger pupils to get along with each other better.

You can help your school improve further by ensuring that your work is presented neatly every time and by continuing to use exciting and adventurous vocabulary in your work. I hope that you are very proud of all that your school has achieved. Thank you very much for your help in the inspection.

I wish you and the school well for the future.