

Rainford Brook Lodge Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104780
Local Authority	St. Helens
Inspection number	287032
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Mike McLachlan

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	185
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr I Beaton
Headteacher	Mrs Pamela Davenport
Date of previous school inspection	30 September 2002
School address	Rufford Road Rainford St Helens Merseyside WA11 8JX
Telephone number	01744 678816
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The vast majority of pupils are from White British heritage. The school has Investors in People status, the National Healthy Schools Award and is a member of the Premier Partnership with a local university to support teacher training.

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 gives good value for money. Overall, pupils' standards are above average and achievement is good in relation to pupils' starting points. This is an improvement on last year. In the 2006 national tests at the end of Year 6, results were broadly average indicating that the achievement of pupils in that year group was satisfactory. This was due, in the main, to weaknesses in the performance of a number of boys in the English tests. A strong focus on literacy across the school combined with a more rigorous approach to monitoring and tracking pupils' progress in lessons has raised standards and achievement. The standards in writing, while improving, are still a relative weakness compared to those reached in reading and mathematics. The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good with some outstanding features. This is due to the consistently good quality of teaching and learning and a very creative, active and well planned curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and taking part in the very rich range of experiences it offers. Behaviour is exemplary and attendance is good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with outstanding features. Pupils readily accept responsibility for their own actions and show excellent caring and responsible attitudes towards their own health and safety and the well-being of each other. Pupils develop good independent learning and enterprise skills which contribute significantly to their future economic well-being.

The quality of teaching and learning is good with some that is outstanding, particularly when teachers make learning active through practical work, real life experiences and role play. The curriculum is outstanding. Learning is greatly enriched by a very wide variety of events, links with other schools and use of outside venues and experts which bring the curriculum to life. An excellent example of this was the rehearsal seen for the local village hall centenary festival. Pupils had researched the history of dance styles used by their parents and grandparents and then joyfully and expertly danced and acted out each era.

Care guidance and support are good. Procedures for safeguarding pupils in school are well in place and strong personal health and social education means that pupils are equipped to make the right choices with regard to their personal well-being. Support to ensure the smooth transition at key points within and on leaving school is excellent. Good systems are in place to monitor pupils' progress and identify those pupils who need additional support.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, with the full support of the governing body, has a good vision for improving the school based on an accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. There is a good and developing team of subject leaders and appointments have been made to strengthen key senior positions in the school in the next school year. The headteacher has recently established good monitoring and evaluation systems which are used well to target work to meet pupils' needs in lessons. These systems provide a sound basis for developing the coordinators' and new leadership team's roles in monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress towards their targets in the national tests, but this is at an early stage of development.

The school has a well deserved reputation in the area. It openly shares its resources with local groups before, during and after the school day and uses links with the community, local schools and other institutions to great effect, clearly living up to its name as a 'community' school. Leaders are not complacent. They have made good improvements since the last inspection and

have responded robustly to the recent dip in standards. Consequently, there is a good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, particularly in writing, to ensure pupils achieve good results in the English tests at the end of Year 6.
- Ensure the new leadership team and subject coordinators effectively monitor pupils' progress towards their expected levels in the national tests.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. They start with broadly average attainment and reach standards that are just above average by the time they move in to Year 1. Attainment builds progressively through the school. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils reach above average standards and progress is good. The school's actions to improve pupils' literacy skills, and the introduction of a more robust system to monitor pupils' progress within lessons, has raised overall standards. Consequently, pupils achieve well given their initial starting points. However, while standards in writing are improving, they lag behind those reached in reading and mathematics. Good support by teachers and teaching assistant ensures the small number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are active citizens in school and in the community and thoroughly enjoy the wide variety of experiences the school offers. They show an excellent understanding and attitude towards developing healthy and active lifestyles. Excellent links with children with different cultural backgrounds ensure they develop high levels of understanding of their own and other cultures. The national Healthy Schools Award, their ready involvement in a wide range of sporting activities, the work of the school council and the Year 5 peer mentors are a few of the many good examples of pupils caring for themselves and each other. Behaviour is excellent and attendance is good, although some days are lost due to holidays taken in school time. Pupils play well together and use the many playground games and facilities very well so all enjoy their free time. The emphasis on acting out situations enables pupils to develop good interpersonal skills, promotes their self-esteem and develops their understanding of important social and environmental issues. Consequently, preparation for their future economic well-being is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Overall, teachers and their assistants have secure subject knowledge and provide effective and sensitive support that enables all pupils to make good progress. Work is well planned and matched to pupils' needs. Role play is used to great effect across the school so that pupils immerse themselves in the situations they are studying and understand and empathise with the characters and issues involved. This is evident in all key stages. For example, Reception children act as vets, Years 1 and 3 as detectives and newspaper reporters and Year 5 as matadors and animal rights supporters. On occasions teaching

and learning is outstanding when there is a strong focus on enjoyment, the pace is fast and a variety of challenging, imaginative, practical activities make learning fun and develop independence. Very occasionally, teaching and learning are satisfactory, particularly where too much time is spent introducing activities. Consequently, pace is restricted and pupils lose interest and concentration. Assessment procedures are developing well. Pupils say they are able to understand what they do well and what they have to do next in order to make progress and are beginning to be involved in assessing their own work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school is modest in its judgement that it provides a good curriculum. Inspectors judge the curriculum is outstanding, creative, exciting and wide ranging. Literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills are given due priority, but the school has maintained an enhanced creative curriculum that is valued in all subjects. The range of opportunities for pupils to develop skills and foster interests outside of lesson time is exceptional, as are the links with the high school that enable pupils to benefit from science and French lessons. The pupils say they really enjoy their frequent trips to places of interest like Wigan Pier and the Manchester Science Museum. Older pupils' teamwork skills and self-confidence are well developed through the annual residential visit to Grange over Sands. A particularly exciting initiative is the excellent links the Year 3 pupils have made with pupils in a multicultural Bolton school as part of the 'Children Talking' project. This has developed their knowledge of living in multicultural Britain which is invaluable for these pupils from predominantly White British backgrounds. A significant strength is the continuation of the project next year so that eventually all pupils in Years 3 to 6 will be involved.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of its pupils. There are appropriate procedures to safeguard children and to ensure their health, safety and general well-being.

The most vulnerable pupils are well supported and the high level of pastoral care provided is very evident in the outstanding behaviour the pupils display at all times. Parents are fully confident that their children are safe in school. Pupils agree that disagreements are easily resolved and that any bullying is swiftly dealt with. The recently introduced whole-school system for tracking pupils' progress is beginning to have a positive impact on raising standards. Staff use this information well to focus additional support for those pupils who are not reaching their expected targets. Outstanding induction and transition arrangements from Reception to Year 1 ensure that children settle into new routines extremely well. Excellent links with the high school, from an early age, ensures pupils are very well prepared to move on to the next stage.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The quality of leadership is good. Good self-evaluation has accurately identified the causes behind the recent drop in standards and good actions have been introduced to remedy the situation. Following the disappointing results in 2006, the school judged that achievement and

standards were satisfactory. However, inspectors agree with the school's current view that actions taken have led to improvements. Parents are very supportive of the school but are concerned over the recent disruptions caused to teaching due to staff absence. Recent appointments have been made to build capacity in the senior leadership team and improve teaching provision. Subject coordinators, some who are relatively new to the role, effectively monitor planning and teaching in their area. Their roles in monitoring standards are developing but are not yet fully effective in tracking pupils' progress towards their expected outcomes in the national tests. Staff development is good and the school has an excellent reputation for supporting trainee teachers. The governors give good support and are developing their roles as the critical friends of the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	2
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

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?	2

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

Inspection of Rainford Brook Lodge Community School, St Helens

WA11 8JX.

The inspection team would like to thank you for the way you made us feel so welcome during our recent visit to the school. You were a great credit to yourselves, your parents and your teachers. We can clearly see that you enjoy coming to school and that you are making good progress. You say you enjoy school, that you are doing well and that the teaching you receive is 'great', particularly when the work you do is active and practical. We agree with you.

We really liked the way you throw yourselves into acting out situations in lessons so that you really understand what it is like to be a vet, a policeman, a reporter, a matador and even a bull. We are impressed by the way you and your teachers use role play to help you understand important issues such as pollution and caring for animals and each other.

We think your teachers plan an excellent range of activities for you in and out of the classroom. For example, we were particularly impressed by your Village Hall Centenary dance rehearsal - (the new TV Danny and Sandy have some great competition). We also think that the Year 3 'Children Talking' project, where the class recently met, played and worked with children from different cultures, is an excellent activity. We are particularly excited to see that this project is going to eventually involve all pupils.

We think your school is well led and your headteacher and staff clearly care for you and your safety. They have good plans in hand to make your school even better. We think to help them do this they need to build on the good work they have started in measuring the progress you are making to ensure you are on track to get the best results possible. We also think that there is still room for improving your writing skills. We know you will help by continuing to enjoy yourself, working hard and coming to school regularly.

On behalf of the inspection team, thank you again for making us feel part of your school and good luck for the future.