

# Rainow Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111203
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cheshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	288890
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 April 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Angela Westington HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	150
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Jane Brett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr A Bertinshaw
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 February 2003
<b>School address</b>	Round Meadow Rainow Macclesfield Cheshire SK10 5UB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01625 572021
<b>Fax number</b>	01625 572021

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Rainow Primary School is a rural village school situated in outstanding surroundings on the edge of the Peak District, approximately three miles north of Macclesfield. Pupils come from a range of socio-economic groups and, although the area is largely agricultural in nature, the intake includes a high proportion of pupils from homes designated as high social class households as well as pupils from outside the immediate area. Three per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, a proportion much lower than the national average. The vast majority of pupils entering school in Reception have had pre-school experience from a variety of providers. Currently, there are no children with English as an additional language and 3% of parents have indicated that their children come from minority ethnic backgrounds; this is lower than the national average. The school reports increasing numbers of pupils with more complex learning needs. Six per cent of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), which is well below the national average and three have formal statements of special educational needs (SEN).

The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark as recognition for its work in achievement in mathematics and English.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Rainow Primary School is a good school with several outstanding features. These include leadership and management, governance, the pupils' results in national tests at Key Stage 2 and pupils' behaviour. The quality of teaching is good. A particular strength of the provision is the quality and regularity of assessment which ensures constant attention to the progress that pupils are making. As a result, all pupils do well, including those with LDD. The curriculum is rich and rewarding and benefits from the outstanding rural location of the school and its immediate environment. Parents overwhelmingly support the school and attest to the fact that their children are safe, happy, well cared for and doing well. They appreciate the family atmosphere which enables their children to grow into confident, caring and well educated young people. This inspection confirms these parental views. The leadership team and the governors know the school well and are committed to maintaining and raising further the high standards the school achieves.

Results in national tests at age 11 remain very high: overall, they are well above the national average, thus continuing the positive trend established over several years. The school continues to meet and exceed its challenging targets. Pupils' results in mathematics, science and reading are very impressive: for example, last year 95% of pupils gained the higher Level 5 in reading and over 60% did so in mathematics and science. Pupils make good progress overall, and particularly good progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2. Nevertheless, managers and governors are not complacent and they have recognised that within this high level of attainment pupils' writing is an area for further development as too few gain the higher level they are capable of.

Results in Key Stage 1 national assessments have declined over recent years, from a previously exceptionally high position to one just above the national average. However, the school explains this through the vagaries of small cohorts, larger numbers of pupils with increasing needs and some identified weaknesses in the teaching of writing. Measures taken by the school to strengthen the teaching of early writing are already beginning to bear fruit and this was confirmed during the inspection. As a result, the school is rightly confident that the declining trend in Key Stage 1 will be reversed.

Provision in the Reception class is strong and prepares pupils very well for the next stage. Careful attention is paid to the teaching of basic skills, especially learning to read and write, and this leads to the overwhelming majority of pupils exceeding the national expectations for this age group.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils are extremely well behaved and courteous, something that many parents commented upon. They enjoy school and this is reflected in their high rates of attendance. They enjoy taking on responsibility, such as raising funds for good causes. The school council meets half termly, but currently only representatives from Key Stage 2 are elected and the opportunity for more pupils to participate on the council is missed because annual elections are not held. A small number of parents commented upon this fact and the inspector agreed with their views.

At the previous inspection, the school was deemed to be a very good school and the only recommendation made was that parents be 'better informed about how their children are getting on'. This has been addressed through, amongst other things, the development of the school website, more parents' evenings and clearer reports. Since then the school has also reviewed and enhanced its information, communication and technology (ICT) provision. Given

its continued achievements and the commitment of managers and governors to further development, the school has good capacity to improve.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve pupils' handwriting, punctuation and presentational skills in writing across the school.
- Sharpen the teaching of writing in Key Stage 2 to include a greater focus on pupils' understanding of how they can improve their work and achieve better results.
- Review the composition and work of the school council to ensure that all pupils have an opportunity to have their voice heard.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children's ability on entry to the Reception class is slightly above national expectations. Because of careful and methodical teaching they make good progress overall, so that most attain or exceed the early learning goals for this age group.

Pupils continue to make good progress overall in Key Stage 1, although not as good as in previous years. The area that the school has identified and has begun to focus on is writing. In common with the national trend, pupils' performance in writing continues to lag somewhat behind their skills in reading. Last year the school moved to a new way of teaching early writing by introducing a more systematic phonics approach (letter-sound relationships). Pupils in Reception are now introduced to the 44 letter-sound combinations as quickly as possible, and the school reports considerable improvements in pupils' early writing as a result of this change.

In Key Stage 2, standards in mathematics, science and reading are of a very high order. The school's own data shows that in mathematics, science and reading pupils make above average progress across the key stage. Progress in writing is less strong. In response to this the school has already initiated measures to bring about improvement. Pupils are articulate and confident speakers and they enjoy the range of drama productions the school offers. They benefit from specialist art tuition and many receive instrumental music tuition. Overall therefore, many pupils are accomplished across a broad front.

Less able pupils and those with LDD do particularly well because of the very tight monitoring and assessment procedures and the resultant teaching that takes place. For example, in the 2006 Year 6 national tests, seven of the eight pupils who four years earlier had gained the lower Level 2 in reading went on to gain the high Level 5.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Throughout their time at school pupils make good progress in developing their personal skills to help them grow into mature and responsible young people. They are taught how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Pupils are extremely well mannered and their attitudes to learning and behaviour are very good. They enjoy school and report that bullying does not occur. They have a good understanding of what constitutes right or wrong, have the opportunities to explore moral dilemmas in assembly and know how to behave towards others. The vast majority of pupils are from a White British heritage and therefore the school makes a positive effort to introduce pupils to other cultures, such as visits from Indian dancers and African musicians, as well as celebrating their own. Pupils have the opportunity to join in with the 'Big Sing' in

Manchester and mix with other pupils from various cultural and socio-economic groups. As a result of two of the school's teachers participating in a British Council exchange to Capetown, pupils have been involved in supporting a school in Africa. All pupils in the school have a 'job' which contributes to the good order of either the class or the school and they are given responsibility to arrange fundraising activities, for example for Comic Relief.

Children's opinions are valued and through the school council they have influenced changes, for example the introduction of the playtime pals scheme. However, there is no opportunity for the younger pupils' voices to be heard or for some older pupils to take turns on the council as the elections do not take place annually.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching overall is good and ranges from satisfactory to very good. The strength of the teaching lies in the school wide assessment and tracking system which is built upon a mix of standardised tests that provide very specific quantitative data (such as reading ages, mathematics scores) and the National Curriculum Levels. From Reception to Year 6, pupils' progress is monitored rigorously and any necessary support is provided. The headteacher maintains a progress file with challenging targets and records for each year group and this is reviewed with class teachers. Pupils have a range of targets and systems for assessing their own progress. However, in writing, in Key Stage 2, they are not fully aware of where they are up to and how best to improve their work.

Overall, teachers' subject knowledge is good and they have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve. Relationships between pupils and teachers are positive and this fosters a sense of security in the pupils.

The recent introduction of interactive whiteboards has been a positive and successful addition and teachers have quickly become skilled at using them.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school's curriculum is good. All subjects of the National Curriculum are covered and statutory requirements are met. Recent improvements to the ICT provision have enhanced teaching and recent revisions to the Key Stage 2 curriculum have provided clearer ways for teachers to teach literacy across other subjects.

Specialist art and music provision enhance the curriculum. Pupils enjoy regular visits to the theatre, drama is a feature of assemblies and the school is particularly proud of its drama productions.

Each term, one week is devoted to a special theme and part of the usual timetable is put to one side so that the whole school can focus on one aspect of learning, for example, 'Healthy Me'.

Trips and visitors and special events feature fully in the school's diary and the school makes very good use of the rich woodland environment on its doorstep. For example, pupils in the Reception class walked down the path to the pond area, listening and looking for the visiting heron and used this experience, in their English lesson, to write instructions.

The teaching of writing however has some shortcomings in the lower end of the school where letter formation, layout and presentation skills are not given the priority needed to establish a good platform for achievement by the end of Year 2 and beyond. This is a key area for improvement.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Good care, guidance and support ensure that pupils achieve well. The school's welcoming atmosphere and good level of concern result in all pupils feeling secure and valued. The overwhelming majority of parents think that their children are well cared for, supported well and are safe. Teaching assistants and other adults are deployed well to support individuals and groups. Procedures for ensuring pupils are safe including those relating to child protection are in place.

The school's strong monitoring of pupils' progress enables teachers to know what children need to do next to improve. However, in Key Stage 2, pupils' targets for writing are not as clear to them as they could be.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The quality of leadership, management and governance is outstanding overall because of the school's continued focus on raising and maintaining very high standards. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are committed to getting underneath the issues causing potential underachievement, for example in writing, and are open to ideas and prepared to seek remedies to tackle the problem.

Governance of the school is very good. There are well established procedures for the governing body and subcommittees, with clearly defined remits for each. Governors are clear about their responsibilities and can explain the latest priorities. They are deeply committed to the school.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and its leadership. Given previous performance, those with responsibility for leading the school have good capacity to improve it still further.

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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>	<b>School Overall</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
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	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	1

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
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	1
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	1
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

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**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Rainow Primary School, Macclesfield, SK10 5UB

As you know, I visited your school recently and I would like to thank you for talking to me and making me feel so welcome.

I looked at many of the things you do in school and talked with your teachers and some of the people who help you. I thought that you behaved very well and I could tell that you and your families are very proud of your school. These are some of the things that I really liked.

- The people in school work very closely with your parents to make sure that you are safe, well cared for and happy when you come to school.
- There are lots of interesting things for you to do including the school clubs, visits and your art lessons. Your school is in a lovely environment and I enjoyed hearing about the pond and the heron!
- You enjoy being with each other, get on well with the adults in school and you are trying hard to be healthy and eat sensibly. The smell of the flapjacks that some of you were baking when I was there was delicious and very tempting!
- You work hard and the older ones amongst you do very well in the national tests. Well done!

I have asked Mr Bertinshaw and the teachers to look again at how the younger children are taught to write and also how the older ones are helped to improve their writing. I have suggested that the school council be extended to include pupils from Key Stage 1 and that you have annual elections so that more of you get a chance to have a turn. I am sure that when these changes take place you will help by doing your best as always and by being helpful and enthusiastic.

I really enjoyed meeting you all at Rainow. I know that you will continue to work hard and enjoy school.