



Runcorn All Saints CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111314
Local Authority Halton
Inspection number 288924
Inspection dates 13–14 December 2006
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 address	Church Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Runcorn
Age range of pupils	5–11		Cheshire WA7 1LD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01928 572091
Number on roll (school)	91	Fax number	01928 560425
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Rev J Hayes
		Headteacher	Mrs J Dutton
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
5–11	13–14 December 2006	288924

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small school is located in Runcorn Old Town in an area of mainly terraced housing close to the River Mersey. The vast majority of its children are of White British heritage. The percentage of children eligible for free school meals is well above average as is the percentage of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Many more children arrive at, or leave, the school during the year than is usual.

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, well led by the headteacher, which gives good value for money. Governors and staff are fully committed to the school's mission statement. They all want to provide the children with the best possible education so that they can fulfil their potential. It is this team work that enables the children to make good progress and develops their personal skills so well. The inspection agrees with the school's view of its effectiveness. Good management since the last inspection has successfully maintained children's rate of progress while also improving children's reading in Key Stage 1. The school has worked hard to gain the complete trust of its parents through offering them support with the difficulties they face, often unconnected with school. It has also built very effective links with the high school, which helps children change school smoothly, and support agencies, to ensure that children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have the support they need. The care, support and guidance given to children are outstanding. Careful checks are kept on children's progress and on provision and thus the management knows the strengths and the areas for development of the school. Forward planning is extremely detailed but action plans contain so many priorities it is hard to have a clear overview of the progress that is being made. The governing body is both a good friend and a constructive critic. These features demonstrate that the school has good capacity to improve further.

Children start school with attainment at well below the expected level. They achieve well throughout their time in school. Positive links with the on-site pre-school help children get to know school staff and settle quickly into the Reception. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and the many well planned practical activities effectively meet children's learning needs. The school works hard to overcome the difficulties that a minority of children face at home, like changing schools or not having a quiet place to do their homework. Children love their school, which for a few is a haven of calm. Standards have stayed consistently average at the end of Year 6 for the past five years, as shown in national test results. This is because teachers make lessons interesting and they match tasks to children's abilities well. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because class groups are very small and they get lots of individual support. However, although they get good practical assistance, their individual education plans are not as precise as they could be in helping staff plan the next small steps in learning.

All staff ensure that children feel safe and well cared for. Children have a good understanding of how to improve their work further. They know about healthy eating because the school promotes this well. They exercise regularly and swimming is a very strong feature of the physical education programme. The school council tells the management what the children think about their school and has suggested changes, like more play equipment at breaktimes. Children take seriously the responsibilities they are given, so, for example, tidying away in class is done efficiently and road safety is promoted through interesting competitions. These features, plus the work the children do for charity, make their contribution to the community outstanding. The good curriculum uses practical work well to engage children in their own learning. The

school has many computers and makes good use of them to bring the outside world into the classroom. Children learn a great deal from the many educational visits and the visitors, such as authors and artists, to school. These occasions help to broaden their understanding of the world and prepare them well for their future lives.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of the targets and success criteria in children's individual education plans to provide clear guidance for their learning.
- Improve forward planning so that management and the governing body can more easily maintain an overview of progress towards its priorities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children have a wide range of attainments on entry to school. Most have attended the pre-school and so are familiar with the routines and the school staff. A minority have a wide vocabulary but most have weak speech and language skills and little knowledge of the wider world around them. Children make good progress through the Foundation Stage because they enjoy and learn from the well planned practical activities. Children join Year 1 with standards below those expected for their age. Their literacy skills have been improved considerably but remain weak. In Years 1 and 2 children achieve well. Results in tests at the end of Year 2 are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. They have been similar for five years. An emphasis on the teaching of letter sounds has led to substantial improvement in pupils' reading skills since the last inspection.

By the end of Key Stage 2 results in national tests in English, mathematics and science have been broadly average for the last five years. Variations occur from year to year because the number of children in each year group is very small and often has a high proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, rather than because of any variation in the quality of teaching or children's achievement. The school reached its challenging targets in 2006.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school judged this aspect as outstanding but the inspection found it to be good. Attendance is satisfactory. The school has worked hard with the parents to bring about this major improvement. Most children love their school and its staff. They like the rewards they can earn so they behave well in class, in the dining hall, where '10 merits' from the caretaker are valued, and outside on the playground. They are keen to learn and show this by working hard at the tasks they are given. Most children feel safe from bullying. All of them know an adult they can turn to if they have any problems. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Adults build the children's sense of self-worth by listening attentively to their contributions and through

the quality displays of their work. Children are well mannered and keen to help others, for example through their work for charity and the choir singing for others. Their manners at the lunch table are not quite so positive. They know how to stay fit and healthy and enjoy the opportunities provided to exercise, but a minority are unaware of the benefits of a good night's sleep. They are well prepared for the next stage in their learning because they have made good progress in their basic skills and have positive attitudes towards school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Children are keen to learn because teachers make lessons interesting, for instance through good use of new technology or by giving them practical tasks. Assessment information is used well to match tasks to children's needs although targets in individual education plans could be more precise in helping staff to plan learning more precisely for those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In Reception children eagerly tackled games in which they learned to recognise numerals. One group worked on putting between one and five people in a car while others showed that they could identify numerals to 20 in a 'frog on the lily pad' game. Teachers are enthusiastic about learning and this rubs off on the children. They challenge children to think for themselves. In a Year 1 and 2 practical science lesson, which was enjoyed by all, children extended their understanding of electrical circuits and switches by experimenting with the equipment they were given and lighting a bulb. Teachers provide clear explanations of tasks so that children know what is required of them. Occasionally this element of the lesson goes on for too long and children lose concentration. Most classes have very few children and so staff are able to give children the individual attention they need in order to make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the needs of the children and National Curriculum requirements. Opportunities for children to use their literacy and computer skills in other subjects are well planned and help children make good progress in these subjects. Children enjoy learning French. All children go swimming every year, which teaches them an important life skill. A good programme of visitors helps children learn about how to stay safe, for instance near water and on the roads. The school expands children's horizons by taking them on exciting visits and these are very memorable. . The extra provision for children identified as being gifted or having specific talents is well planned.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

All the necessary procedures for the school to safeguard children are in place. Parents indicate that if they have any concerns they are dealt with extremely sensitively and promptly. Parents of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities speak highly of the additional support their children receive. Most parents know what is happening in school. The good annual reports and parent/teacher discussions keep them fully informed about their children's progress. Children have a very good idea of how to improve their work. They know their individual learning targets and how to achieve them. Their work is marked in an exemplary fashion. It tells them what they have done well and what they can do to improve further. An example of outstanding practice is how assessment information is used precisely to identify children who need extra support or further challenge.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Governors and all staff work well together to ensure that children achieve well and develop the skills which will aid them in their future lives. The headteacher leads the school very well and is held in high regard by governors, staff and parents for her total commitment to the children. Children's progress is closely checked and the information used well to set challenging targets for the Year 6 national tests. The school plans satisfactorily for the future. Planning is in great detail. However, there are too many priorities, particularly in subject action plans, for management and the governing body to maintain an overview of what is happening and whether or not priorities have been achieved. The school is highly inclusive, treating everyone equally and frequently welcoming new children into school who have had difficulties elsewhere. Governors have a well organised committee structure which is used well to question management on the school's work. While governors use financial resources well for the benefit of the children, for example by maintaining very small classes, they have not fully considered the financial implications of this decision.

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	3
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	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	1
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?	2
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.

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

Thank you for helping me with my work when I visited your school recently. I listened carefully to what you said and used your views when making my judgements. I agree with you, and your headteacher, that your school is good. It helps you make good progress in English, mathematics and science because the teachers do their best to ensure that you all do well. They make learning interesting, which you like, and help you to improve your work through their skilled marking. All the staff care very much about you and are always there for you should you have any problems. Your headteacher leads the school very well and it is clear that you, and your parents, all like her very much and appreciate all she has done for the school.

You enjoy coming to school and behave well in class and in the playground. I think that your school council is representing your views very well and getting things done for you. The way you help in class and around the school and the work you do for charity is outstanding.

You tell me that you enjoy swimming lessons. It is very good that the school takes all of you swimming every year because you live very close to many water hazards, for example the river and the canals. You also like the many visits you go on and I think that these are good.

I have asked your headteacher to do two things which will improve the school for you.

First, I want the school to improve the individual education plans for children with additional needs. Second, I want the school to make sure that its plans for the future concentrate just on the few things that are very important.

Thank you very much for helping me with the inspection. You all made a really good contribution. I hope that you are all proud of what you, the staff, governors and parents have achieved and wish you and the school all the best for the future.