

Rockbeare Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113436
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	289624
Inspection date	20 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Abdul-Hayee Murshad

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	66
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wyn De'Ath
Headteacher	Patricia Morris
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2003
School address	Rockbeare Exeter EX5 2EQ
Telephone number	01404 822501
Fax number	01404 822501

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	20 March 2007
Inspection number	289624

© Crown copyright 2007

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 an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is much smaller than the average primary school and it serves a rural community on the outskirts of Exeter. All pupils are from White British backgrounds, although usually the school has a small number from ethnic minority groups attending. Most of the pupils are from the local community, which has a mixture of private and council homes. Some pupils are from farming families on the edge of Rockbeare. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is similar to the national average. The proportion of pupils with a learning difficulty or disability is similar to that found nationally but that of pupils with a statement of special educational need is almost double the average. Pupils are organised in mixed-age classes across the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'I feel very lucky to have such a good school which my daughter loves.'

This statement from a parent is consistent with the findings of the inspection and is representative of parents in general. This is a good school which uses an all-embracing Christian ethos to successfully create and promote a strong sense of community. Parents and carers feel that the environment and atmosphere at the school is very friendly and extremely positive. Another parent stated that the school 'allows the children and parents to create a real sense of family and belonging'. All staff members play an active role in making the school what it is. The good leadership of the headteacher is a key factor contributing to the success of the school. Her infectious passion to ensure that all pupils are provided with the highest standards of care and education is shared by other staff and the governors.

Leadership and management, including school self-evaluation, are good and the school has an accurate view of priorities for development. It has taken effective actions to address the issues raised in its last inspection report and has a good capacity to improve even further. Staff members are very committed and focused on pupils' achievement and learning. The school has good systems for tracking the progress of individual pupils. It is working to develop the systems further so that the progress of pupils in Years 1 and 2 are tracked more carefully. Pupils receive good guidance about their work and are supported well to achieve challenging targets. Pupils' high expectations of themselves and their good basic skills in literacy and numeracy prepare them well for the next stages of their education.

Pupils start school with skills that are lower than expected at their age. They leave the school with standards that are above the national average. Good teaching and a good curriculum which offers pupils a wide range of activities result in good achievement for all pupils, including those who have a learning difficulty or a disability. The school caters well for mixed-age classes by focusing on what the pupils are learning rather than the activity in which they are engaged. Although overall progress is good, the school needs to ensure better progress in Years 1 and 2, which is currently satisfactory.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. This is reflected in their good attendance and enjoyment of learning. They are very enthusiastic and take great pride and joy in contributing to the school and the local community. Pupils emulate the warm and effective care, support and guidance provided by the adults in the school in their interactions with each other. Pupils behave well and have good manners and respect for fellow pupils and teachers alike. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe and be healthy and demonstrate this in their choice of lunch and participation in extra-curricular activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the standards and the achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' performance results fluctuate from one year to another because of the very small number of pupils in each year group. Considering the skills with which pupils start school, all pupils, including those with learning difficulties, make good progress. They leave the school with

standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science that are above the national average.

Pupils start in the Foundation Stage with skills that are below those expected at their age. Good teaching results in pupils making good progress and most of them reach the nationally recommended goals when they start in Year 1. The progress which pupils make in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and is reflected in standards that are slightly lower than the national average. Pupils make good progress in Years 3 to 6. Their achievement in English and mathematics is slightly better than in science. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher National Curriculum levels is greater than the national average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their good attendance and in the enthusiasm and excitement with which they participate in the extra-curricular activities. They behave well in the lessons and around the school, and demonstrate considerable respect for each other. Pupils' good understanding of healthy lifestyles and healthy eating is displayed in their active participation in physical activities and in their choice of snacks and lunch. They adopt safe practices and are good at taking responsibilities. Pupils say that they feel safe at school because they know the staff very well. They are confident about discussing issues and problems and know that staff will listen and respond to their concerns.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The strong links with the church helps make good contributions to the local community. Pupils are keen to be involved in fundraising for local charities and other good causes. The older pupils have a very caring attitude towards the younger pupils. The school council take their responsibilities seriously and contribute to school improvement, for example with their ideas of ways to develop the school playground or deal with bullying. A pupil proudly told the Inspector: 'We've sorted that out already! The work we've done means there is no bullying'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school's effective strategies to ensure that teachers have high expectations of all pupils are reflected in the quality of teaching and learning, which is consistently good. Teachers make good use of the information about how well pupils are doing to plan their lessons. Great care is taken in planning the lessons to ensure that what different groups of pupils will learn is clear and linked to what they already know. Teaching assistants make good contributions and work in an effective partnership with the teachers in addressing pupils' individual needs.

Pupils' work is marked regularly and shows how to make improvements. Pupils are involved in improving their own work and know what they need to do to get to the next level. The specific targets for English and mathematics are used well for setting milestones for the pupils to reach. Pupils with learning difficulties or those with a statement of special educational need receive good support with their individual targets during the lessons. The school has identified ways in which to improve teaching and learning further. This includes asking pupils more probing questions and making better links between learning in different subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school curriculum meets all requirements and offer pupils a good range of activities to ensure the development of the whole child. Teachers' planning, which is linked to pupils' individual learning needs, ensure that the needs of pupils in mixed age classes are met well. The curriculum is enriched by visits and visitors and a residential trip for pupils in Years 5 and 6. This contributes to pupils' motivation and interest, and supports the standards which they reach. The school makes good use of the local environment as a learning resource. The quality of the resources to support teaching and learning is good and includes modern technologies such as interactive smart boards in all classes.

The introduction and use of specialist teaching is making a positive contribution to the school's curriculum. This is particularly apparent in the teaching and learning of music. There is a good variety of extra-curricular clubs and sporting activities and good links with other schools to enhance pupils' learning experiences. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are well included in all activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All relevant procedures are in place to protect and safeguard the pupils. The care, guidance and support have a good impact on pupils' personal development and well-being. A particular emphasis on good relationships and consistency in the management of behaviour has a positive influence on pupils' work and attitudes. Pupils are well known to staff as individuals and are very well cared for on an individual level. Pupils' noticeable confidence that adults will deal with issues swiftly and efficiently means that they feel safe and secure.

The school has good systems to ensure issues of health and safety. Risk assessments for the premises as well as other aspects of the school's work are in place. Teachers know pupils very well, have a clear picture of their progress and have high expectations of pupils' achievement. One of the pupils highlighted this, stating 'teachers work hard to make the children a better person and help them understand their work'. Targets are used effectively to guide pupils to achieve the next level. Teachers generally make effective use of marking pupils' work to show what they are doing well and can do to improve their work. The school is working on developing greater consistency in the marking and guidance provided in different subjects.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school works as a successful community in which the headteacher plays an effective role to ensure that everyone is included and has opportunities to contribute. The very strong focus on care and respect acts as the bedrock and makes the school what it is. All staff members have specific responsibilities and contribute well to securing improvements that bring benefits for everyone. The subject leaders carry out their roles effectively because they are supported well by the headteacher and make good use of the high quality professional development and training opportunities. A strong team culture, in which the governors play an active role, fuels the school's work which is focused on pupils' achievement and learning. The school has rightly

identified the need to track pupils' progress more carefully in Years 1 and 2 to ensure greater consistency in pupils' achievement.

The school has good systems for consulting parents and keeping them well informed. Parents are given advice and support so that they can play an active role in their children's education and learning. The school makes good use of its resources and finances to implement the identified priorities. Members of the governing body make very good use of their extensive experience and particular expertise to provide good support and challenge to the school.

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.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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	2
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	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?	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

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

I am writing to thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when I inspected your school. It was a great pleasure to have the opportunity to talk to some of you and see your school in action.

I agree with you and your parents that Rockbeare is a good school. Your teachers and the school governors work very hard to make sure that you all get the best care and good education. They have good ideas about how to make things better and some of their plans have already helped you to improve. For example, you now have access to, and make good use of, computers and other technologies to support your learning. Your teachers always have the time to listen to you and your parents. They provide you with work that is interesting and teach you what you need to learn. They tell you what you can do to improve and give you targets so that you can move to the next level.

One of the best things about Rockbeare is you. I was impressed by your good behaviour and enjoyment of school. You work hard in your lessons and have a very positive attitude towards learning. You are extremely polite and courteous towards all adults and each other. You are proud to take on responsibilities and help others in any way you can. You have a good understanding of healthy living and staying safe. You understand and respect the differences in people and know quite a lot about different cultures and religions.

Before I left, I talked to your headteacher and some of the teachers and governors about how they can improve the school even further. One of the things they need to do is make sure that children in Years 1 and 2 are supported to do even better.

I am sure you can think of ways in which you can help to make your school even better in the future. I hope you will continue to enjoy school and I am sure that it will help you to become happy, sensible and successful adults.