

Rufford CofE School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119483
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	291434
Inspection dates	27–28 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Eric Jackson

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	
School	124
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	
Headteacher	Miss Rachael Farrington
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2001
School address	Flash Lane Rufford Ormskirk L40 1SN
Telephone number	01704 821300
Fax number	01704 822940

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	27–28 March 2007
Inspection number	291434

© 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 one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average village primary school. It serves a fairly affluent area and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. Children's attainment at entry to the Reception year is generally above average. The proportion of pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Almost all the pupils are White British and all speak English.

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 and improving village school, confirming the school's own view through its effective self-evaluation. Christian values are veined throughout its work. Parents say that their children love it here and will not miss a day if they can help it, as the above average attendance shows. Pupils are well cared for and all child protection and safeguarding procedures are in place.

There are outstanding features in pupils' spiritual development through the many opportunities for personal reflection; pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is exemplary. Other aspects of pupils' personal development are good, and pupils are active members of the school, parish and local communities. They learn safe practices and have adopted the school's healthy living messages well; they really value lunchtime for its award-winning healthy and appetising meals. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their lives. For example, older pupils have a mock stocks and shares trading competition that stimulates their economic awareness.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 are above average in English and mathematics and they are well above average in science, exceeding the school's targets. Progress is currently good across the school, including for children in Reception, and pupils achieve well. This is because teaching and learning are good, so that pupils enjoy their work and try their best. The shelves bending under sporting trophies reflect the good focus on pupils' physical development and health. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well to make good progress; able or talented pupils are increasingly challenged to extend their skills and understanding. There are good examples of pupils evaluating their own and other's work, such as in design and technology in Year 2, but this practice is not consistent across the school. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is often good, but is too variable.

Pupils do better than at the last inspection in subjects such as information and communication technology (ICT), geography and history. The staff's efforts have led to a good curriculum which is well enriched by extra activities during and after school, often involving parents. For example, the mixed choir sang beautifully for local people attending a coffee afternoon. The staff have begun a full review of how the curriculum is taught. This has already led to exceptionally high quality imaginative writing by pupils in Years 5 and 6. However, the curriculum review is not yet as adventurous as it could be following new guidance for schools in planning pupils' learning.

The headteacher ensures that the school runs well, supported skilfully by other staff and a strong and well-led governing body. The school works closely with Edge Hill University in training student teachers and the maintenance of high quality learning for the pupils and students is due to the school's effective monitoring of strategic and day-to-day leadership and management.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers' marking is consistent across the school, and that pupils are taught how to evaluate their own and other pupils' work.
- In reviewing the curriculum, apply the spirit of national guidance to promote innovation and creativity to extend pupils' learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards in national tests in core subjects are above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils achieve well and exceed the set targets, building successfully across the school on the good progress in the Reception year where most children reach expected levels, and many exceed them. Almost all parents are very happy with the progress their children make and say that in Year 7 they stand out as Rufford pupils. One wrote, 'Our children ... are stretched to reach their full potential.' A very small number of parents question whether potential high attainers reach the levels they should. Inspection evidence shows that able, gifted and talented pupils are identified by staff and make good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress towards targets in their individual plans. The school has responded well to the need from the last inspection to raise standards in the curriculum beyond the core subjects. Although detailed inspection was not made of all subjects, there is strong evidence in ICT, geography and history that good improvements have been made.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their moral, social and cultural development is good and their spiritual development is outstanding. Pupils become confident learners, concentrating well in lessons and playing happily and cooperatively at break. They know how to stay safe and live healthy lifestyles. Their behaviour is excellent; they are polite, considerate and thoughtful, acting independently with great poise for their age. In times of reflection through prayer or when considering beauty in nature, art or music, they respond with mature sensitivity and enquiring minds. Their pleasure at being in school is evident in their smiling faces and their cheerful response to the staff's prompting. The staff provide good role models here, as they also seem to enjoy themselves! Through the school council, as monitors and helpers and through charitable giving, pupils make a good contribution to this and other communities. By Year 6, pupils have the academic and social skills that equip them to take good advantage of the next steps in their learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Lessons are well organised, often catering for two year groups effectively and based on good planning. Student teachers work initially from the class teachers' plans and report that this has given them a smooth and easy-to-follow introduction to the school's systems. The staff have high expectations of themselves and of the pupils, who respond really well to the varied learning activities in lessons. Most lessons have a brisk pace so that pupils make good progress against the shared learning objectives. In some lessons, pupils evaluate their own and other pupils' work, but this is not yet consistent practice across the school. Teachers' marking is good and in the best examples is detailed, indicating strengths and points for improvement. Years 5 and 6 pupils respond to the teachers' questions posed in marking their work. However, there is no agreed whole school approach to marking so that pupils in different classes have to learn new systems.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and covers all statutory requirements. The displays in classrooms and around school show the full curricular range, a skilled mix of teaching material and celebration of pupils' work. They also show the staff's high expectations of the pupils. The core subjects are given priority and recent improvements in teachers' planning have helped pupils to make increased progress. There have also been good improvements in the other subjects of the curriculum and in the interpretation of the areas of experience for children in Reception. This has raised standards, certainly in ICT, geography and history where many children exceed the levels expected for their age. There is a whole curriculum review underway but this does not yet take sufficient account of new national guidance for local innovation. There are good enrichment activities that strengthen pupils' learning, including very effective local and residential visits and extra-curricular sport.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. All required safety procedures are in place and the school cares for its pupils very well. A parent wrote movingly of the staff's extremely supportive and effective response to her children at a time of severe family stress. The school works closely with parents, keeping them informed of pupils' progress using recently adopted and effective monitoring systems. These systems make assessment monitoring much clearer for staff so that planning for each child's learning is more precise and expectations of their progress have been raised. Guidance and support for different groups of pupils are now good and help them effectively in their academic and personal development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good, resulting in good progress in all aspects of pupils' learning. A parent wrote of the headteacher, 'She is a truly dedicated headteacher, manager, and warm-hearted person'. This view is echoed by almost all other parents. Her presence in school is calmly authoritative, conveying high expectations for pupils and staff with caring humanity. Other staff in leadership roles support her well, especially the highly regarded deputy headteacher. They translate policy into effective practice and, through good self-evaluation, seek to improve the school's provision and raise standards. The well-led governing body is supportive and challenging, proud of its role in selecting good staff. Governors ensure that through streamlined committees all pupils receive their full entitlement to learning and that the school's resources are effectively deployed. Given the good improvements recently, and the good understanding that leaders and managers have of the school's current strengths and weaknesses, the school has good capacity to continue to improve.

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	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	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**

29 March 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rufford CofE School, Lancashire, L40 1SN

Thank you for welcoming me to your lovely school. I enjoyed talking with you and seeing some of the many activities that go on at Rufford CEPS. I am intrigued to know who will be meeting Alan Sugar after winning the shares league.

You will remember that I came to check how well your school helps you to learn. I know that you are happy in the school and your parents tell me that most of you don't want to stay off even when you are ill. I can understand that because the staff make your work interesting and often fun. The Riddler in Class 2 had me guessing!

My judgement is that you attend a good school, where you behave extremely well, make exceptional progress in your ability to think about the world and religious faith and grow into skilled learners who are ready by Year 6 to move to high school confidently. Most of you reach good standards for your age because you respond well to the staff's teaching and make good progress in English, mathematics and science. The school has also improved how you learn in subjects such as ICT, history and geography. I know more from Year 6 Powerpoint displays about mountains and the number of insects Mary and Joseph had to cope with on the way to Bethlehem, than I knew before.

The staff are always trying to improve how you learn. I have asked them to make sure that their marking in different classes follows a similar pattern and to involve you more in assessing your own and your friends' work. I have also asked them to be even more adventurous in planning what you learn in order to make it even more interesting and exciting. You can help by continuing to work hard and enjoying your time at the school.

With best wishes for your future,

Yours sincerely,

E Jackson

Lead Inspector