



Rivington Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119509
Local Authority Lancashire
Inspection number 291442
Inspection dates 21–22 November 2006
Reporting inspector Mark Williams HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Horrobin Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Rivington, Horwich
Age range of pupils	4–11		Bolton, Lancashire BL6 7SE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01204 696951
Number on roll (school)	108	Fax number	01204 696951
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Dr Frank Yates
		Headteacher	Mrs Liz Case
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–11	21–22 November 2006	291442

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This school, nestling into a wooded hillside next to Rivington Reservoir, is much smaller than most other primary schools. The number of pupils in each year group is, therefore, small and they are taught in four mixed-aged classes. Pupils attend the school from a wide surrounding area. The school is housed in a two storey building built in the early eighteenth century. More recent additions to the accommodation have allowed the school to offer extended hours provision. The school is unusual in its voluntary aided status as it is not attached to a diocese. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the average for England as is the proportion whose first language is not believed to be English. The school has fewer pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than those found nationally.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This school, described by one parent as ‘a close knit family’, offers a good education for its pupils ensuring that they achieve well and make good strides in their personal development and well-being. It is a good school, offering good value for money. The inspection supports the school’s positive view of its work. It is well placed to improve further.

The good, strong leadership of the headteacher has maintained previous strengths and put into place important measures to secure further improvement in teaching and learning. As a result, pupils make good progress in their learning and have positive attitudes. In this small community, all staff know the pupils well and care deeply for them. Every pupil is valued. The overwhelming majority of parents and pupils appreciate what the school does for them. Pupils’ behaviour is excellent and they work well together, encouraging each other to do their best.

The school is not complacent. Despite strengths in teaching, it understands that day-to-day planning does not always provide opportunities for higher ability pupils to be fully stretched, for example in questioning. Although marking is often good, it is inconsistently applied to enable all pupils to move on to the next steps of their learning. While progress in learning overall is good, progress in mathematics is not as rapid as it should be.

A strong feature of the school is the high quality specialist provision in music and physical education (PE). This has enhanced the good curriculum. Best use is made of the limited space the buildings offer to ensure that teaching and the curriculum are not inhibited. For example, good use is made of the church hall for collective worship and PE. Teaching is good. Teachers and support staff work well together to make learning fun and exciting. They model the enthusiasm, attitudes and behaviour they require and the pupils respond with interest.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide enhanced learning opportunities for higher ability pupils through extended and deeper questioning and better use of assessment data to plan more challenging activities.
- Ensure consistency in the marking of work so that all pupils know exactly what they should do to improve.
- Ensure that pupils make more rapid progress in mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. Pupils enter school with standards that are broadly expected for their age, although this is variable across each year group.

Pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage. This is because of the good support they receive, which enables them to develop key literacy, numeracy and social skills well. Pupils continue to make good progress in their learning in Key Stages 1 and 2 so that by the time they leave, they have achieved above average standards in English, mathematics and science. This is because lessons are exciting and expectations high. Good quality programmes of support ensure that pupils with learning difficulties also make good progress. Challenging targets are set for each class.

However, the school is aware that the rate of progress for some pupils in mathematics is not as rapid as it is in English. It is also aware that, although teachers have a good knowledge of what pupils can and cannot do this information is not always used effectively to provide suitably challenging work for higher ability pupils. It has, however, begun to successfully identify pupils who may be gifted and/or talented.

The good overall progress made by pupils is further enhanced by the positive attitudes they are encouraged to have in their learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good with some outstanding features. This good development contributes significantly to the progress pupils make.

Pupils freely say 'school is fun'. They are purposeful and happy. They clearly enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their good attendance. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They work well together in a variety of different groups and demonstrate good teamwork, positive attitudes, much enthusiasm and good levels of concentration. For example, in a lesson in Years 5 and 6, pupils were captivated by their teacher and a support assistant acting out a conversation between a reader and a newspaper reporter. Following this, the pupils keenly acted out similar roles in groups; they valued each other's contributions and made interesting notes about 'X Factor' contestants and strange lights in the sky!

The pupils willingly participate in various opportunities and take responsibility; for example, through the school council and they raise funds for charity. Pupils are polite and show respect to adults and each other. Their good understanding of other faiths and cultures enables them to reflect upon the needs of others. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and how to keep themselves safe, and recognise the positive effects these aspects have upon their life. They move around the school maturely, sensibly and safely. Many pupils participate in the additional opportunities for sport and exercise. Pupils' above average skills in literacy, numeracy and the many opportunities to work together, prepare them well for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good. It ensures that pupils, including those with learning difficulties, make good progress in their learning. Teachers use a good range of styles and activities to consistently remind pupils of the focus of lessons. As a result, children work hard, are keen to learn and achieve well.

Throughout the school, pupils are engaged in lively discussions with activities well matched to capture their interest and enthusiasm. For example, pupils in Year 3 and 4 thoroughly enjoyed halving and doubling numbers in a game using a dartboard and different targets; in Years 1 and 2, pupils were enthralled by the lighting of candles in a darkened room to show how light travels. Usually skilful questioning and prompting keeps pupils on their toes. Sometimes, however, questions are not sufficiently challenging for higher attaining pupils. While good examples of marking exist, its use to move pupils on to the next steps of their learning is not consistent across the school. Nonetheless, good teamwork ensures that teachers and support staff know their pupils well, have high expectations and strive to make learning exciting. Learning is modelled well to help pupils understand what to do. For example, in a lesson in the Foundation Stage, staff successfully modelled words in a timeline so that the children were able to make progress in acquiring early reading skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is designed to include all pupils. A strong focus on literacy and numeracy leads to good achievement in these areas. The curriculum is enhanced by the opportunities for writing and the use of thinking skills across different subjects, the range of good quality resources available and the experience of a variety of visits and visitors such as artists and theatre groups. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through assemblies, links with other countries and religious education.

There is good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and they are included in every aspect of the curriculum. Staff identify concerns and fine tune activities and expectations, with the result that these pupils achieve well. For example, in a music lesson, a pupil low in confidence was fully included in the lesson and succeeded in singing a verse of a song solo. The high standard of music is supported by opportunities for pupils to play string and brass instruments in addition to joining the choir.

The curriculum is further enriched by the creative arts and specialist teaching in PE. A range of sporting activities are widely supported by pupils and in some cases by parents too.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good, overall. Care is excellent. Pupils know who to go to for help and guidance, and know that their problems will be addressed successfully. They have complete confidence in the staff. The school safeguards pupils well. Procedures for their health and safety, child protection and risk assessments are in place.

Most pupils are provided with clear targets for development and some have good written feedback through marking, which tells them how they can improve; although this is not yet consistent in all classes. Staff know pupils well but the accurate information they have on what pupils can and cannot do is not always used effectively enough to plan activities for higher achieving pupils.

On the whole, parents feel that communication with the school is good and provides effective support and guidance to parents and pupils. The school is not complacent about this and has identified further communication with parents as an area for development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. In the two years since her appointment, the strong leadership of the headteacher has ensured that the strengths of the school, including standards, have been maintained. In addition, important measures have been put into place to secure further improvement in teaching and learning. There is a strong sense of shared leadership throughout the school. The senior teacher, subject leaders and governors provide good support for the headteacher and together they successfully identify what the school does well and what it needs to improve further. The school has good quality plans in place to tackle issues. Responses to questionnaires representing the views of parents of over 70% of pupils were overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school. Parents typically say how well the school supports their children and appreciate the high quality care given by all staff.

Governance is good and ensures that the school meets its statutory requirements. Financial management is also good. Best use is made of the limited space the buildings offer. The addition of an extension has enhanced the school enabling before and after-school activities to be provided. The school has correctly identified the need to extend pupil toilet facilities and plans are in place to do so.

The good, strong leadership of the headteacher has ensured pupils develop personally as well as academically. The school has made good progress since its previous inspection and has good capacity to do so further.

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?	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	1
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.

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

Rivington Voluntary Aided Primary School

Horrobin Lane

Rivington

Horwich

Bolton

Lancashire

BL6 7SE

23 November 2006

Dear Children

As you know, Mrs Pringle, Mr Isherwood, Mr Moore and I visited your school recently. On their behalf, I am writing to thank you for all the help you gave us and the way you made us feel so welcome. I am writing to you to let you know what we found out.

Firstly, and most importantly, you need to know you go to a good school. It is good not only because you do well in tests, but because you are helped to grow into good citizens. We could really see what a happy community you are. We were very impressed by your excellent behaviour, good manners and politeness.

So what other reasons make your school so good? Well, here is a short list:

- Mrs Case leads your school well and has ensured that all the staff work as a team for you
- you make good progress in your learning
- you display good attitudes in all you do
- you and your school council work well as groups and in teams
- your teachers and support staff are good and make your lessons interesting and exciting
- the school cares for you very much!

We know you will want to help each other make your school even better. We have asked Mrs Case to make sure you make faster progress in mathematics, that your teachers' marking of your work gives you clearer information how to improve, and that their questioning and use of information is used to plan activities that help those of you who can learn a little faster do so.

Most of all, we could see your pride in your school. We really enjoyed meeting you and wish you every success in the future.

Best wishes

Mark Williams

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools