



Ripon Cathedral Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 121581
Local Authority North Yorkshire
Inspection number 292166
Inspection dates 20–21 September 2006
Reporting inspector Peter Howard

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Priest Lane
School category	Voluntary controlled		Ripon
Age range of pupils	3–11		North Yorkshire HG4 1LT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01765 602355
Number on roll (school)	297	Fax number	01765 605465
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs L Williams
		Headteacher	Mr Darren Dudman
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	20–21 September 2006	292166

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Ripon Cathedral School occupies recently constructed accommodation set in pleasant grounds close to the centre of the city. It serves an area of mixed housing. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average and that of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average. The number of pupils speaking English as a second language is small. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school is emerging from a period of change following its move to new premises in 2003, which coincided with significant changes in leadership and staffing. It is particularly successful at creating conditions in which pupils' personal development thrives and there is emerging evidence of improving standards of attainment and accelerating progress. However, progress remains uneven through the school, reflecting some underlying issues in teaching and the curriculum, which the school's leadership has yet to resolve. The school has rightly judged overall effectiveness to be satisfactory.

Children enter the Nursery with skills and knowledge that are broadly as expected for their age. They receive a satisfactory start in Nursery and Reception, which have benefited from significant improvements to organisation and teaching. As a result, standards and quality in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Pupils leave Year 6 having attained standards in the national tests in English, mathematics and science that are broadly average. In this context, pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school and appreciate the quality of care they receive and the way that teachers work hard to make learning enjoyable. The school's achievement of the Healthy School Award reflects its commitment to help pupils adopt a healthy lifestyle.

The quality of teaching, the curriculum and the care given to pupils are satisfactory. Teachers and other staff work well together and there is a strong commitment to improving practice. Not all teachers consistently use effective strategies to involve pupils fully in their own learning, nor do they always set challenging targets for the more able. The curriculum offers a good range of interesting enrichment activities, but makes too few connections between subjects to fully exploit all opportunities for learning. This is a very caring school and there are effective arrangements in place to ensure the welfare of pupils.

Whilst the headteacher, with good support from the deputy headteacher, other senior staff and governors, has led the process of improvement very effectively, but not all planned changes are yet embedded across the whole school. However, improvements in provision, teachers' high levels of cooperation and their commitment to professional development have already led to higher achievement and standards. This indicates that the school's capacity to improve is good. Parents reflect this in their very strong support for the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Involve children more in their own learning, assessment and target setting.
- Make better use of assessment information to consistently set challenging targets for the more able pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The level of children's knowledge and skills on entry to school is typical for children at that age. Children make sound progress. Standards at the end of Reception are broadly average. At the end of Year 2 in 2006, attainment in writing and mathematics was average, but reading dipped to below average. At the end of Year 6, standards show the impact of improved teaching and curriculum. Overall standards improved from below average in 2005 to average in 2006. The improvement was most marked in mathematics and science, but attainment in English fell. The school has already acted to address this and to sustain the momentum of improvement across the whole curriculum. As a result of this improvement, pupils make satisfactory progress throughout school. However, higher attainers make less progress than they might because the work they are set is sometimes too easy for them. In this context, targets are not sufficiently challenging to ensure that all pupils make good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those from minority ethnic groups receive effective support and make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils talk with great affection about their school and their teachers; they enjoy school a great deal and come prepared to learn. One parent wrote, 'My son loves attending school, he runs in every morning and is grumpy when it's closed for holidays.' Attendance is satisfactory. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school has positive links with the cathedral and embraces a strong Christian ethos, which contributes to the pupils' mature understanding of right and wrong. Pupils maintain good relationships with each other and with staff. Behaviour in the school is good. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They know there is someone to go to if they are worried or concerned. Pupils are learning about the benefits of leading a healthy lifestyle and have worked hard to help the school achieve the Healthy School Award. They value the opportunities provided by school to exercise responsibility and contribute to school life. This is evident in the effective school council and positive links with the wider community. Improving basic skills contribute to satisfactory preparation for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall; good and outstanding teaching was also observed during the inspection. Teachers' planning is increasingly collaborative and benefits from the developing expertise of subject leaders. Where this is particularly effective, in mathematics and science, the impact of improving teaching on national

test results in 2006 was evident. The school has introduced a range of strategies, such as explaining lesson objectives and encouraging pupils to assess their own work, to involve pupils more in their own learning. However, these strategies are not yet consistently implemented in all classes and subjects and are therefore not having as much impact as they could. High quality resources enhance teaching throughout the school. Teachers manage their classrooms well and other adults make a valuable contribution to all pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and all statutory requirements are met. The much improved practical curriculum in Nursery and Reception, enhanced by outstanding outdoor areas, is well designed to meet the needs of young pupils. In Years 1 to 6, the school is introducing a revised curriculum concentrating on developing skills, rather than teaching subjects in isolation. This has greater relevance and offers more stimulating learning experiences for pupils. However, this process has some way to go and as yet the curriculum makes too few connections between subjects to fully exploit pupils' learning. Changes to the mathematics and science curriculum have already improved achievement. It is too early to see the impact of changes to the curriculum for English. A well considered approach to teaching personal, social, health and citizenship education contributes well to children's good personal development. Good curricular enrichment is provided by visits, out-of-school clubs and visitors such as artists, musicians and storytellers.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory. Staff are very committed to the welfare of the children in their care. The support given to children is contributing well to their personal development and helping to raise achievement. The school has worked successfully with the local authority to improve assessment and this is now satisfactory in all classes. Teachers use assessment information to set targets to guide pupils' learning, although this process is not yet consistently implemented for all pupils. Arrangements for health and safety and child protection are thorough and well managed. The school works hard to ensure that pupils move from one phase of their education to the next as smoothly as possible.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's future and, with good support from the deputy headteacher, he provides very effective leadership. The school responds well to the needs and views of parents, who give it their overwhelming support.

Leading the school through a period of change, the headteacher has worked successfully to create a team ethos among the staff and a culture of continuing professional development. Although some subject leaders are already contributing well to raising standards, the overall effectiveness of middle managers is only satisfactory. Governors are very supportive of the school, but do not have a sufficiently informed and detailed understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school's self-evaluation, underpinned by effective checks on teaching and learning, is accurate, and this provides a good foundation for further improvement. The issues raised in the last inspection have been dealt with effectively and the school give satisfactory value for money.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

As you know, two colleagues and I recently inspected your school. We really enjoyed our visit because everyone was so helpful and friendly. We would like to share with you what we thought.

We enjoyed the conversations we had with you that showed us how grown up you are when you talk about school. We liked the way so many of you enjoy school, work hard and get involved in the many clubs and activities. The school council makes a good contribution to school. The teachers and all the other staff in school look after you well and you should all be proud of achieving the Healthy School Award. Your school buildings are still quite new and we think you are fortunate to work in such a lovely setting. The adults in school have worked really hard to provide a wide range of features in the school grounds to make both learning and playtime fun. Inside school, your work is well displayed to show all the different things you do.

Your teachers have also been working hard to introduce new approaches into their teaching, for example making use of lesson objectives and asking you to mark your own work. We think they are helping you make better progress in your work, but it would help if all of your teachers did these things more often. Setting you targets to guide your learning is also a good idea. However, the targets set are not always as challenging for you as they might be, particularly for those of you who find learning easy.

Mr Dudman works well with staff, governors and parents to plan how to make the school better. They are all keen to help you achieve more at school and one measure of this is how well you do in the end of year tests in English and maths. Of course, the success you enjoy at school is not all about what others do: you can help yourselves by working hard and taking advantage of all the opportunities offered by school.

We wish you all the very best for your future at Ripon Cathedral School.