

Riddlesden St Marys CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107340
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	309384
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Gill Hepworth

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	314
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Learmonth
Headteacher	Miss E Jackson
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	Grange Road Riddlesden Keighley West Yorkshire BD20 5AB
Telephone number	01535 210002
Fax number	0

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Riddlesden St Mary's is a larger than average primary school located in an area of social and economic disadvantage. A large proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups with the largest group being of Pakistani heritage. The majority of pupils enter school with limited English. An above average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average.

The school is an Investor in People and holds the Activemark award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Riddlesden St Mary's is a good school. It lives up to its values of 'mutual trust and respect for all'. The school's success owes much to the headteacher's leadership and management, well supported by the deputy headteacher and senior staff. This ensures that pupils receive good educational opportunities. The headteacher's high expectations set the standards for her team of capable staff. A number of staff are new to the school but good staff development ensures that teaching and learning are consistently good. As a result, pupils enjoy school and learn well. Planning is firmly based on information about pupils' progress. This means that pupils are challenged at levels that take account of their previous learning, enabling all to make good progress. Parents are very positive about the school, as shown by the responses to the parents' questionnaire. The strength of their feelings is reflected in their comments, writing, for example: 'this is an excellent school where teachers are friendly and approachable'.

Children are at the heart of the school's work and widening their horizons is seen as an important priority. As a result, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy all the opportunities that the school gives them through the interesting curriculum and the extensive range of additional activities. Pupils play well together and take very good care of each other. For example, 'playground pals' make sure that younger pupils enjoy their lunchtimes and playtimes. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to maintain a healthy lifestyle and make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community. The school places great emphasis on providing a high level of care for all its pupils but particularly the most vulnerable. In a strong commitment to inclusion, led by the headteacher, the school has dedicated expenditure to providing a good number of skilled learning support staff; this enables pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress. The school makes excellent links with outside agencies to provide specialist help and support where needed. The parental involvement worker provides high quality support to both parents and pupils, resulting in good behaviour and above average attendance. Pupils develop positive attitudes because the school is responsive to their views. An example of this is the school council working with the school to provide playground equipment.

Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage. Many are in the early stages of learning English and a few have very little English. They make good progress and develop positive attitudes to learning because teaching and learning is of a high quality. The quality of teaching and learning in Key Stages 1 and 2 is at least good. This leads to good rates of progress overall. The previous irregular progress in Years 3 to 6 has been largely eliminated and standards are now near to average by the end of Year 6. Senior leaders have a clear understanding of how well individual pupils are doing. However, the procedures for tracking pupils' progress are not used regularly enough to quickly identify how different groups of pupils are doing, especially in Key Stage 2. Academic guidance is good and most pupils know their targets but many are not sure how to improve their work further. This means that pupils are not always involved in their learning.

The school has a modest estimate of some aspects of its provision because it expects a lot from itself. Pupils' continued improvement and good personal development demonstrate that the school has good capacity to improve further and that it provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children start Nursery, their skills overall are well below what is typical for their age, with communication, language and literacy skills being particularly low. The majority of children have limited English. They respond well to the warm welcome provided by the staff and the stimulating environment for learning. They quickly become engaged in learning. Adults provide very good support and make the most of every opportunity to help children learn, to get along well together, talk about their learning, grow in confidence and behave well. Success is celebrated and relationships are excellent. As a result, children, including those whose mother tongue is not English, make good progress in all areas of learning based on purposeful, practical activities that show a very good understanding of how young children learn. The Foundation Stage leader provides good leadership and management and all staff play their part.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use the systems for tracking pupils' progress more frequently in order to provide a clearer view of how well different groups of pupils are doing, especially in Years 3 to 6.
- Ensure pupils have more knowledge of what they need to do to improve their work so that they are fully involved in their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall, most pupils make good progress in Years 1 to 6 so that by the end of Year 6, standards are just below average in English, mathematics and science. This is good achievement. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils who are at the early stages of learning English are well supported and make similar progress to others in their year groups. There is a rising trend of attainment by the end of Year 2. Standards in writing and mathematics are particularly promising because they are close to the average. Irregular progress in all subjects between Years 3 and 6, which caused the low standards in the past, is being eliminated even for those who are admitted later than most and for those who have English as a second language. The school's tracking information shows that pupils are on course to exceed the standards attained in the national tests in 2007.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' have excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They very much enjoy their time in school. When they enter school they are immersed in a community that really does have children at the heart of learning. Attendance is higher than average and pupils participate with great enthusiasm in activities both in and out of lessons. They settle very quickly into school life. Pupils are aware of how to stay healthy, especially through eating well and being physically active. They behave in a safe and sensible manner, working well collaboratively, treating each other and adults with care and respect. The school's contribution to the community is exceptional, whether it is through pupils raising funds for charities at home or abroad or the school council helping redesign a local park. Pupils have a strong voice in the school and express their views confidently. They take on many roles of responsibility, for example, the 'playground pals' contribute much to the smooth running of the school. This prepares them well for secondary school and beyond.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. As a result, pupils achieve well. Above all, most lessons are interesting and exciting and relationships are good, giving pupils the confidence to learn. The majority of lessons have a clear focus and challenging pace. In a small minority of lessons, teaching is not so well focused and the pace of learning slackens. Because pupils behave well and respond willingly to the requests of their teachers, lessons are conducted in a calm and orderly atmosphere. In most lessons, pupils develop language skills through practical activities and opportunities to share ideas. As a result, they enjoy lessons, are eager to learn and work hard. Skilled teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to pupils' progress, particularly those who are new to learning English. Although teachers mark work regularly, comments do not always provide pupils with enough specific guidance on how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum supports the academic and personal development of all pupils well. It is effective in meeting the needs of all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. As well as a strong focus on English, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT), the curriculum offers many practical learning opportunities. This provides the maximum opportunity for pupils to develop and apply basic skills. Cross-curricular links are well developed and this makes learning meaningful. The very wide range of school clubs adds significantly to pupils' enjoyment. The school provides many opportunities to enhance pupils' learning by making full use of its attractive grounds and the many areas of interest in the local community. In addition, pupils have the opportunity to learn French which gives them the chance to learn a new language together.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils benefit greatly from the outstanding levels of care offered by all adults in the school. All recommended procedures for safeguarding pupils are thorough. The school provides a good level of support for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The parental involvement worker has made a significant contribution to raising pupils' confidence and achievement levels by working with pupils and their families. There are good links with other professionals to provide specialist help when needed. Support staff are very successful in encouraging all pupils, including those learning English as an additional language to take a full part in lessons. The school has recently introduced effective procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress and from these a wide range of challenging targets is set. However, the available information is not always used regularly enough to track the progress of different groups of pupils especially in Key Stage 2.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Together with the deputy headteacher and senior staff, the headteacher has created a common sense of purpose among staff. Initiatives to raise standards are top priority. Effective assessment strategies have been introduced and a range of interventions are in place to help pupils who might underachieve. Through strong induction procedures, the teachers who have recently joined the school already fit well into the team and work to the high expectations set for them. All teachers are actively involved in the process of self-evaluation. As a result, school is fully aware of where improvement is needed. The school underestimates the quality of some aspects of its provision because it knows that nothing is ever perfect. Excellent links are made with parents and outside agencies to support the school's work. The impact is seen in the good progress made by pupils and in their sense of security and well-being. Governors are very supportive of the school. They also challenge and hold the school to account for its performance.

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Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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 making me feel so welcome when I inspected your school recently. I enjoyed my visit, especially having the opportunity to see you hard at work and talking with you about all the interesting things you do.

This is what I particularly liked about your school.

- Children in the Foundation Stage enjoy all their activities and learn a lot.
- You go to a good school that helps you make good progress because teaching is good and you learn well.
- All of you are friendly and polite to each other and you behave well.
- You look out for each other and 'playground pals' take very good care of younger children and help the school run smoothly.
- You enjoy your lessons and many of you take part in the large number of clubs and activities that the school provides for you.
- You make good choices about your diet and take plenty of exercise because you want to grow up fit and strong.
- Adults in the school look after you extremely well, especially those of you who find things difficult in school.
- Your headteacher and other staff, as well as the governors, lead the school well and work very hard to make sure that you get the best out of your time in school.

Your school does much to help you do well and your parents are very pleased with the school. We have identified two things to help it get even better.

- To check more carefully that all of you continue to make good progress in your work.
- When marking your work, teachers need to give you clear help on how to make your work better.

You can all help by continuing to work hard to meet the targets set for you.