

Rowsley CofE (Controlled) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112820
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE LA
Inspection number	311019
Inspection dates	29–30 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Keith Edwards

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	68
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ted Mellor
Headteacher	Mrs Alison Wain
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2003
School address	Woodhouse Lane Rowsley Matlock Derbyshire DE4 2ED
Telephone number	01629 733727
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school serves the village of Rowsley. Although most children live locally, an increasing number are drawn from further afield. All of the pupils are of White British heritage. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average, although each intake reflects a wide range of ability. The range of socio-economic circumstances is broad. The proportion of children with learning difficulties is above average.

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 school. It has improved significantly over the last two years and is very well set to maintain this momentum. Standards have improved markedly because the quality of teaching and learning has been carefully nurtured. One delighted parent, whose views are echoed by many others, commented, 'I have total confidence in this school. The good quality teaching enables my child to make good progress and he is treated as an individual'. Rowsley Primary has the respect of the community that it serves and works well with other schools.

The children achieve well in the Foundation Stage to reach standards that are above national expectations. In Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have risen markedly since 2005 and the school's tracking and assessment data indicate that this trend is set to continue. Current standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 are above average. Standards in Year 6 have risen dramatically in English, mathematics and science because the pupils have now a much clearer idea of what they need to do to improve, and their attitudes to learning are so positive. Standards in English and mathematics are above average and in science, they are well above. The pupils' achievement is reflected in the much improved performance of the pupils in the national assessment tests for Years 2 and 6 in recent years. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Because they are well supported, both by the teachers and a team of dedicated teaching assistants, those pupils who find learning difficult make good progress. The more academic pupils are challenged to reach their potential through work that is carefully matched to their ability, particularly in mathematics and science.

The personal development and well-being of all pupils is good. The children really enjoy coming to school and attendance rates remain above average. Staff respect and value the pupils and consequently pupils develop self-confidence, self-esteem and self-discipline. They behave well. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and they respond well to the school's initiatives that encourage them to adopt healthy lifestyles, particularly by taking part in sport. They work hard and play well together. They willingly take on extra responsibilities, such as school council work and make a good contribution to village life, particularly through links with the church. The school makes good provision for the welfare of its pupils. Each member of staff knows each of the pupils by name and the adults are excellent role models. The curriculum is well structured and meets the academic needs of the pupils but lacks the spark of creativity. Furthermore, the curriculum does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to gain an insight into the nature of our multicultural society.

Leadership and management are good. The school's view of itself is entirely accurate. The headteacher has nurtured the ethos of high achievement and has motivated and empowered her colleagues to settle for nothing but the best. Teamwork is at the heart of all of the school's successes. The school leadership has systematically remedied the issues from the last inspection and is absolutely clear about the next steps for school improvement. The school provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The children make good progress in the Foundation Stage, particularly in their personal and social development and in their communication skills. This is because the leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good and the staff are very successful in enabling

the children to settle quickly. The school places great emphasis on reading, writing and the development of the children's speaking and listening skills and standards by the end of the Reception year are good. The staff work well as a team and the curriculum provides a very clear structure for learning the basic skills. The accommodation has been much improved since the last inspection to provide indoor and outdoor experiences for the children. However, the curriculum gives too little emphasis to the children's creative development. Nevertheless, the quality of teaching is good and the overall quality of the children's experience provides a secure foundation for their future learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Place greater emphasis on the celebration of the cultural diversity in modern British society.
- Develop the creative aspects of the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The quality of learning is good in Key Stage 1 and the pupils make good progress. In 2007, in the national assessments for pupils in Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were broadly in line with the national average. Because the staff now make effective use of assessment data when planning lessons and the teaching is good, current standards are rising sharply. In Key Stage 2, aspirational targets are set and met. The school was in the top 2% nationally in terms of performance at the end of Key Stage 2 in both 2006 and 2007. Standards were exceptionally high in English, mathematics and science. In science, pupils benefit from the exciting investigative approach to learning. Although current standards in English and mathematics are above average, they have not been consistently so in writing in recent years. However, pupils have responded well to the many school initiatives to record their experiences and current standards in writing are above average. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved because of enhanced resourcing and training for staff.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils behave well. Pupils report that incidents of poor behaviour are rare and they trust the staff to deal with any problems that might occur. Attendance rates are good and pupils arrive punctually. They are polite and courteous. The uptake on an impressive range of out-of-school activities is high. A strong personal, social and health education programme supports the strong relationships and enables pupils to develop a secure understanding of healthy lifestyles.

Pupils value the care shown to them and feel very involved in all decision making. By the time they leave, most pupils have acquired secure social and academic skills to support their future economic well-being. Through weekly meetings of the school council, pupils make a meaningful contribution to the school community. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils have a good understanding of their own rural traditions but their understanding of multicultural issues is not as well developed.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school is well staffed and the pupils benefit from their broad range of skills and expertise. For example, good use is made of sports specialists to enable the pupils to develop skills in games, such as hockey, and to build up their fitness. A common feature in all classes is the warmth of the relationships that promotes good behaviour and encourages most pupils to try hard. Teaching assistants provide valuable support. Interactive whiteboards are used successfully to demonstrate new techniques and the teachers ensure that the pace of learning is good. In almost all lessons, the work set closely matches the range of ability in the class, and this enables the pupils to make good progress. Teachers provide good oral feedback to pupils but the quality of marking in the pupils' books lacks consistency.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is structured effectively to support learning in the mixed-age classes. There is an appropriate focus on promoting skills in literacy and numeracy. The curriculum strongly supports the pupils' personal development with many valuable opportunities to promote their well-being. A key strength of the curriculum are the strong roots in the school's rural traditions and the links with the community. A further strength is the programme of well-chosen visits, visiting speakers and the range of activities beyond the school day. However, although the curriculum provides many opportunities for investigative work, particularly in science, there is too little emphasis on the creative dimension, particularly the visual arts.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Trusting relationships permeate every aspect of school life and pupils' welfare is at the heart of all of its work. Parental confidence is strong. Procedures for safeguarding pupils fully meet government requirements. Pupils know they can confide in a trusted adult. A flexible range of advice, guidance and support mechanisms ensures all pupils thrive socially and academically. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities receive good support. Older pupils enjoy looking after younger ones and initiatives, such as 'Playground Buddies', successfully maintain a happy and harmonious climate. The school's procedures for assessing progress are good and the teachers use data effectively to help pupils improve. Learners are becoming increasingly involved in gauging their own progress but the picture is not yet consistent across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has been the key catalyst for change and outstanding progress has been made since the last inspection. The headteacher maintains an accurate view of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the school and has resolutely fashioned the strategy to bring about school improvement. Barriers to future improvement have been removed. A key element of this success is the strength of the teamwork and the quality of the relationships within the school. This has enabled the staff to grow in confidence and to share the responsibility for school effectiveness.

A very secure base has been established to secure further improvements and the momentum is strong. Governors are committed to the work of the school and provide conscientious support. Their awareness of their responsibility to hold the school to account has grown and they have established good procedures to monitor the work of the school.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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 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	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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

3 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rowsley CofE Primary School, Rowsley, Derbyshire, DE4 2ED

I really enjoyed my visit to your school at the end of last month because everybody was so helpful and friendly. I particularly enjoyed my discussions with you and hearing your views on Rowsley School. It was also delightful to be able to be part of the audience when Class 1 performed their wonderful dance. I also enjoyed working with you in your classrooms, joining in with your morning assemblies and watching you playing games outside. I can fully understand why you enjoy your school so much as there are so many things that make your school very special. Here are some of them:

- You clearly want to do your best to learn in lessons and are prepared to work hard.
- The standard of your work is good, especially in science.
- Everybody understands the school rules and you behave well.
- Everybody tries to be friendly, thoughtful and helpful. Well done!
- Your teachers are good and they work hard to make your lessons interesting and fun.
- The school provides a wide range of activities and visits to keep you interested.
- Mrs Wain always does her very best for you.

You are very fortunate to be able to attend your village school. It is really important that you remember to thank your teachers for all their hard work and that you continue to try your best. I know that you achieve well but I am asking your teachers to keep on finding ways to help you be more creative. The school should also do more work to help you appreciate the richness of the different cultures in our society. This sounds like more hard work but I know that you can pull together and succeed.

Very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Keith Edwards

Lead inspector