

Rownhams St John's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 116311 |
| Local Authority | Hampshire |
| Inspection number | 312253 |
| Inspection dates | 23–24 October 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Janet Sinclair |

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 296 |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 0 |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years | 0 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Ann Laird |
| Headteacher | Mrs Meri Knights |
| Date of previous school inspection | 18 April 2005 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Bakers Drove Rownhams Southampton SO16 8AD |
| Telephone number | 02380 736417 |

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| Age group | 4–11 |
| Inspection dates | 23–24 October 2008 |
| Inspection number | 312253 |

Fax number

02380 731732

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Rownhams is a larger than average primary school. When children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), their skills and knowledge are similar to those expected for their age. Pupils' entitlement to free school meals is below average as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils are mainly White British with a few from minority ethnic backgrounds, some of whom are at an early stage of learning English.

The school has experienced some turbulence in terms of staff changes due to maternity leave, promotion and changes of subject leadership within the school.

The school has Enhanced Healthy Schools status, Sportsmark and ICT mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve.

Significant improvement is required in relation to achievement in mathematics at Key Stage 2. The school's overall effectiveness is inadequate, as senior leaders have not dealt successfully with all areas of underachievement over several years. Although actions have been taken, they have not been consistently implemented across the school. Teaching and learning are not effective because teachers' subject knowledge is weak and they do not plan work precisely enough to meet pupils' needs. This hampers progress, particularly for high attaining pupils. The school does not make enough use of its tracking systems to check how well pupils are achieving in the short term, thus allowing underperformance to go unchecked.

Across the rest of the work of the school, pupils make satisfactory progress to achieve broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. There is appropriate provision for pupils with learning difficulties and those at an early stage of learning English so that they make sound progress towards their individual targets.

In all other respects, they make similar progress to their peers which results in inadequate progress in mathematics. The curriculum is satisfactory because, apart from in mathematics, the range of planned activities engages and interests pupils in their learning. A good number of clubs, visits and visitors enrich the curriculum. Pupils particularly enjoy their extra-curricular sporting activities.

Although leadership and management are mainly satisfactory, there are elements of it that are unsatisfactory. In order to maximise the effectiveness of all leaders, the school has moved towards a more widely based leadership model and the use of curricular teams. This is to ensure staff's skills are used more effectively, so that improvement is accelerated. Although the school has a sound understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, there is a lack of clear success criteria for addressing the key areas for improvement, so the targets set are not specific enough. This makes it difficult for staff and governors to assess the success of initiatives or to ensure accountability from leaders. However, leaders have worked hard to ensure that recent improvements in English are being sustained, science is now beginning to improve under new leadership, and the school's use of information and communication technology (ICT) has improved. The school has been awarded the ICT mark. The enthusiasm and commitment of most subject leaders, alongside their detailed action plans, ensure satisfactory developments on most fronts and a sound capacity to improve. However, the school needs to tackle the issues in mathematics with greater rigour and urgency.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe within its caring and supportive environment. This, coupled with secure safeguarding procedures, contributes well to pupils' good personal development. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons and across the school.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children make satisfactory progress across all the areas of learning and there are particular strengths in the progress they make in their personal, social and emotional development. As a result, children work and play well together and are developing self-confidence. There are close links with parents to ensure that children settle in well and parents are encouraged to become partners in learning. Adults are sensitive to children's needs and provide good support for their personal development in many ways. Teaching is satisfactory, and children have good relationships with adults. In the better lessons, activities are well matched to children's abilities and staff provide good support to extend children's imagination. The designated outside play area is restricted and does not provide the children with the full range of relevant practical and creative activities. This slows their rate of progress. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is an awareness of the areas of weakness in provision, but action to improve has had only a limited impact.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement, especially in mathematics at Key Stage 2, by ensuring that lessons provide activities that match the needs of pupils of all ability levels.
- Use the tracking systems to monitor pupils' progress in mathematics more closely, and take effective action to address slow progress at a much earlier stage.
- Ensure that the plans for addressing key areas for school improvement include clear success criteria so that outcomes can be accurately measured and leaders held accountable in order to accelerate the pace of change within the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards are broadly average across the school, except in English at Key Stage 2 where they are above average. However, pupils in Key Stage 2 are not achieving well enough in mathematics. Improvements, such as setting the pupils in smaller groups and planning in more detail, have not had enough impact. Additionally, teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to explain their strategies for solving problems or involve them fully in their learning, and this hinders the development of their mathematical skills.

Pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve satisfactorily in reading, writing and mathematics given their starting points and capabilities. There has been a drop in standards in the last two years, but this reflects mainly the lower attainment on entry of these pupils.

At Key Stage 2, achievement in English improved in 2007 to be securely satisfactory, and this has been maintained successfully due to the school's efforts. Science, where there was also underachievement, is beginning to improve, and achievement is mainly satisfactory. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties and those at an early stage of learning English make sound progress towards the targets set for their specific learning needs due to appropriate interventions and well-targeted support from trained assistants. Otherwise, their progress is similar to their peers, resulting in inadequate progress overall. The unvalidated national test results in 2008 show that the school met its targets for English but not for mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school, and their good behaviour and good attitudes to work create a happy learning atmosphere. Pupils learn to respect and understand their own feelings well and those of others. Attendance is broadly average. Pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and respond well to opportunities to be physically active. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are kind and helpful to each other and courteous to all adults. Pupils make a good contribution to the community. They take on a wide range of responsibilities such as acting as prefects and playground friends. School council meetings involve pupils in making decisions, such as deciding on outdoor play apparatus. All pupils spoken to feel safe in school because they are confident that bullying will be dealt with effectively. However, despite pupils' good personal skills, their weak progress in mathematics means they are only satisfactorily prepared for the next steps in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1. It is more variable at Key Stage 2, and inadequate overall, especially in mathematics. This is because work is not always well matched to pupils' needs, with the result that it is not sufficiently challenging. Across the school, teachers organise and manage lessons well and have good relationships with pupils so that they enjoy their learning. They make effective use of interactive whiteboards to engage pupils in their work. Pupils' enjoyment was particularly noticeable in a good lesson in a year 5/6 class, where they were fully engaged in adapting a Charles Causley poem and then reading it to the class. Teachers generally provide activities that are more interesting for English, such as links to their history work on Romans, so that pupils are more interested in the work. However, inconsistencies in teaching overall hamper pupils' learning. Lessons are not always planned well enough to meet pupils' needs, and weaknesses in marking mean that pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is planned appropriately to meet the needs of pupils in the mixed-age classes. There are many school clubs, visits and activities as well as music and sports provision that pupils thoroughly enjoy and that support their personal development well. Sports days are very popular with pupils, who say that they are great fun. All broad areas of learning are allocated appropriate time, but the curriculum does not always give enough emphasis to the development of pupils' mathematical skills. Similarly, across the school, opportunities for pupils to show initiative and to make decisions in their learning are limited. There is good attention to health and safety. The school has Enhanced Healthy Schools status and pupils are given many opportunities to discuss issues such as bullying.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The caring atmosphere of the school makes a clear contribution to pupils' enjoyment. Pupils learn to respect the rights of others and this helps them to care for each other. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties, and those who are learning English as an additional language, are supported adequately by the school in terms of their individual targets, often in effective partnership with outside agencies. A recently appointed specialist provides valuable support for the emotional needs of vulnerable pupils. Procedures for safeguarding all pupils are sufficiently robust and securely in place. The school monitors pupils' progress satisfactorily, giving support where needed, which helps progress, particularly in English and for pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils are starting to use their targets and are becoming more involved in assessing their own learning, an activity they enjoy, but practice is inconsistent, meaning that not all pupils benefit.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher, supported by all her staff, has successfully ensured a strong caring ethos within the school, good attention to pupils' personal development and good curricular enrichment. Regular staff meetings, and opportunities for professional development through courses and performance management, ensure all staff have appropriate opportunities to further develop their expertise. For example, some staff are attending a 10-day mathematics course which is already improving their confidence to carry out their duties effectively.

Evaluation is mainly accurate and the school has a realistic view of its strengths and weaknesses. However, it has not always used this to ensure effective strategic planning for improvement. Additionally, although teaching has been regularly monitored, there remain weaknesses that affect pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics, where teachers' confidence and planning are not as secure as in English.

Governors are supportive and are led by an effective chair. The governing body's committees have been restructured in order to ensure that governors are more accountable. The school has good links with the church and the local community. Parents are supportive of the school and what it provides.

Since the last inspection, ICT facilities are much better and achievement in English at Key Stage 2 has improved. However, the underachievement in mathematics remains.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 4 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | No |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being? | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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|---|---|
| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS? | 3 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 3 |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop? | 3 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 2 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 3 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 4 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 4 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress | 4 |

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good are 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 |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |

The quality of provision

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|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs? | 4 |
| 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 |

Leadership and management

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| 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 | 4 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 3 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 3 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 3 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 4 |
| 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? | Yes |

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

24 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rownhams St John's Church of England Primary School, Southampton, SO16 8AD

Thank you for all your help during the recent inspection of your school. We enjoyed our visit and were particularly impressed with your smiling faces and friendliness towards us. We found your school was caring well for you and providing you with lots of extra activities that you thoroughly enjoy, particularly your netball and football. We know you feel safe in school and trust the adults taking care of you. You make sound progress in most subjects but ,in mathematics at Key Stage 2 your progress is too slow. This results in you making insufficient progress overall.

We have asked that your school be put in a special group of schools that get extra support. Your headteacher, teachers and governors know they need to help you do much better. This is because many of you are not making fast enough progress in your mathematics, teaching is not as good as it needs to be, and senior leaders are not rigorous enough in setting clear targets to make things better.

This is what we have asked your school to do now.

- Help you to do much better in mathematics by ensuring that work in lessons helps you to make as much progress as possible by being planned carefully to meet your needs.
- Check your progress in mathematics more often so that you do not fall behind.
- Ensure that school leaders set clear targets for improvement and that they check carefully so that your school gets better.

We very much enjoyed talking to you and wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Janet Sinclair

Lead Inspector