

Rawtenstall Newchurch Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119390
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313279
Inspection dates	8–9 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Jennie Platt

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	142
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Alan Hamilton
Headteacher	Mrs Carolyn Cornthwaite
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2004
School address	Dark Lane Newchurch Rossendale Lancashire BB4 7UA
Telephone number	01706 229478
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school serving an area which is socially and economically disadvantaged. An average number of pupils take a free school meal although school information suggests more are eligible. The vast majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. A few vulnerable pupils who are looked after by the local authority attend the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It provides sound value for money. It has faced challenges since its last inspection and several parents expressed concern about the numerous changes in staffing. Many of these changes have been unavoidable and the school has endeavoured to provide the best for the pupils. The staff have been well led by the headteacher and have successfully improved the ethos of the school and kept ahead of changes in education to make learning more enjoyable for pupils. Nevertheless, the staffing changes have made it difficult for the school to put in place actions to raise standards and parents are justified in their concerns. However, the situation is much improved, and as staffing has stabilised, it is clear that standards are slowly rising. The school is working hard to improve partnerships by making it easier for parents to contact school and share their concerns. Many of the parents who expressed concerns about the school still considered their children enjoyed school. This is evident to visitors and pupils' personal development is good.

Pupils play together well and are polite and well mannered to visitors. They feel safe in school because care and guidance are effective and pupils know there are adults available if they have any worries.

Achievement is satisfactory. Children start school with skills typical for their age and leave with standards that are broadly average. For several years, standards have been low at the end of Year 2, especially so in 2007. Effective measures have been put in place to ensure that most pupils now make satisfactory progress. Current standards are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Standards in Year 6 are broadly average in English and mathematics but below average in science. The more able pupils are not making enough progress in science and mathematics. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the future.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most lessons have good elements including the management of pupils and effective organisation. As a result, lessons run smoothly, behaviour is good and pupils settle promptly to their work. The pace of the lesson is often brisk as teachers tell pupils how long they have to finish their tasks. In science and mathematics tasks do not fully challenge the more able pupils. Expectations of presentation of work are not always high enough. Marking is not always making it clear that work should be better and infrequently tells pupils how to improve. Good teaching of literacy is reaping benefits especially in promoting progress in writing. This quality of teaching is not evident in science, especially in teaching pupils how to investigate and experiment. Pupils are profiting from changes to the curriculum. It is satisfactory and improving as topics are brought together under one theme. The current topic on organising a mini Olympics is being well received by pupils with activities including designing an Olympic torch and planning the events. Much serious debate is taking place about the presentation ceremony. The number and variety of extra-curricular activities are good. The focus on sport is appreciated by pupils who all know the importance of keeping healthy.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Self-evaluation is perceptive and identifies the correct priorities to raise standards. It is having an impact on literacy and to some extent mathematics but not yet in science. Nevertheless, priorities are translated into clear actions in the school's improvement plan. This clarity of planning indicates good capacity to improve. Subject leaders for science and mathematics are relatively new and their role in monitoring and evaluating the impact of change is underdeveloped. Governance is satisfactory. Many governors

are newly appointed and currently are not gaining sufficient first-hand information to fully monitor what is happening in school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children settle happily because they are well cared for and staff are welcoming to parents and children. From a starting point that is typical for this age, children make satisfactory progress to reach the level expected for their age by the time they start in Year 1. Many make better progress in their personal and social skills and benefit from having older pupils to support them. Teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory. Many tasks are practical and children really enjoy their early experiences. The school benefits from ample space both indoors and outside and children enjoy freedom of movement between activities. They have a good balance of tasks led by an adult and those they can select for themselves. Recently acquired resources have enhanced provision but there is still a way to go in adding richness and stimulation to the children's experiences and using the outdoors effectively to extend learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards in science.
- Improve the marking of pupils' work and raise expectations of what pupils can achieve especially in the presentation of their work.
- Enhance the richness of opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage.
- Extend the monitoring and evaluating role of governors and subject leaders of science and mathematics.

A small proportion of the school's whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Children start school with skills that are typical for their age and leave with broadly average standards. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. The results of teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2007 were significantly below average and lower than usual for the school. This group included a high number of pupils with learning difficulties, often new to the school. Nevertheless, the school has acted swiftly to raise standards. Improvements in teaching, especially in the teaching of letters and sounds, have reaped benefits. Current standards are now average in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Results of national tests over recent years have been below average and it is Key Stage 2 where the effect of staff changes can be seen. The current Year 6 pupils have benefited from stability of teaching over the last year and standards are broadly average in English and mathematics. Standards in science are below average. The more able pupils could make more progress in science and mathematics.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Those with social and emotional needs and the vulnerable pupils flourish in the school because of the care and attention given to their individual needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This is a busy school with an atmosphere of purposeful activity. Most pupils enjoy learning and are good at collaboration and taking on responsibility. Controversies about the current topic on the Olympics are hotly debated. Pupils have real opinions about the rights and wrongs of being competitive and Year 6 pupils argued their points very well. There is a feeling of belonging to the school community which the whole school approach to planning the curriculum is nurturing. Year 6 pupils work with the younger ones to see how far different ages can throw the javelin and opinions are canvassed on preference for refreshments. Pupils understand their role in the wider community and have raised amazing amounts of money for charity. The innovative approach to all pupils being members of the school council is encouraging all to be involved and express their concerns.

Pupils know how to keep healthy. Parents and pupils appreciate the healthy tuck shop and the new arrangements for cooking fresh and appetising meals on site. Clear messages about keeping safe are recalled by pupils so that they know how to look after themselves. Most attend regularly and attendance is in line with the national average.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are polite to visitors and each other. They follow the rules they have written for their class and this has a positive impact on the way they relate to each other. Although parents expressed a concern about bullying, pupils did not identify this as a problem. They mentioned some poor language during football and some name calling but felt that this was handled well by staff. Pupils learn about their own religion but are less knowledgeable about life in a multi-cultural society.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with several strong features. Teachers manage pupils well using their good personal skills to include humour and warmth so that pupils behave well. Computers are available in all classes and often used effectively to add interest as well as enhance information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Lessons are carefully planned and teachers make it clear to pupils what they are going to learn. As a result, pupils know what is expected of them. Detailed assessment in English enables teachers to plan work that matches pupils' needs and interests. This is not always the case in mathematics and science and tasks are not always sufficiently challenging. In science especially, pupils are not pushed on to follow their own lines of enquiry and suggest how they can investigate and record their findings. Pupils' work is marked regularly but not always with sufficient accuracy, with some comments being positive when work is not of a high enough quality. Insufficient guidance is given to pupils to improve their work. However, at the end of lessons most teachers give pupils a chance to identify if they have any problems and then they adjust their planning with this information in mind.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with some good features. Provision to enhance personal development is effective and pupils appreciate the lessons which allow them to share their

worries and learn about relationships. This has a positive impact on pupils' progress and the way they behave. The school's commitment to learning being enjoyable is clear in the balance of creative, physical and academic opportunities. Many pupils expressed pleasure in art lessons and the school is awash with displays of their imaginative work. Parents appreciate the project approach to planning. One parent comments, 'projects such as the Olympics, which span all subjects are enjoyed and my children come home with tales of what they are doing in school'. This approach to planning is increasing the use of literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. This has always been the case for reading and writing but less so for numeracy. The school meets the needs of the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities but less so for the more able pupils. The range of extra-curricular activities, including visits is good and adds excitement to the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care for pupils is good. All safeguarding procedures are in place. Partnership with external agents is good. Advice is sought to ensure the pupils with learning difficulties receive well informed guidance. Staff know their pupils well. Additional support for the more vulnerable pupils is effective and enables them to have full access to the curriculum. Those who have difficulties controlling their emotions are also well supported. When pupils feel they need time on their own to calm down the 'chill out corner' is available. Some pupils travel from a distance because their parents appreciate the care provided for their children. Academic guidance is good in literacy. Information is used effectively to provide additional support if it is spotted that a pupil is not making the expected progress. This is not yet as evident in mathematics and science. Although tracking procedures are in place assessments have not been regular enough to record pupils' on-going progress. Procedures to improve tracking in these subjects are in the pipeline.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher shows determination to bring about changes that reflect current good practice even when this occasionally meets with opposition. She has effectively used her skills in teaching English to the benefit of the school. Her good management of the subject has led to standards in English rising at a faster rate than other subjects. Changes have been most effective and the school is ahead of the game in adjustments to the curriculum which are making pupils more enthusiastic readers and writers. This has not been the case in the leadership of mathematics and science. The new subject leaders are auditing their subjects well but their role of monitoring and evaluation of change is not well developed. Staffing changes have slowed down progress since the last inspection. It is satisfactory overall, but presentation of work and challenge for the more able remain as areas to improve. Nevertheless, the school does have a clear view of what needs to be done to take the school forward. In 2007, challenging targets were set for Year 6 pupils. They were exceeded in English and met in mathematics.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors are very supportive but do not have clearly established links to gain an informed picture of what is happening in school. Governors are committed to raising the school's reputation in the community. The community café is one step in the right direction which is appreciated by many.

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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?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 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	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

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?	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?	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 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 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

10 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rawtenstall Newchurch Church of England Primary School, Lancashire, BB4 7UA

Thank you very much for your friendly welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed my visit, especially the delicious coffee served in your café. Your school seems to be very busy and it was a delight to see you all so involved in your preparation for the mini-Olympics. I hope it went well and the weather was kind to you.

You go to a satisfactory school and most of you leave school reaching the level expected for your age. You do well at your English but your science is not quite as good. You behave well and told me you had many friends and enjoyed school. I am pleased that you know how to look after yourselves and enjoy keeping fit and healthy. You also care for others and I was amazed at the amount of money you raise for charity. Well done! The adults in your school take good care of you and teach you to keep safe. I was impressed by the number of sporting activities provided for you and I am pleased the older pupils enjoyed the activities on their residential trip.

There are some aspects that need improving and I have asked the school to do the following things:

- help you to do better in science
- check that your work is always at the right level and presented neatly and to tell you how to improve
- add even more interest to the activities for the children in the Reception class
- look more closely at how you are doing to make sure that you do really well in all the subjects.

For you, the most important things are to continue to attend regularly and to carry on enjoying school and working hard.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Jennie Platt

Lead inspector