

# Rishton Methodist Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 119396            |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Lancashire        |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 313281            |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 7–8 February 2008 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Joe Clark         |

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

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|---|--|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Voluntary controlled   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 4–11   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed  |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |  |
| School                                    | 189  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Mr Geoffrey Bennette   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Mrs Susan Lawson (Acting Head)                                 |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 1 January 2004   |
| <b>School address</b>                     | George Street<br>Rishton<br>Blackburn<br>Lancashire<br>BB1 4JF |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01254 887223   |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01252 829525   |

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized school. Most pupils come from the village of Rishton. The vast majority are White British with only a small number of ethnic minority pupils. Very few pupils have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Although the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, most pupils come from areas of high social and economic deprivation. In the last two years, there has been considerable instability in the leadership and management of the school. A Children's Centre has opened recently to coordinate the quality and provision of support for the under-fives and their families.

## Key for inspection grades

|         |              |
|---------|--------------|
| 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, HMCI 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 pupils' achievement, the standards they attain, and the curriculum.

In the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2007, standards were well below average and pupils underachieved. In the previous two years, standards were broadly average and achievement satisfactory. Standards in 2007 were adversely affected by staff turbulence, and by pupils' unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour. Low standards meant pupils were not well prepared for the next stage of their education. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have been declining for a number of years, particularly those of boys in reading, and are well below average. Pupils' current progress in both key stages is satisfactory and is accelerating, but has not had time to translate into higher standards in national tests. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those at the early stage of learning English, are making satisfactory progress.

Pupils are making better progress because staffing has stabilised, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are much improved and teaching and learning are more effective. Specialist support is improving classroom practice. A new programme of professional training and development is only now beginning to tackle the problems experienced by some teachers who moved key stage in September without having the necessary training or knowledge as to what their new classes might be expected to achieve. The curriculum is inadequate. Strategic curriculum planning to identify what pupils should be expected to learn from year to year, and effective tracking procedures to identify where pupils are falling behind, are not in place.

Whereas pupils' attitudes and behaviour inhibited their achievement in 2007, the more positive attitudes to learning they currently display are helping them make faster progress and produce higher standards of work. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the benefits of healthy eating and taking regular exercise. They say there is no bullying and they feel safe. They enjoy school and their attendance is average. Pastoral care is good. Relationships between pupils and adults are very supportive and help raise children's self-confidence and self-esteem, especially through residential trips. Partnerships with other providers are good, especially that with the local Sports College which has enhanced provision and participation in a wide range of physical activities.

Progress is faster, behaviour better and teaching and learning more effective because of the outstanding leadership of the acting headteacher. Challenging targets in all areas have been set with clear direction and planning on how these are to be achieved. Leadership at all levels, including governance, is improving rapidly and is satisfactory overall. Good support is being provided by the local authority. In a short time much has been achieved and the capacity for further improvement, based on the track record so far, is good. While the school does not provide value for money based on pupils' achievement and standards in the latest national tests, there are real signs of progress in a number of key areas. This has been recognised, above all, by the parents. Many comments received referred to recent improvements and renewed optimism for the future. One parent's comments were typical of many: 'there has been a tremendous improvement in all areas...I would now recommend this school to anyone'.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children enter Reception with skills that are generally well below what is typical for their age, particularly in speech and language development. They make satisfactory progress but standards are still below national expectations for the majority of children when they move into Year 1. Children enjoy the well resourced and stimulating environment and make good use of the outdoor play area. Leadership and management are new and satisfactory; teachers and assistants work as an effective team. The children's progress is monitored but target setting and tracking of progress are not rigorous enough. Parents say their children enjoy school and feel secure and well cared for. The induction process is effective; it helps develop positive relationships with pre-school providers. Parents feel confident in approaching the school if they have any concerns and feel their views are listened to and acted upon. The planned curriculum is balanced, with whole school sessions, small group work and opportunities for children to work and play independently. The programme for developing children's communication and language skills is not as intensive as it might be.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve achievement throughout the school, but particularly in reading among the boys at Key Stage 1.
- Improve the planning of the curriculum to show clearly what pupils should learn each year and how their progress will be tracked.
- Improve teachers' understanding of standards expected of pupils in each age group and their skills in assessing pupils' learning.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 4

Standards are well below average and pupils' overall achievement is inadequate. Pupils enter Year 1 with standards that are broadly below average. In the 2007 teacher assessments at the end of Year 2, standards were well below average, particularly in boys' reading. At the end of Year 6 standards were very low in English, below average in mathematics and average in science, representing significant underachievement for this cohort of pupils. In the previous two years, pupils' achievement had been satisfactory. Based on evidence from lesson observations, the work in pupils' books and the school's own emerging tracking data, current progress is satisfactory and accelerating. Staffing has stabilised, teaching and learning are more effective, and boys in particular are making faster progress because they are showing better attitudes to learning. This better progress has not had time to translate into higher performance in national tests. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at the early stage of learning English are making satisfactory progress in meeting their personal and behavioural targets and in their academic work.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

Personal development is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They say there is no bullying and that they feel safe. They mix easily together and say the school is a friendly place. They are polite and respectful to adults. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall, with their good spiritual development reflecting the school's strong

Christian commitment to personal values. Attendance is average. Pupils, parents and teachers acknowledge that the behaviour and attitudes to learning of a minority of pupils have been unacceptable in the past but have improved rapidly this year. During the inspection, only good behaviour was observed. Behaviour in the dining room, particularly during the saying of grace, is excellent. In lessons, attitudes to learning are usually good. Pupils make a good contribution to the local community, particularly the local church community. They have good opportunities to exercise responsibility as school councillors, lunch-time monitors and playground leaders. The school has a Healthy Schools Award and pupils know how to adopt a healthy lifestyle. They know the important factors in ensuring their own safety. Their preparation for the next stage of learning is inadequate because, as indicated by national tests, standards in basic skills are too low.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There was a wholesale movement of teachers and classes at the beginning of the year and some teachers have struggled to come to terms with new curricular demands and challenges. Gradually, confidence is being restored and teaching and learning are adapting and improving. There are some common strengths in the teaching. The methods used and the tasks set are generally interesting and excite pupils' curiosity. Lesson planning provides good opportunities for information and communication technology (ICT) to be used effectively to capture pupils' interest. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed to help pupils learn. Where teaching is less effective, teachers' lack of knowledge about what pupils might be expected to achieve in any particular year group inhibits the setting of suitably challenging work for all ability groups. Assessment practice is inconsistent across classes. Most teachers find it difficult to set individual targets for pupils because previous tracking data is unreliable.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 4**

The curriculum is inadequate. It is not planned in a coherent or systematic format which can guide teachers in ensuring progression and development from year to year. There is no agreed planning framework for developing the core subjects. Within the curriculum, there is no overview of time allocations for each subject to ensure breadth and balance. The recent emphasis on the teaching of phonics and the establishment of intervention groups reflects the priority to improve reading. Greater emphasis is now being placed on the teaching of basic skills in English and mathematics, and standards are beginning to lift. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and other pupils requiring extra help are well supported and have full access to the curriculum. The school is developing a varied range of extra-curricular opportunities, particularly in sport, which are enriching the timetabled activities.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

The pastoral support of pupils is good. Pupils say there is always someone they can turn to for help if needed. Safeguarding procedures are up-to-date and conform to recent legislation. Good levels of adult support are a feature of morning and lunchtime outdoor activities which

are helping to promote good standards of behaviour. The school has recently added more rigour to its work with outside agencies to improve the support and care for vulnerable pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at the early stage of learning English receive effective support from teaching assistants and outside agencies. Intervention strategies have been introduced recently to support their learning but it is too early to judge their impact. Pupils do not get enough guidance on how to improve their academic work. Tracking systems are not well developed and pupils are often vague about how well they are doing in relation to national standards and what they have to do to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Since her appointment, the acting headteacher has brought an energy and sense of direction to the school which has won the active endorsement of all the major stakeholders. Following accurate and rigorous self evaluation, challenging targets have been set to secure improvement at all levels. High expectations of staff, pupils and parents have raised aspirations and given confidence. Subject coordinators are relishing the challenge of improving the way their subjects are taught. Teachers' morale is high and senior leaders are excited by the prospect of change: 'We've got a real buzz about what we can achieve and a determination to do it'. Governors have new systems for challenging and monitoring the school's work. External support is good. There is still much to do, not least in ensuring that the improvements seen so far are bedded in and have a positive impact in terms of higher standards and sustained progress leading to greater achievement. Improvement since the previous inspection is inadequate.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

|  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| <b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b> | <b>School Overall</b> |
|--|-----------------------|

### Overall effectiveness

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b> | 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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage  | 3  |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements  | 2  |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How well do learners achieve?</b>   | 4 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 4 |
| 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

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                           | 3 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 3 |
| 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   | 3 |
| 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 | 4 |

### The quality of provision

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>          | 3 |
| <b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b> | 4 |
| <b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>   | 3 |

<sup>1</sup> 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**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 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  | 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 |

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

11 February 2008

Dear Children,

Inspection of Rishton Methodist Primary School, Lancashire, BB1 4JF

Thank you so much for your warm welcome when we visited your school recently. We really appreciated the help you gave us and the interesting things you told us. This is what we thought about your school.

Yours is a rapidly changing school, where many of the things that have been going wrong recently are now being put right. You told us that until this year, because of teacher absence, you had a number of different teachers in some classes. This has now been resolved. Your behaviour, by your own admission, was not the best last year but is now improving rapidly. We only saw you behave sensibly and sometimes, for example, during grace, your behaviour was excellent. Keep it up!

Last year's Year 6 did not do as well as they should have done in their national tests; their results were poor. You are starting to reach higher standards and are making satisfactory progress because you have improved your attitudes to learning and the school is getting to know you better and what you are capable of.

However, we think your school needs to improve the standards you reach and how much you achieve during your time at this school, especially boys' reading skills in Years 1 and 2 which are much lower than the girls'. To do this, we have asked the school to give the teachers better guidance on what to expect of you, to ensure they stretch you to the limit and spot anyone falling behind. We have also asked the school to plan the curriculum to make sure you make the necessary progress from year to year.

We know you can keep up this better progress because in Mrs Lawson you have a brilliant headteacher. You told us she has made some big changes which you approve of because they have made the school better. However, she will not be able to achieve anything without your hard work and support. So do your best, and go on to great things when you leave this school.

Thank you once again for being so friendly and helpful. Good luck.

Joe Clark (Lead inspector) David Edwards