

Rockwell Green Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123800
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	314722
Inspection date	18 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Colin Lee

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	150
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Bloodworth
Headteacher	Peter Williamson
Date of previous school inspection	6 October 2003
School address	Brooklands Road Rockwell Green Wellington TA21 9DJ
Telephone number	01823 662317
Fax number	01823 661246

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is smaller than average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The school is organised in single age classes for Reception and Years 1 and 2, with mixed age classes of Years 3/4, 4/5 and 5/6. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. These pupils have a wide range of needs, often complex, including hearing impairment, speech and language difficulties and behavioural and emotional difficulties.

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 where pupils achieve well because they are taught well. It is well led by a headteacher who, with the support of senior staff and a good governing body, has maintained a constant drive for improvement during a period of many staff changes. The staff currently at the school have quickly developed a strong team spirit, working cooperatively together towards improvements in many aspects of the school's work. The school knows itself well; its self-evaluation judgements are accurate and it has a good capacity for further improvement.

Pupils' achievement is good, and from a low base pupils are reaching broadly average standards by the time they leave. The high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has caused standards to be below average in the assessments at the end of Year 2 and, until recently, in the tests at the end of Year 6. Due to a whole school focus on writing and improvements in teaching and learning, standards in literacy and numeracy are rising, and the current Year 6 pupils are on track to exceed their challenging targets in English, mathematics and science. Specific factors contributing to these successes are the rigorous tracking of pupils' progress, the high quality of teaching of older pupils, and the good impact of professional development of staff by local authority personnel and by the school's senior management.

Pupils' progress has been uneven in the past. This is less evident now although it is still not consistent, most especially in terms of maintaining the good progress made in the Foundation Stage into Year 1. This is improving because expectations of Year 1 pupils have been raised and their progress is now better. However, the low starting point of many children means that some require the Foundation Stage curriculum to be continued into Year 1 in some areas of learning, and at present the school does not give enough attention to meeting pupils' needs in personal and language development through activities such as role play and other structured play experiences. The other example of uneven progress is in Year 4, where there is variation between the two classes containing pupils of this age. In all other respects the quality of learning is good. It is particularly well supported by teachers' good use of target-setting that helps a step-by-step development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The school provides a good curriculum, with an emphasis on first hand experiences. This is achieved through good use of the local environment, educational visits and learning through topics rather than individual subjects. The priority placed on improving pupils' writing, which is already raising standards, is concentrated on work in literacy lessons. The school recognises that it does not yet plan sufficiently systematically for pupils to improve writing skills in topic work and other subjects in order to develop a love of writing to match the love of reading that most pupils already have.

Pupils' enjoyment of school and all that they do is one of many strengths in their good personal development and well-being. This reflects the good provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education, which also contributes to pupils' good behaviour and relationships with one another. Parents and carers say how pleased they are with the good quality of care and support that the school provides, for both pupils and families. Pastoral care is particularly strong.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has successfully delegated responsibility amongst the small number of staff so that all have a manageable workload. He has ensured that new, inexperienced subject leaders have appropriate mentoring, and that mentoring is excellent. This has been a key factor in improving achievement and raising standards in English and mathematics.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Parents and carers speak very highly of the way that their children settle so quickly in school. The good provision for the Foundation Stage results in the children making good progress in all areas of learning. They enjoy their time at school and work and play well together. This has a very positive effect on their personal, social and emotional development. Teaching and learning are good, and assessment is used very effectively to plan activities. The curriculum meets children's needs well and good liaison and cooperation between the two part-time teachers ensure there is seamless continuity in children's learning. Staff are supported well by local authority personnel and there is a clear action plan for further development of the provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Remove inconsistencies in pupils' achievement to ensure good progress throughout Years 1 to 6.
- Plan for better continuity in learning when Foundation Stage children transfer into Year 1.
- Plan opportunities for the development of pupils' literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In the past, the good progress made by children in the Foundation Stage has not been sustained into Year 1. Although progress improved in Year 2, standards have been well below national averages by the end of Year 2 for several years. A lack of continuity in all areas of learning between the Foundation Stage and Year 1 has disrupted the progress of some of the less able pupils. Nevertheless, most Year 1 pupils are now making good progress because expectations are higher and this, together with the continuing good progress in Year 2, is raising standards. Levels of language development are low when children start school. The good emphasis on basic speaking and reading skills in the first three years in school helps pupils to make good progress so that by the end of Year 2, although standards are below national averages, the gap is closing. The same is also true in numeracy and, as a result of the priority currently placed on writing throughout the school, improved achievement in writing is starting to show.

Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good overall. The current Year 6 pupils are on track to exceed the challenging targets set for them by the end of the year. Their standards are close to those expected at their age, which is a particularly good achievement considering their low standards at the end of Year 2.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils arrive at school each day eager and ready to learn. Their attendance is satisfactory and improving. The youngest children are happy and settle well due to the good links with pre-school providers. Older pupils continue to enjoy lessons and mostly find learning fun. Their behaviour is good and they say that there is little bullying so that they feel safe. Pupils are tolerant and supportive of each other with a strong sense of fairness.

Pupils enjoy their responsibilities, for example as play leaders, library monitors and school councillors. The school council has been re-instated and this is giving pupils more opportunities

to express their views and increase their contribution to school life. They regularly raise funds for local and national charities and they are especially proud of the recent fundraising to help a member of their own school community. They have adopted healthy lifestyles well, eating fruit and keen to be involved in physical education and sporting activities. They have a good understanding of safe practices in school and in the home. The recent improvement in basic literacy and numeracy skills, together with good social skills, means that pupils are prepared satisfactorily for future stages in their education and their eventual economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good learning and teaching across much of the school are founded on teachers' careful planning of activities that are matched well to individual pupils' needs. The continuous assessment of children's learning in the Foundation Stage is a key factor in their good progress. Other teachers are similarly carrying out regular checks of pupils' progress and ensuring that any pupils falling behind get extra support to help them catch up. Teachers set suitable short-term targets for pupils to work towards in their basic literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils delight in achieving these targets. Weaknesses in teaching are generally specific to individual teachers and effective monitoring and guidance by senior staff are gradually increasing teachers' effectiveness. Pupils' learning is celebrated through attractive displays of their work in classrooms and around the school. Teachers work closely with the school's very able teaching assistants, whose good impact on pupils' learning is due to their detailed knowledge of the needs of the pupils with whom they work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Children in the Foundation Stage experience a range of stimulating learning opportunities and this fosters a love of coming to school. For those pupils who need it, aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum are not continued into Year 1 and this limits progress. In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum is taught by linking subjects very effectively and progressively together in topics, making learning particularly interesting for pupils. Strong emphasis is placed on literacy and numeracy but there is insufficient planning of opportunities for literacy skills to be applied and developed in topic work and other subjects. There is better planning for information and communication technology (ICT) and numeracy skills to be used across the curriculum. The curriculum is enriched by regular educational visits and there is a good range of clubs providing learning opportunities outside the school day. These activities are well attended. The local environment is used well as a resource to stimulate learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

A high quality of pastoral care is at the heart of the school's ethos. The school works tirelessly at providing the support required by the significant number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils appreciate the importance of including everyone in all aspects of school life and they work as hard as the adults to provide support for anyone needing it. The school works well with external agencies to support both pupils and families. Pupils say they feel completely safe at school and that they know that they can talk to staff if they have any

worries. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils know their targets well but they do not always receive sufficient feedback through teachers' marking of their work. All statutory requirements for child protection are met. The school site is secure and health and safety issues are well managed by staff and governors.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has a clear vision of where and how the school can improve. The senior leadership team has a good breadth of expertise and by responding actively to the headteacher's leadership, the team has a positive impact on school effectiveness. The checking of pupils' progress over time by analysis of data from regular tests and assessments is rigorous and is used well to identify groups of pupils requiring extra help. There is a strong focus on monitoring and evaluating the quality of learning and teaching, both of which are improving, and in turn starting to help pupils' achievement to improve, most noticeably in literacy. From their initial observations of learning and teaching and scrutiny of pupils' work, the new literacy and numeracy leaders have quickly gained a clear picture of standards across the school. Their analyses of strengths and weaknesses in pupils' work are being used effectively to guide staff on ways of raising standards. Leaders of other subjects review provision annually but some of them have not yet had sufficient time to evaluate standards in their subjects across the school.

Governors too have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are supportive and have a strong commitment to the ethos of the school. They monitor thoroughly the progress in key areas of the school's raising attainment plan and use their findings to support and, where necessary, challenge senior management so that, despite staff and organisational changes, there is a constant drive for improvement.

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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	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	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?	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

19 June 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Rockwell Green CofE Primary School, Wellington, TA21 9DJ

Thank you for making us welcome in your school and for talking with us so willingly. We thoroughly enjoyed joining you in lessons and seeing you at work. We think your school gives you a good education. This is what we particularly appreciated.

- Children in Reception make a good start to their education.
- Nearly all of you are making good progress.
- Your behaviour is good and this makes your school a friendly, pleasant place where you all care for one another.
- You understand well the importance of healthy eating and exercise, and about what are safe things to do at school and home.
- Many of you, including the school councillors, do a good job in helping the school to run smoothly.
- Teaching is good and teachers plan interesting activities for you in your lessons.
- All the adults do a good job in looking after you and making sure that you are safe and get help whenever you need it.
- The school is led well by the headteacher and all the adults, including the governors, are working hard to improve it.

- We have three recommendations to help your school to get even better:
 - Make sure that you make consistently good progress in every year group in Years 1 to 6.
 - Develop the curriculum by planning opportunities for your literacy skills to be practised in other subjects.
 - Make the curriculum in Year 1 follow on smoothly from the Foundation Stage.

We hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make Rockwell Green CofE Primary School an even better school.

Yours sincerely

Colin Lee Lead Inspector