

Royston St John The Baptist Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106636
Local Authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	324435
Inspection dates	15–16 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Gordon Potter

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	223
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	Fr John Hudson
Headteacher	Mrs Jill Ryan
Date of previous school inspection	7 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Vicarage Lane Royston Barnsley South Yorkshire S71 4QY
Telephone number	01226 722011

Age group	5–11
Inspection dates	15–16 October 2008
Inspection number	324435

Fax number

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school. Pupils come from a broad range of social and economic backgrounds. The overwhelming majority of pupils are of White British background. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is above average. Pupils enter the Reception class in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in the autumn and spring terms. The previous deputy headteacher took on the role of headteacher in September 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Royston St John The Baptist Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is a good and improving school. It is at the heart of the community. It is proud of its Christian ethos and accordingly gives its pupils good care and support so they are happy. As a result, they develop good care and support for one another in their turn. Clear target setting has been effective in enabling pupils to make good and rapidly improving progress. Parents strongly appreciate the way teachers help their children to feel safe and secure in school and provide them with a wide range of interesting activities which support their learning.

Effective action has been taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning and it is now good. It is making a major contribution to the improvement in pupils' progress. However, in a small number of lessons teachers do not allow pupils sufficient opportunities to work independently or with others, so that pupils' interest wanes and progress is less pronounced. A developing strength of learning is the way pupils are encouraged to assess their own work against clear targets which help them to know how to improve their work. The curriculum is satisfactory because, while it is enhanced by an impressive range of activities, the school has recognised that it needs to be more creative and skills-based. The curriculum offers younger pupils too few opportunities to learn through play and the work done at the beginning of Key Stage 2 occasionally lacks appropriate challenge and clear pathways for continuity and progression.

Year 6 pupils who took tests in 2007 entered the school with levels that were typical for their age. They left with standards that were broadly average, representing satisfactory progress. However, evidence from the inspection and from the school's own detailed tracking data indicates that standards have risen and are above average by Year 6. From broadly typical starting points pupils now reach above average standards by the end of Year 6 as evidenced by unvalidated test results in 2008. The school's detailed tracking data confirms inspection evidence that the trend is upwards. Pupils' achievement is now good across the school, although pupils make more rapid progress as they grow older. This is because work is more suitably matched to their interests and they are given more opportunities to work independently and with others.

Good relationships and sensitive support from a caring staff promote good levels of pupils' personal development. Pupils know that there is always someone to turn to if they need help. Attendance is average. Pupils' behaviour is good and contributes to their enjoyment of school. They readily take on responsibilities, such as being school council members or playground helpers. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and stay fit, as the school strongly promotes these qualities. The school's strong focus on developing pupils' academic and personal development, including a growing awareness of business enterprise, gives them a good preparation for their future economic well-being.

Leadership and management are good. The new headteacher has quickly established a leadership team which shares her clear vision of school improvement. Immediately they have planned a new approach to the curriculum, and initiatives introduced when the headteacher was the school's deputy headteacher have now settled down. This has already had a significant impact on raising pupils' achievement. There is strong teamwork and the headteacher encourages all teachers and the strong team of teaching assistants to develop their leadership roles. There is

a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The highly effective action already taken shows that the school has good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception class with skills which are typical for their age, except in communication, language and literacy where they are below. As a result of a strong emphasis on the development of speaking and listening, writing and reading skills, children make good progress in these areas. Younger children have only two terms in Reception but they too make good progress and all children leave the EYFS with skills in all areas of learning which are in line with national expectations. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the way teachers and teaching assistants effectively manage the provision. Children settle very quickly into Reception class because very good procedures exist for teachers to get to know the children before they start school and because there are clear routines for children to follow. Their social development is good. The children are well cared for. They form good relationships with adults and other children and speak confidently about what they are doing. They develop a good understanding of the wider world through creative use of play both inside and outside the classroom. However, the outside area is small and cannot accommodate large-scale equipment, which restricts the range of learning on offer. Children are actively encouraged to solve problems and use information and communication technology (ICT) well. They are encouraged to make healthy choices about what they eat and enjoy the many opportunities for exercise. Leadership and management of the EYFS are good. The strong team under the direction of the lead teacher creates a happy and stimulating environment where children are safe and secure and in which they thrive. Children's progress is monitored very carefully and assessment is thorough and is used well when planning activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that there are more opportunities in lessons for pupils to be actively involved in their learning.
- Ensure that the curriculum offers appropriate opportunities and challenges for pupils as they move into Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter Year 1 with skills which are in line with national expectations. Results in the assessments for seven-year-olds in 2007 showed that standards were broadly average and that pupils made satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. The results of the tests for eleven-year-olds in 2007 showed that standards remained broadly average and progress and achievement were satisfactory. Writing was a weaker aspect of pupils' achievement in both key stages.

Unvalidated test results indicate above average standards in the tests for eleven-year-olds in 2008. Pupils currently in Year 6 had above average standards in their assessments for seven-year-olds and the school's tracking data show that these pupils are now exceeding the challenging targets that have been set for them. Standards are now above average and achievement is good. Pupils make more rapid progress in the later years of their time in school. All groups of learners, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make equally as good progress as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils are friendly and mix well together. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, including an appreciation of other faiths and cultures, although there is less clear understanding of the multi-ethnic nature of modern Britain. They have a good appreciation of right and wrong. Their behaviour both in class and around the school is good, although there can be restlessness in some lessons. They thoroughly enjoy school and are keen to learn. Attendance is average because, despite strong intervention from the school, some families take holidays during term time. There are good links with the community, especially with the local church, and pupils are proud of the Christian ethos of the school. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of keeping safe and adopting a healthy lifestyle, especially in their choice of meals and in their enthusiasm for exercise. There are good opportunities for pupils to exercise responsibility, for example as play leaders and as members of the school council where they were involved in buying new play equipment. Pupils leave school with good basic skills which, allied to their developing group work skills and work with local businesses, prepare them well for the next stage of their learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Typically lessons are well planned with a range of interesting activities which are well adapted to the needs of individual pupils. They have a brisk pace and pupils are actively involved, so that they make good progress. Pupils are encouraged to work with 'talk partners' and with other pupils in groups and these are helping them to develop their speaking and listening skills and to improve their writing. Relationships in classrooms are good, as are pupils' behaviour and attitudes, so that they work well together. Occasionally, younger pupils can become restless but when this happens teachers manage their behaviour well. Pupils make more rapid progress as they grow older because they have opportunities to be actively involved in their work. Interactive whiteboards are used well especially in the teaching of phonics so that pupils make good progress with their reading. Pupils increasingly assess their own and others' work against agreed targets and this has had an impact on raising standards. Marking is good and offers pupils a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. However, it is inconsistent across school. In less successful, though nonetheless satisfactory lessons, teachers miss opportunities to allow pupils to work together or to be actively engaged in their learning quickly enough. These lessons lack pace and challenge so that pupils make less rapid progress. Teaching assistants are very well deployed to support individuals and groups so that these pupils can access their learning and make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is broad and balanced and has a necessary emphasis on literacy and numeracy, so that pupils make increasingly good progress in these areas. ICT is delivered as a discrete subject and to support learning in other subjects so that pupils develop good skills in ICT. There is strong provision for music so that there is regular singing and all pupils learn a musical instrument before they leave the school. There has been a focus on improving pupils' writing skills and this has had an impact on raising standards. However, the curriculum offers

too few opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects other than English. The curriculum offers younger pupils too few opportunities to learn through play and the work done at the beginning of Key Stage 2 occasionally lacks appropriate challenge and clear pathways for continuity and progression. The school has recognised that the curriculum requires improvement and has plans in place to introduce a more skills-based and creative curriculum this term. There is a very strong programme of enrichment activities which enhance pupils' understanding and enjoyment of their work. These include study visits to the seaside, trips to museums and visits from writers. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities including dance, arts and gardening which many pupils enjoy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good and are based on the school's strong Christian ethos. All teachers know the pupils well. There are good relationships with outside agencies to ensure that the needs of all pupils are addressed. A very large majority of parents are supportive of the school and what it does for their children. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for vulnerable and looked-after pupils is good so that needs are quickly identified and addressed, and the impact of intervention measured. The safety of pupils is paramount and all safeguarding measures are in place. The personal, social and health education programme which includes a highly successful programme of sex and drugs awareness education, supports pupils' good personal development and well-being. Good transition arrangements ensure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Reports to parents are informative and include information about how pupils can improve their work. The school has rigorous tracking and assessment procedures which tell pupils at what level they are working and what their targets are. This has had a positive impact on raising standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The newly appointed headteacher has a clear vision for school improvement and is continuing to develop the necessary initiatives she helped to introduce as deputy headteacher in the school. She has created a new leadership team which shares her aims for the school. The leadership team know the school well and the school's improvement plan includes appropriate developments and how they will be achieved. Teamwork in the school is strong so that all members of staff feel valued and appreciate the continuous professional development, which helps them to raise standards for the pupils in their care. Challenging targets are set and these are having a significant impact on raising standards. Equality of opportunity is well promoted so that all pupils make good progress. Resources are effectively and efficiently used especially in the deployment of teaching assistants who provide necessary and effective support in large classes. Contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory because governors have still to consider how to develop pupils' understanding of the multi-ethnic make-up of modern Britain. Governance is satisfactory because while governors are very supportive of the work of the school and monitor provision in subjects, they are less proactive in challenging the school to raise standards further.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

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

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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Royston St John The Baptist Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Barnsley, S71 4QY

On behalf of the team, thank you so much for making us welcome when we inspected your school. Royston C of E Primary School is a good and improving school. The staff care for you extremely well and help you to enjoy your learning because they arrange many exciting visits for you. They encourage you to know what you need to do to improve your work.

We were pleased to see that you work hard and do your best. You come to school on time and care for one another in the playground. We think that your behaviour is good, although some of you can be restless when you are not engaged by your work in lessons. We found that you are very polite and helpful, and we enjoyed talking to you about your school. You told us that you enjoyed coming to school because you learned something new every day and because you liked your teachers. You said you appreciated the activities the school provides for you, like the visits to outdoor centres and sporting activities. Your parents and carers like the school very much, especially the way your teachers care for you and help you to enjoy your learning.

We have asked your teachers to do two things to make your school even better.

- Give you more opportunities to be actively involved in your learning.
- Ensure that the work you are asked to do is at the right level for you when you start in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

You can help by always doing your best. Thank you for all your help and I wish you every success in all you do in the future.