

Ruardean Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115647
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	326240
Inspection date	14 May 2009
Reporting inspector	David Westall

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 controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	107
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	Caroline Smith
Headteacher	Peter Knight
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	School Road Ruardean GL17 9XQ
Telephone number	01594 542461
Fax number	01594 542461

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	14 May 2009
Inspection number	326240

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- if teaching enables pupils to make effective progress throughout the school
- whether the school could further develop pupils' mathematical skills and understanding
- the quality of pupils' personal development and well-being
- the quality of leadership and management and its impact on pupils' progress.

Evidence was gathered from the school's data on pupils' progress, visits to lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work; discussions with the headteacher, staff, governors, parents and pupils; and analysis of responses to the parents' questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's assessments of these areas, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Most pupils who attend this small school come from the village but the Communication and Interaction Centre based at the school serves a wider area. The Centre has up to ten places for pupils with severe speech and language impairment, or those whose needs relate to the Autism Spectrum Disorder. At present, there are seven pupils from the Centre on the school roll. The overall percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the school is well above average. The Early Years Foundation Stage children are taught in the same class as some Year 1 pupils, and each of the four classes includes pupils of mixed ages.

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. It provides a well-rounded education for its pupils, enabling them to make good progress in both their academic and personal development. The school's success is quickly sensed by visitors, who are met by enthusiastic pupils, interesting displays of work, and by committed staff who clearly love their jobs. The quality of care, guidance and support is good. Staff know the pupils well and help them to develop into kind, cooperative and caring individuals. Consequently, the school is a happy and harmonious community where pupils get on well together and enjoy their education. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are valued members of the community, play a full part in the life of the school and contribute to its success. The curriculum is good and provides pupils with a wide range of worthwhile learning opportunities. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that pupils' achievement is good and parents hold the school in high regard. A typical remark to an inspector included, 'This is a super school where the staff are professional and caring. They do all they can to make sure children do well, and my son loves it here'. From starting points that are often below the levels expected nationally, pupils achieve well to reach standards which are generally above average in Year 6. Pupils' progress in English has been a consistent strength. Standards have risen further this year because areas for improvement in writing have been pinpointed and addressed even more accurately. There was a dip in standards overall in Year 6 in 2008. This was partly due to the high percentage of pupils with learning difficulties, but also to a notable decline in pupils' attainment in mathematics. There is no hint of complacency in this school, and mathematics has been the key focus for improvement over the past year. As a result of this sustained emphasis, pupils' progress in mathematics has accelerated, and standards have risen. Nevertheless, there is still room for further improvement in Years 3 to 6, particularly to enhance pupils' mathematical problem-solving skills. Pupils progress well in science and information and communication technology, and standards in these subjects are above national expectations by Year 6. Across the school, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.

Pupils achieve well because the teaching is good. Teachers' enthusiasm and professionalism shine through in lessons. They plan their lessons effectively and their explanations are clear so that pupils are confident about tackling their work. Often teachers know just when to intervene with well-judged advice and when to stand back and let pupils work things out for themselves. Teachers motivate pupils effectively, and pupils say they work hard but still have fun. 'We could have carried on for much longer because it was really interesting,' said one pupil after a particularly stimulating English lesson. Indeed, smiles and laughter are everywhere in this happy school, and learning is seen as a shared and enjoyable experience. Teaching assistants are well briefed and provide good support, especially with pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. While teachers' marking is generally good, pupils sometimes require more focused feedback about how to improve their work in mathematics.

Pupils' good personal development and well-being stem from the supportive relationships that exist across the school. It is clear that pupils like and respect their teachers, and that their feelings are reciprocated. As a result, pupils know that teachers have their best interests at heart, and have a strong sense of self-worth because they know they are valued as individuals. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They work together amicably, respect the feelings of others and have a well-developed sense of fair play. Behaviour is nearly always good. Very occasionally, a small number of pupils present challenging behaviour but

this is well managed by staff. The attendance rate is broadly average. It is restricted from being higher as some parents choose to take their children on holiday during term time. Pupils are safety conscious and have a good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and exercise. They have a strong community awareness and are keen fundraisers for charities. Their ability to work constructively with others and their good academic progress mean they are well prepared for the future.

- The school promotes community cohesion well, and this is reflected in the effective way in which it includes all its pupils. Pupils have a good understanding of the needs of the local community. For example, pupils have relished the opportunity to investigate plans for the regeneration of a nearby town, interviewed local people about the issues, and helped to create a film which presents their views. Pupils also have good opportunities to learn about life abroad, including links with schools in Kenya and Austria. Good leadership and management are at the heart of the school's success. Self-evaluation procedures are good. They are used effectively to identify accurate areas for development and have helped the school to improve. The headteacher is a key strength and works tenaciously to ensure that the school provides well for its pupils. He is quick to recognise and praise the good work of staff and alert to situations where people require advice. Because teachers and support staff benefit from constructive feedback, they have a shared sense of direction and feel part of a successful team. Responsibility is delegated wisely, and the senior leadership team, subject teachers and governors all fulfil their roles effectively. The school is continually striving to improve further and is well placed to get even better.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children's achievement is outstanding. As a result of first-rate teaching, they make excellent progress across all areas of learning. Their progress is particularly rapid in their personal, social and cultural development, and in their communication, language and literacy skills. Most children reach the expected learning goals in all areas of learning, despite their generally low starting points on entry. Indeed, some children will exceed these goals this year. Planning is very effective, and the teaching is lively, captures children's interest and is exceptionally well tailored to their needs. Children benefit from a rich range of learning opportunities, which means they love coming to school. All areas of learning are covered thoroughly and there is a well-judged balance between adult-led tasks and opportunities for children to make their own choices. Relationships between adults and children are excellent, and they benefit from high quality care. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding, and the adults work together very effectively to meet children's needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 by improving pupils' problem-solving skills and ensure that marking provides pupils with clear guidance about their next steps in learning.

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

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

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?	2
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?	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Ruardean Church of England Primary School, Gloucestershire GL17 9XQ

Thank you for welcoming us into your school and for being so friendly, polite and helpful. Here are some of the good things we found out.

- You think Ruardean is a good school and we agree with you.
- You enjoy school, behave well, like your teachers and have many friends.
- You are doing well in your lessons and your work is usually better than children's work in most schools by the end of Year 6. This is because the teaching is good.
- The staff take good care of you and understand the importance of keeping safe and healthy.
- The headteacher leads and manages the school well, and the hardworking staff make sure you have many opportunities to learn different things.

We found some things that could be improved in mathematics in Years 3 to 6. We have asked the school to make sure that pupils are more able to solve problems, and that teachers' marking shows how mathematics work could be improved.

It was good to meet you. We really enjoyed our short time in your school.

Best wishes,

Yours faithfully

David Westall

Lead inspector