

Rishton Methodist Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119396
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	327018
Inspection dates	30 April –1 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Andrew Stafford

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)	177
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	Mr Geoffrey Bennette
Headteacher	Mr Paul Whaling
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2008
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	George Street Rishton Blackburn Lancashire BB1 4JF
Telephone number	01254 887223
Fax number	01254 829525

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Rishton Methodist is a smaller than average primary school. The vast majority of pupils are White British. A small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. 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 typified by high levels of social and economic disadvantage.

An out-of-school club is provided on the school site by a private organisation. It is open to children of all ages every weekday from 15.15 to 17.45 and during school holidays from 07.45 to 17.45. The provision is registered by Ofsted and there is a separate report available.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

This is a satisfactory and improving school that has recently gone through a period of significant upheaval, including three headteachers in the last two years. The present headteacher has brought stability to the school. New key staff are in place and parents are almost universal in their praise of the school. One typically commented that: 'the school has made a big U-turn, the atmosphere now is one of pride and enjoyment'.

Pupils enter the school with knowledge, skills and understanding that are well below those typical for their age. Progress is satisfactory and currently, by Year 6, standards are broadly average, although too few pupils reach higher levels across all subjects. Standards have improved this year because significant work has been undertaken under the new leadership to improve behaviour and the quality of teaching and learning. This has been successful in addressing the legacy of underachievement in reading and mathematics but there is still some way to go in writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support, especially from the many skilled teaching assistants, and make progress in line with targets set for them.

Personal development is satisfactory, as is pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Pupils say they feel safe in school, enjoy their learning and have good awareness of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle. Pupils make a strong contribution to the calm and purposeful atmosphere established through their improved attitudes to learning. Pastoral care is good and staff support pupils well, increasingly working with parents and the local community to support their needs. Teaching is satisfactory; some good practice was seen. Where teaching is good, teachers challenge pupils well and provide interesting activities to extend learning and improve progress. Too much teaching remains satisfactory, however, because work is not matched closely enough to the capabilities and needs of all pupils. Assessment data are not used consistently across the school to plan the next steps in learning and to ensure that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable.

The curriculum is satisfactory and rightly places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy to equip them for the future. Opportunities for pupils to apply and extend these skills in other subjects are not extensive enough at present. Too few opportunities to play and learn outdoors are currently available for the youngest children.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher has been particularly successful in raising teachers' expectations of pupils' progress. A clear vision for the future is shared by all. The school knows what it has to do to improve further as a result of robust self-evaluation. Its capacity to bring about this improvement is satisfactory. The school recognises that recent improvements mark the start of the journey and that much still remains to be done. The governors are experienced and committed; they are challenging the school satisfactorily in the drive for improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's skills on entry are well below those typical of children of similar age and their communication and language skills and personal development are especially weak. Although children make good progress in developing their skills and abilities, especially in communication

and language development and personal development, there is a significant proportion that does not yet reach the expected levels. Consequently children are on track to enter Year 1 at below average levels in most areas of learning. Parents say that their children settle well and that they are kept well informed about their progress. Improvements in provision have been good recently; the indoor learning environment provides good challenge to stimulate progress in learning. Children have opportunities for outdoor play and physical development. However, the outdoor provision is limited and not fully developed to support learning across all areas of the curriculum. The setting is safe and secure and children's welfare is promoted well. Children are helped to behave well. They really enjoy the many opportunities to choose from a wide variety of activities that promote their learning well in most areas of experience. This is particularly true in the development of their speech and language skills and in their personal, social and emotional development. Children play well together and confidently take part in much talk and discussion with partners and adults. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support, are happy and settled and make good progress. This is because the good teaching is based on effective ongoing assessment of children's progress and development. Leadership and management are good. Leaders are well focused on providing a safe environment in which children enjoy learning and make good progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science, particularly in writing, by the end of Year 6.
- Develop accurate assessment of pupils' progress that leads to precise planning of teaching to meet the needs of pupils, especially the more able.
- Improve the facilities for learning outdoors for the youngest children.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and progress are satisfactory throughout the school. Children start Year 1 with below average skills. Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 1. Standards are below the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics. This reflects the assessments by teachers at the end of Year 2 in 2008.

Pupils' results in the 2008 national tests taken in Year 6 were below average in English, mathematics and science. Overall, achievement for these pupils was inadequate. Progress is now accelerating in Key Stage 2 because of more effective teaching and improved behaviour. Current pupils were seen to be working at broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science. A large proportion of pupils have made up some of the ground lost in reading, writing and mathematics. However, there is still some way to go, especially in writing. As yet, too few pupils reach the higher levels across all subjects.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the few pupils for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress. Pupils with statements of special educational need progress well towards their learning targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Attendance is broadly average. Pupils' understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle is good, recognised in the Healthy School award. Pupils make healthy choices from the good menu provided at lunchtime and high numbers volunteer for after-school sporting activities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. They sing prayers in assembly gently and tunefully and have time to reflect on moral and spiritual messages. Behaviour has improved since the previous inspection. However, some low level disruption by a small minority of pupils slows the pace of learning in occasional lessons. Pupils say that a culture of mutual respect is being established. The reasons for exclusions have been explained to pupils and the number of exclusions this year has halved. Pupils say that the disciplinary measures are fair. They say that they feel safe and that there is little or no bullying. Pupils also express satisfaction with their learning; in some lessons they clearly enjoy the activities, such as when taking opposing sides in a debate in Year 6. They have a satisfactory understanding of how to stay safe, and learn about the dangers of misuse of alcohol and drugs. Pupils fulfil their duties and responsibilities well, for instance, as school councillors and prefects. They contribute satisfactorily to the local community through, for example, taking part in worship in the Methodist church. The development of social and academic skills to help pupils in their future lives is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall; much of the teaching is good although there are occasional lessons that are inadequate. The good teaching, especially of older pupils in upper Key Stage 2, is helping to accelerate progress. In the best lessons, pace and a wide range of activities stimulate and maintain pupils' interests. Repeated questioning by teachers challenges them to extend their learning. In a good mathematics lesson, for example, careful planning identified all pupils' needs and well-structured tasks extended their numeracy skills through game situations and calculations. Pupils were fired with enthusiasm for their learning and took pride in their own good achievement. Generally, relationships in the school are warm and productive and this has had the effect of improving attitudes to learning. Less effective lessons lack pace, variety and enjoyment and do not effectively help to make up the ground lost by pupils in previous years. The accuracy and consistency of the assessment of pupils' progress has improved. However, assessment data are not always used by teachers to plan precisely the next steps in learning. Consequently, not all pupils make the progress of which they are capable, particularly the more able. The needs of learners with difficulties and/or disabilities are met satisfactorily across the school because of the extensive use of skilled teaching assistants within classrooms.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum was a weakness at the time of the previous inspection; much has changed to raise it to the current satisfactory level. The provision for children's learning now meets requirements and ensures that pupils receive their entitlement. There has been a strong concentration on English, mathematics and science in the drive to improve achievement; planning

for learning covers this satisfactorily. The changes to the curriculum support pupils' personal development effectively because pupils' attitudes to learning have improved. New equipment has been installed for information and communication technology (ICT) and pupils' learning is enhanced because the systems are quicker and more reliable. However, teachers do not plan to use modern technology with sufficient regularity so that there are missed opportunities to develop pupils' ICT skills in a range of contexts across the curriculum. There is an increasing focus on providing greater challenge across subjects for all pupils in the drive to raise standards. An extensive range and variety of clubs and extra activities, including good opportunities for sport, provide well for pupils' interests. Pupils say that they have enjoyed many visits to such places as Blackpool and local heritage sites.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pupils are well cared for and safe. There is always an adult they can turn to if they need help. Many adults hold First Aid qualifications if pupils need medical assistance. All the required safeguarding, risk assessment and child protection procedures are in place. Academic support and guidance are satisfactory. Pupils know in general what their targets for learning are and these are followed up in most lessons satisfactorily. The quality of marking is variable. The best examples were seen in literacy books where individual comments targeted progress for every pupil. On too many occasions, however, marking was bland and did not give effective guidance. Assessment procedures are in place, but they are not yet sharp enough to guide pupils in accelerating their learning from satisfactory to good. Links with outside agencies are effective, such as with speech therapists, other local schools and the local authority. This helps to ensure that pupils' needs, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are well met.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has brought stability to the school and clearly developed leadership roles and responsibilities. New appointments to the senior leadership team are bringing an energy and commitment to improvement that is being shared across all staff. The senior leadership team has evaluated the school's performance robustly and has a growing understanding of its strengths and needs. Weaknesses are being tackled, as can be seen in improved behaviour, more effective teaching and pupils' more positive attitudes to learning. The fall in standards has been arrested and satisfactory progress is being made across the school. The improved provision is helping pupils to get closer to reaching the challenging targets set by the school. The school provides satisfactory value for money. Key subject leaders are starting to take more responsibility for managing their areas and have brought in changes to make lessons more creative and interesting. The school has adopted a national framework as a means of improving the curriculum. This is engaging pupils more effectively than at the time of the previous inspection.

Community cohesion is satisfactory because the school has plans and a clear understanding of what it wants to do to promote links at a local and global level. The school works satisfactorily with local partners, especially the Methodist Church, to serve the needs of the community and parents, who are highly supportive of the developments put in place. The school has started to chip away at the need to increase pupils' awareness of the traditions and customs in a diverse

society. The established link with an African child and the child's family is helping to increase pupils' awareness of the global community. Governors are experienced and committed to improving the school. They challenge and support the school satisfactorily.

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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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	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/or disabilities make progress	3

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?	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	3
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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 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?	3

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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

5 May 2009

Dear Pupils

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

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school. You were very friendly, polite and described well what you enjoy and what your opinions about the school were. You told us a lot of interesting things about the activities you do and how you appreciate the recent improvements. Rishton Methodist is a satisfactory school. These are the main things we found that are strengths of your school.

- The school cares for you and looks after you well.
- You enjoy school, you say that you feel safe and, importantly, behaviour has improved.
- Those of you who find learning difficult are well supported by the school.
- The headteacher and staff have brought about improvements recently, especially in the quality of teaching and in your learning. There is some good teaching that helps you make good progress.

These are the things that we have suggested to the school to make it even better.

- Help you do better in literacy, numeracy and science, particularly in your written work, by the end of Year 6.
- Improve what teachers plan for you to do so that you can all make progress at your own pace.
- Improve the outdoor play areas for the younger children.

You can help by telling your teachers how you learn best and if you are having any difficulties. You can also help by behaving well and working hard, as you are now doing.

Yours faithfully

Andrew Stafford and Eric Jackson

Inspectors