

Richard Hill Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120205
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	327226
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Susan Currie

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	176
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	Simon Foster
Headteacher	Coleen Shepherd
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Anstey Lane Thurcaston Leicester LE7 7JA
Telephone number	0116 234 0212

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2009
Inspection number	327226

Fax number

0116 235 2965

Age group	4-11
Inspection dates	17-18 March 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Richard Hill Church of England Primary School is a smaller-than-average, voluntary aided primary school. The school is federated with a nearby primary school and shares the same headteacher and governing body. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is lower than average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than found nationally. The school has the Activemark award. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises a Reception class.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Richard Hill Church of England Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. One parent summed up the views of many saying, 'I feel very pleased that my children have had such a strong, caring and nurturing education. Richard Hill helps to develop values for life.' This caring atmosphere is created by the enthusiastic staff team, ensuring pupils generally enjoy learning and behave well.

Children get off to a satisfactory start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, making satisfactory progress because of the effective direct teaching and the range of activities provided. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 make satisfactory progress to reach standards that are broadly average by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Standards have remained broadly average since the last inspection, although pupils' achievement in mathematics has improved. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the effective support and targeted work given. However, the school has correctly identified that it needs to help more pupils reach the higher levels, particularly in writing and science.

While there is some good practice across the school, teaching is satisfactory overall, mainly because some teachers in Years 3 to 6 do not always provide sufficient challenge to ensure the higher attainers achieve to their full potential. In all year groups, pupils are not always given clear guidance about how to improve their work. The satisfactory curriculum, with an increasing range of interesting activities, is now beginning to improve pupils' enthusiasm for, and quality of, learning. The satisfactory care, guidance and support of pupils ensures that they feel safe and enjoy school. The school reaches out to parents well and works in partnership with other agencies effectively. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and they have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to stay safe. Attendance is better than the national average and the school has sound systems in place to improve this further. Pupils' contribution to the community is good, particularly through the school's good links with the local community and the church. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their future working lives.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has good leadership skills and is well supported by the effective federated governing body to ensure the school is appropriately focused on raising attainment. The federation has been used well to create good opportunities for pupils, staff and governors to work together to bring about change and improvement. Leadership at all levels in the school is being strengthened by training and support and is beginning to improve pupils' achievement. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses; however, the impact of interventions and initiatives is not always monitored and evaluated by all staff with enough rigour. Sufficient improvement has been made since the last inspection to demonstrate that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children generally enter the school with skills and abilities in line with those expected for their age. Their speaking and listening and social skills are particularly strong and they have a good understanding of numbers. They make satisfactory progress, and by the time they enter Year 1, standards are broadly average in most areas of learning. Children make better progress in number work and phonics because of the effective direct teaching that is closely matched to

children's levels. The caring staff team know the children well and use a good range of techniques to find out how well they are learning. Children enjoy learning and develop confidence and independence. For example, they were fascinated by planting pumpkin seeds and explained confidently how 'mad scientists' had visited the school in the previous week to help them learn more about science. There are many opportunities for children to learn from, and enjoy, direct experiences such as the recent visit to a farm. Children make good progress in their personal development because of opportunities to work together and an emphasis on sharing. Children's social development is well promoted through purposeful play, but there are not always enough activities that enable children to initiate their own learning. The school works effectively to develop good links with parents. Induction into school is good and parents speak highly of the Reception class, recognising that it gives their children a sound start to their learning. Leadership is satisfactory. It has already identified that there are too few opportunities for children to develop in all aspects of their learning in the secure outdoor area.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the rigour of systems for monitoring and evaluation so that teaching is consistently good, particularly in Years 3 to 6, and pupils reach the highest standards of which they are capable.
- Ensure all teachers match work to the level of the pupils effectively so that the higher attainers are sufficiently challenged.
- Ensure pupils are given effective guidance in how to improve their own work and understand what they need to do to improve.

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 their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils achieve satisfactorily from their starting points and reach standards at the end of Year 6 which are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. The school sets challenging targets and most pupils reach these, although some more able pupils do not do as well as they might. Pupils' progress is variable in Years 3 to 6 because of inconsistencies in teaching quality. Pupils attain well in reading and mathematics as a result of improved resources and teaching in these subjects, but there has not been a similar improvement in writing and science outcomes for pupils. The school's improved detailed analysis of its data means it has already correctly identified the areas it needs to develop. Recent improvements mean that pupils in Key Stage 1 are now making good progress and this year reached above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 because of the better teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they often work in small groups, are effectively supported by learning support assistants and activities are well matched to their needs. New effective strategies, such as improving girls' attainment in mathematics by giving them additional support to boost mathematical confidence levels, and improvements made to the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, are beginning to ensure that girls and boys achieve equally well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The good progress that pupils make in their personal development reflects well on the caring atmosphere that permeates the school. Pupils are proud of their school and look after it well, putting flower tubs out, developing garden areas and showing a respect for their environment. Pupils are friendly, polite and helpful. Parents agree that behaviour is generally good, but a few express concern about a minority of pupils. The inspection findings show that pupils behave well and they respond well to teachers' expectations for good behaviour. Pupils feel any bullying is effectively dealt with. There have been no exclusions and attendance is above average. The benefits of healthy eating and taking exercise are well understood. School council members are active; they have requested a 'pet day' and helped in developing 'super leaders' for the playground. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall; however, their cultural understanding is less well developed. Pupils contribute well to the local community and church and raise money for charities. They have good empathy with others less well off than themselves and have raised money to sponsor a child in Uganda.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

While good teaching exists across the school, it is less consistent in quality in Years 3 to 6. The pace of lessons has improved since the last inspection, as has the teaching of writing, although this has yet to be seen fully in improved standards. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and activities are interesting and engage pupils well. This leads to good relationships, good classroom management and pupils who behave well. Good opportunities for independent learning enable pupils to develop good research skills. Pupils collaborate well and communicate effectively in lessons, asking questions and responding maturely when questioned. Information and communication technology is used well to support pupils' learning, such as in a presentation by pupils on their research on the animals of Australia to the rest of the class. Teachers do not always match work to the needs of the pupils; consequently, higher attainers are not always challenged as much as they could be. Teachers evaluate the impact of their teaching on learning by effective questioning but do not always provide pupils with the opportunities to assess their own learning and that of others or decide their own targets. Good relationships with parents help learners to succeed, for example the well received-mathematics workshops.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy learning because of the new creative developments in the curriculum. For example, science week included a variety of activities that inspired pupils, such as visiting scientists, pet day and the development of the pupils' new garden. Lively displays portray the new interesting curriculum well. The curriculum matches the needs of most pupils, with effective interventions in place for pupils who are at risk of falling behind. However, not enough is done to ensure higher attainers do as well as they possibly can. The curriculum contributes well to pupils' social and moral development through the effective personal and social programme. Strong links with the church and community enhance learning, but cultural development needs further improvement to enable pupils to have a greater understanding of the diversity of their own

and the wider global community. Good enrichment and extra-curricular activities contribute well to pupils' enjoyment of learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The pastoral support given to pupils is good and they are well cared for by a caring staff team who link well with other agencies and parents. Safeguarding meets statutory requirements. Bullying and poor behaviour are dealt with effectively and pupils feel safe because health and safety is well promoted. The school takes effective action to ensure that pupils attend and arrive on time. The progress of pupils is monitored well through good tracking systems. The school now identifies pupils at risk of underachievement and consequently, it is introducing intervention strategies to ensure that no pupils fall behind. This is particularly successful in improving progress in mathematics. Pupils are informed about their progress periodically, although marking does not always include comments which inform pupils about how well they have done or what they need to do next to improve their work. Transition is good and well planned at all points of transfer so pupils settle quickly and feel confident about moving on to their next school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership has strengthened since the last inspection, mainly because the federation provides many exciting opportunities for collaboration. The headteacher shows good leadership skills and works hard to provide clear direction through effective development planning. Governance is good. The governing body has a good strategic overview and has developed its role well, balancing its challenge to the school while also offering it support. The school's self-evaluation of its performance is accurate, and is leading to the introduction of strategies to improve pupils' achievement, but there is not always enough evaluation of how effective these are. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. Good local and UK links exist and there are sound links with Europe and worldwide, although pupils' multicultural understanding is limited. Leaders at all levels are beginning to monitor and evaluate the school's provision and the impact it has on pupils' progress, although it is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that the best practice is replicated so that teaching, and hence pupils' progress, is consistently good across the school.

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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?	2
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?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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	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	2
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 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	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**

19 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Richard Hill Church of England Primary School, Thurcaston, LE7 7JA

Thank you for making us very welcome in your school when we visited recently. You were all very polite and friendly and spoke to us very warmly. Thank you for telling us about the school and showing us your work. Your school provides you with a satisfactory education.

Here are some of the good things we found.

- We were particularly impressed to see how well you behaved in class and in assembly.
- You told us that you enjoy school and that you like your teachers and you think that they deal with any bullying or other incidents well. We agree with you.
- We know that you know how to keep healthy and take sufficient exercise.
- We could see how much you enjoyed science week with the 'mad scientists', pet day and the development of the gardens. Teachers are making learning more fun for you.
- You take care of your school and care for the environment by putting flower tubs in place and doing gardening.
- You have an active school council and raise lots of money for charities, such as for Comic Relief or the child you sponsor in Uganda, because you understand that others are less well off than yourselves.

To help you improve your learning further, we have asked the headteacher and the governing body to:

- check regularly that all the lessons are as good as they can be so that your learning is even better, especially for those of you in Years 3 to 6
- check that the work set in lessons is at the right level for all pupils and gives enough challenge to everyone, especially those who find learning easy
- make sure you are all involved in assessing how well you are learning and that teachers' marking shows you clear ways in which to improve your own work.

You can help with this by working hard to reach your targets.

Best wishes

Susan Currie

Lead inspector