

Rowde Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126409
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	328494
Inspection dates	14–15 July 2009
Reporting inspector	George Logan

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)	220
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	Mandy Housby
Headteacher	D Ball
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	High Street Rowde Devizes SN10 2ND
Telephone number	01380 723991

Age group	5–11
Inspection dates	14–15 July 2009
Inspection number	328494

Fax number

01380 728853

Age group	5-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Rowde Church of England Primary School is of average size. The pupils are predominantly White British and all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and has increased in recent years. The majority of these pupils have speech, language and communication difficulties, or behavioural, emotional and social problems. The Early Years Foundation Stage provides for Reception-aged children. The school offers before-and after-school childcare facilities. Since the last inspection the school has relocated to extensive new premises on the edge of the village.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of Rowde Church of England Primary School is satisfactory. Significant strengths within its pastoral work mean that pupils develop positive attitudes to learning and behave well. They enjoy school, make a good contribution to its smooth running and have a strong sense of their local community and the wider world. They have a particularly good awareness of how to live a healthy lifestyle. Parents value the school's concern for individuals and the breadth of opportunity it provides. As one parent wrote, 'The headteacher... seeks to achieve the very best for the children and is always striving to provide more opportunities and experiences.'

Despite these strengths, pupils' academic achievement is satisfactory but inconsistent as they move through the school. Teaching is stronger in some years than others and while some is outstanding, there are also pockets of inadequate practice where lessons lacks pace and activities are not consistently as well matched to pupils' needs or as challenging as they should be, particularly for more able pupils. Marking is a particular weakness, and often fails to show pupils clearly how to improve their work. These issues have a negative impact on pupils' progress, and while the school is aware of them, it is taking time to resolve them. Achievement is generally good in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children in Reception benefit from an attractive environment and good resources which extend their learning successfully. The strength of teaching in Year 6 has enabled pupils to reach above average standards this year, as they prepare to move on to secondary education. Evidence from lessons and pupils' work shows inconsistent progress across Years 3 to 6 and this directly reflects the quality of teaching. However, the increasing proportion of pupils with additional learning needs, particularly those entering the school after the Reception Year, has also had some impact on standards. This is particularly true for Years 1 and 2, where attainment is broadly average.

Leadership and management as a whole are satisfactory. The headteacher is very committed to pupils' personal development and to enriching their opportunities through a wide range of activities. Academic development has had less prominence in recent years, although incisive action to improve standards in writing has had a clear impact this year. While staff work well as a team, monitoring and evaluation are not yet rigorous enough to provide them with an accurate understanding of all aspects of the school's performance, especially in relation to the quality of teaching and learning and the analysis of pupils' academic outcomes. Governance is satisfactory. Governors appreciate the breadth of opportunities which the school provides. Their knowledge of standards and achievement, however, is not so strong and this constrains their ability to hold the school fully to account. Taking all these factors together, the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter Reception with skills and knowledge that are broadly at the levels expected for their age. They settle well as a result of the well-organised induction arrangements. Effective teaching helps most children, particularly those with additional learning needs, to make good progress. They are well cared for and have good relationships with staff. They feel safe and secure, are enthusiastic about learning and behave well. Outcomes are particularly good in pupils' personal development and in reading and writing, where they are supported well by effective teaching of the linking of sounds and letters. By the end of Reception, standards are

usually above those expected nationally, and children have made good progress, but some aspects of the provision constrain further improvement. Activities are often too teacher-directed, particularly in the outdoor area, and this restricts opportunities for children to develop independence. Some activities do not provide sufficient challenge for the most able children. The monitoring and recording of progress are insufficiently rigorous. Information collected is not used systematically to inform planning, nor are records shared with parents. For these reasons, leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils' work is marked thoroughly and promptly, offering clear guidance as to how they can improve their work.
- Improve the quality of teaching, ensuring that it consistently provides greater pace and challenge so that pupils make more rapid and sustained progress.
- Ensure that school leaders are more rigorous and challenging in their monitoring of teaching and of pupils' work, and in their analysis of pupils' academic performance.

A small proportion of 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

While the pattern of achievement across the school is variable, current Year 6 pupils, as in all recent years, have made satisfactory progress during their time in school. Progress in other years is fragmented because teaching is not always sufficiently challenging, and standards are affected in some year groups where there are a high proportion of pupils with additional learning needs. In addition, achievement varies between subjects, but is always strongest in reading. Progress accelerates significantly in Year 6 because of highly effective teaching. As a result, current standards in Year 6 are above average, particularly in English. This represents a significant upturn on the 2008 results, and the school has exceeded its targets for 2009. Pupils with additional learning needs benefit from effective interventions, and although support staff are not always sufficiently briefed by teachers, their overall progress is also satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils eagerly support the many clubs and activities. They are very proud of their school. Pupils show consideration for each other, feel very secure, have confidence in adults and have few concerns about bullying. Their good behaviour shows that they know how to keep themselves and others safe. There have been no exclusions. Pupils collaborate well in lessons. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy. They have a good awareness of issues around food production. Sporting activities are very well supported. Pupils contribute well to the school community through classroom responsibilities and the active school council. Pupils' impressive personal qualities and positive attitudes, together with their good academic performance by the end of Year 6, mean that they are well prepared for their future lives. Attendance is above average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of lessons seen ranged between outstanding and inadequate, with most variability in Years 3 to 6. This is reflected in pupils' written work. In the best lessons, expectations are high, relationships are good, the pace is brisk, and pupils are motivated and consequently learn well. However, some lessons have lengthy introductions. Tasks are not always matched sufficiently to pupils' needs and so provide limited challenge. Expectations of pupils' written work are not high enough. These issues affect learning, particularly of the more able pupils. While school leaders have begun to tackle the shortcomings, there is more to do. Although there is some good practice upon which to draw, the marking of pupils' work is often superficial, providing little guidance for improvement. However, good examples were seen in Years 4 and 6 of pupils evaluating their own work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is greatly enhanced by an excellent range of clubs, visits, residential opportunities and events. The stained glass window project has successfully engaged pupils' enthusiasm. The performing arts are strongly promoted, with many pupils receiving individual music tuition. Good links with partner secondary schools offer pupils a wide choice of sporting activities. This particularly supports pupils with identified sporting talents. These strengths contribute greatly to pupils' enthusiasm for school.

The school places an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy, although planning has not until recently focused on the development of these skills through other subjects areas. The current writing initiative in Years 3 to 6 identifies more opportunities for writing across the curriculum. However, information and communication technology skills are used infrequently across the curriculum. Plans are in place to target phonic awareness and writing in Years 1 and 2 in order to raise standards further.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is outstanding. Procedures in relation to child protection, first aid and health and safety are rigorous and effective. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet current requirements. Staff show great commitment to meeting the welfare needs of children and families, facilitating access to a wide range of support from outside professionals such as therapists. This contributes strongly to pupils' good personal development. There are effective procedures to promote good attendance.

Academic guidance is a relative weakness. The school makes a significant investment in supporting pupils with additional learning needs, but while there is a system of individual academic targets in a few classes, mostly in English, there is no common whole-school approach. Where targets are implemented well, for example in writing in Year 6, they help pupils make better progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Parents, staff and governors recognize the headteacher's commitment to the pupils, his tireless efforts to extend pupils' opportunities and the outstanding pastoral care. The successful re-establishment of the school in new premises and the high quality of the learning environment owe much to his efforts. Pupils' personal development is promoted well. Community cohesion is satisfactory. Links with the local community are strong and effective links have been established with schools and charities internationally, although opportunities to engage with other faiths and cultures in contemporary Britain are relatively limited.

The school has not been as rigorous recently in relation to its academic work. While most staff show commitment to the school's ideals, too much, at times, is left to the discretion of individuals. This leads to variable practice in, for example, the presentation and marking of work. Leaders have not been sufficiently incisive and challenging when monitoring standards and progress or the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, the school's evaluation of its performance is not always accurate. That said, the robust commitment to improving writing has significantly improved overall performance this year. Governors share the headteacher's philosophy and provide good support, but do not rigorously challenge the school in relation to the quality of education and outcomes.

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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?	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?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	2

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?	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?	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**

16 July 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Rowde Church of England VA Primary School, Devizes SN10 2ND

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and spending time in your lessons. We found that your school is satisfactory, which means that it has some important strengths but also some areas in need of improvement.

- The main things that we found are these:
- You behave well and work hard.
- Standards in Year 6 are above average, and are particularly good in English.
- Although some of the teaching we saw was outstanding, it varies in quality and is satisfactory overall. As a result, your progress is also satisfactory.
- Children in Reception get off to a good start.
- The school makes sure that you are cared for really well. You conduct yourselves safely and know all about how important it is to eat healthily.
- The curriculum is good, with very good out-of-school opportunities. Those of you who need extra support are generally well provided for.
- Those in charge of the school make sure that it runs smoothly.

We are asking the school to make these changes so that you do even better:

- Make sure that teachers mark your work thoroughly and frequently, giving you clear guidance as to how you can improve.
- Make sure that all teaching has a brisk pace and provides you with lots of challenge, so that you make more rapid and consistent progress.
- See that school leaders regularly and carefully check the quality of teaching and your written work, to ensure that you are learning as effectively as you can.

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best. We hope that you will have every success in the future.

Yours faithfully

■ George Logan

Lead inspector