

Rothwell St Mary's RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108018
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	337007
Inspection dates	23–24 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Terry McDermott

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clare Skinner
Headteacher	Mr Stephen Nicholson
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 17 lessons. Ten teachers, including visiting specialist teachers of physical education and music, were observed teaching, most of them twice. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at the books of many pupils in several different year groups, minutes of the governing body meetings, the school development plan and reports from the School Improvement Partner. Responses from 144 parents and carers to the questionnaire were analysed and considered, along with questionnaires completed by school staff and pupils in Key Stag

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the consistency and effectiveness of teaching across the school in the light of apparently declining pupils' progress in Key Stage 2
- the effectiveness of any measures taken by the school to address that apparent decline
- the accuracy and quality of the school's self-evaluation.

Information about the school

This average-sized school serves the parish of St Mary's. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, but the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school holds several awards including Artsmark Gold and Healthy Schools status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. It has improved markedly since its last inspection. Its Early Years Foundation Stage, curriculum, and the care, guidance and support it provides for all pupils are outstanding. These improvements have been driven by the excellent senior leadership team. Excellent role models provided by adults make the school a calm but very purposeful place to be. All staff strive to ensure that not a minute of a child's time is wasted.

The school provides an attractive, happy and exciting environment for learning. Pupils say they really enjoy coming to school because 'the lessons are so interesting'. They are certain that bullying does not exist 'because we have to look out for each other like God looks out for us'. They know that they are completely safe. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, underpinned by the school's strongly catholic ethos of consideration and forgiveness.

The overall quality of teaching is good, with some that is outstanding. Most of the teaching observed during the inspection was at least good. Excellent relationships in lessons result in pupils behaving outstandingly well and being keen to learn. This provides a strong foundation for learning. However, learning occasionally slows unnecessarily when teachers do not set work which meets pupils' learning needs closely enough. This is because they do not always make the best use of information provided by the school's accurate, reliable and easy to use assessment system.

The curriculum is outstanding. While focusing strongly on English, mathematics and science, it gives pupils many hands-on experiences which bring learning to life in many other areas of learning. Pupils say this is why learning is such fun.

The excellent quality of care, guidance and support for all pupils is critical to their outstanding achievement over time. All pupils are well known to the staff and this enables them to pick up very quickly when any pupil may be having difficulties. Excellent links with other outside professionals contribute significantly to prompt and effective support for vulnerable pupils.

Adults have a strong team spirit and an evident sense of pride in the school. Pupils' achievement has improved since the last inspection but school leaders still guard vigilantly against complacency. Self-evaluation is robust and accurate, and the school knows what it needs to do to sustain and improve its current performance. Although subject leaders do not yet consistently check the quality of learning in their subjects, the school has outstanding capacity to make further improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Ensure that all teachers make full use of assessment information to plan work which meets pupils' learning needs fully.
- Ensure that all subject leaders check more closely and comprehensively the quality of learning in their area of responsibility.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Attainment is significantly above average in English, mathematics and science. When considering their starting points, all pupils make good academic progress, particularly through Key Stage 2. This means that concerns raised as a result of pre-inspection analysis of national assessment data proved unfounded. In some lessons, progress is outstanding. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well overall and sometimes very well because of the skilful and well-planned support they receive from teaching assistants. Boys and girls perform equally well. There is no sustained underachievement.

Pupils are highly motivated, considerate and thoughtful in lessons. They use sophisticated vocabulary in their explanations and they transfer this to their written work. The high-quality, often very emotive written work on display in classrooms and around the school is testament to this. High participation rates in vocal and instrumental music, sport and art underline pupils' appreciation of and desire for everything the school has to offer. Pupils willingly share their ideas and opinions with the whole class, even the whole school, during assemblies. This consolidates learning, builds confidence and self-esteem, and encourages reflection and self-discipline.

Pupils express complete confidence in the school's ability to sort out, quickly and fairly, any issues which may arise. They understand the positive effects of exercise and healthy eating on their bodies and are not afraid to point out, even to visitors, the detrimental effects of the opposite. They are active ambassadors in helping the school to maintain its Healthy Schools status. They readily take on the many responsibilities the school offers them and carry them out conscientiously. Their behaviour is exemplary and their attendance is high. The confidence and assurance pupils gain from working together, combined with their high academic standards, mean that they are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their lives. By the time they leave school at the end of Year 6 they have become well-balanced young citizens, interested in and concerned with many things.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

All classes are very well managed and relationships are excellent. As a result, pupils behave exceptionally well, are keen to learn, and prepared to work hard. Teachers have accurate and up-to-date information on what pupils already know and can do. The very best lessons are characterised by: clear learning objectives which inform pupils about what they are going to learn; short, sharp tasks which are well matched to pupils' learning needs; a focus on encouraging pupils to think for themselves; and relentless pace and challenge. In a few lessons pupils are all given the same work to do. Some find the work too easy and some find it too hard. In such cases, pupils make slower progress.

The curriculum is rich, exciting and broad. It provides many opportunities for subjects to be linked together to consolidate pupils' earlier learning. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the excellent range of visits and visitors who 'make learning a part of the real world'. They participate in large numbers in school clubs, which focus on developing skills and promoting high-quality performance, in music, sport and art.

The exceptional care, guidance and support provided for pupils contribute significantly to their enjoyment and to both their personal and academic development. Very effective arrangements are in place to ensure that transition into the Reception class, from many different settings, is handled smoothly and sympathetically. Similar arrangements exist for all other transitions including on to secondary school. Pupils are taught extensively about the importance of kindness and forgiveness and this shines through in their open and thoughtful personal demeanour.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team has been extremely successful in creating a caring and happy learning environment for pupils. Staff's morale is high. Arrangements for overseeing the quality of teaching and learning are good and these have helped to ensure high standards and good progress. Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. They have already implemented successful actions to address a blip in pupils' progress in Key Stage 2. However, monitoring remains too dependent on senior leaders, since some middle leaders have yet to assume full responsibility for rigorously checking learning in their respective subjects.

Governors give generously and consistently of their time in supporting the school, and are beginning effectively to challenge the school's performance. Exceptional care is taken to ensure that no form of discrimination exists in the school and that equal opportunities for all are promoted very effectively. Safeguarding procedures are given high priority and are applied rigorously throughout the school, with the result that, at the time of the inspection, pupils are protected exceptionally well. The school's self-evaluation is accurate in identifying clear strengths and honestly objective in identifying areas for development. This illustrates well the school's clear aspirations to be the very best. Community cohesion is promoted well within school, locally, regionally and nationally. The school recognises that these links do not yet extend sufficiently into other parts of the world. Links with parents and carers are very strong. They value the support and care provided individually for their children. The school gives excellent value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Reception class from a wide variety of settings and, overall, with knowledge, skills and understanding at the nationally expected levels for their age. Strong partnerships with parents and carers are established before children arrive in the Reception class. Children settle quickly into a vibrant, colourful and welcoming learning environment. Staff make excellent, creative use of the attractive inside spaces and outdoor features to stimulate and motivate children's interests. Adults promote children's welfare very effectively. Their calm and measured approach provides an excellent role model for children who, as a result, quickly develop exceptional personal and social skills, which they sustain throughout the remainder of their time in the school. Children play and work together extraordinarily well. They are happy to share toys and ideas and to take turns at being the captain of the pirate ship or at using the outdoor computer. They really enjoy their learning experiences and are relaxed, confident and safe.

Leadership and management are outstanding. Children's progress is assessed and evaluated regularly, accurately and efficiently. Excellent planning, based upon well-understood assessment practices, takes close account of children's interests and their individual attributes. This ensures that teacher-led activities nurture a lively sense of wonder which transfers seamlessly and safely into activities which children choose for themselves, but which sustain the theme of their learning. Arrangements for transition from the Reception class to Year 1 are most effective and pupils move easily into the next stage of their education. They make excellent progress both personally and academically.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

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Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of parents and carers returned the Ofsted questionnaire. They hold overwhelmingly positive views about the school. They are unanimous about several aspects of the school's work, including that their children enjoy school, are safe and that their needs are being very well met.

A very small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns about the progress their children make, about how well they are kept informed about progress, about their children keeping healthy and about being happy with their children's experience at the school. Inspectors looked at these concerns in detail, but could find no evidence to substantiate them.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rothwell St Mary's RC Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 144 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 204 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	111	77	33	23	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	118	82	26	18	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	81	56	60	42	3	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	97	67	46	32	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	118	82	26	18	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	104	72	40	28	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	105	73	38	26	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	101	70	42	29	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	110	76	34	24	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	105	73	37	26	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	98	68	45	31	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	120	83	24	17	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	125	87	18	13	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



25 June 2010.

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rothwell St Mary's RC Primary School, Leeds, LS26 0BJ

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We were really impressed with the very kind way you all look after each other, your politeness and the outstanding togetherness you display when singing together. We particularly appreciated your excellent behaviour and very positive attitudes to learning in lessons.

We found that St Mary's is an outstanding school. It has many significant strengths including: the Early Years Foundation Stage which prepares you so well for Key Stages 1 and 2; an excellent curriculum which teaches you about real things; and the care and support the school provides, which makes you feel safe, secure and helps you to become well-rounded young citizens.

However, we also found that the school could do some things even better than it does at present. So I have asked the adults who lead, manage and teach in the school to do the following to help you to make even better progress and reach the highest standards.

- Ensure that all teachers more consistently set tasks in lessons which are neither too easy nor too hard for you but which keep you all busy learning new things.
- Ensure that all adults who look after different subjects check more closely the learning going on in their subjects across the school.

You can help St Mary's to get even better by continuing to be the curious, well behaved and happy young people you already are.

Good luck to you all for the future.

Yours sincerely

Terry McDermott

Lead Inspector

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