

St Rumon's Church of England Infants School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113420
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	338167
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Alex Baxter

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	123
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Jones
Headteacher	Clare Wesson
Date of previous school inspection	14 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 17 lessons and other learning sessions and six teachers were observed. The inspectors also attended two assemblies, observed break and lunchtime activities and held meetings with governors, staff, pupils and parents. They looked at plans and policies, records of assessments and the tracking of pupils' progress. The provision and planning for pupils who are vulnerable or have special educational needs and/or disabilities were evaluated. In addition, 75 parent/carer questionnaires and 16 staff questionnaires were analysed.

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

- the school's apparent success in sustaining at least good progress for most groups of pupils
- the effect of the school's specific aims to lift pupils' behaviour, especially in Reception classes, and to develop links with the community
- the impact of 'Federated leadership and management' and shared leadership roles in promoting improvement.

Information about the school

This is a small infant school for pupils aged three to seven. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Such needs mainly feature communication and emotional difficulties. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in designated Reception classes. The school holds the Healthy School and Activemark awards amongst others. The school is a part of a federation of two schools, with a shared governing body and executive headteacher.

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

St Rumon's is an outstanding school. It is a school with a distinctive caring, family ethos that lies at the heart of the community. An excellent unity of purpose stems from the inspirational leadership of the executive headteacher. She receives highly effective support from the head of teaching and learning and other senior managers, including governors. Together they ensure that the breadth of staff skills across the 'Federated' link with its partner junior school are used to enrich pupils' learning.

Very rigorous monitoring of the quality of provision and pupils' progress underpins the school's outstanding self-evaluation and contributes to its outstanding capacity to improve. As a result high levels of achievement, including for an above-average number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, have been sustained in national assessments for several years. Improvements in facilities, learning opportunities and children's behaviour in Reception and in writing across the school have maintained the school's proven track record in bringing about improvement and further reflect an excellent capacity to continue this in the future. Governors fulfil their duties very effectively and also play an important role in nurturing very beneficial relationships with parents, which aid pupils' learning.

St Rumon's clearly is a school that focuses equally successfully on pupils' academic and personal development. Staff ensure that pupils experience and greatly enjoy an outstanding range of curricular activities many of which, for example the 'Tavistock Exhibition', stem from excellent links with the church and local community. Such stimulating activity and high quality care, guidance and support promote the pupils' personal qualities, especially their excellent behaviour and pursuit of healthy lifestyles. Staff develop excellent links with outside agencies, for example, the educational psychologist, to meet pupils' needs. As a result, pupils feel very secure at school. One little boy in Reception exclaimed, 'Look at me, I'm wearing red like everyone else and I'm very proud of my school!'

From levels of skill that are generally below those normally expected of their age, effective and improving provision in Reception gives children a good start and prepares them successfully for future learning in a caring community. At times, though, learning is not developed as successfully from children's chosen activities as it is during adult-led learning sessions. Progress increases through the school, reflecting the pupils' improving contributions as independent learners. As a result, by the end of Year 2, pupils generally reach above-average levels of attainment. The way excellent teaching and learning for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with higher ability, continues beyond the classroom is a notable feature of this school. By taking pupils into the community and by dovetailing regular small group or individual

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support with normal classroom tuition, staff tackle pupils' particular needs and present 'real-life' learning which promotes the pupils' outstanding achievement. However, very occasionally, learning slows during introductions to mathematics lessons because discussions are not pitched at the right level for all pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Over the next two terms, to further support pupils in the progress they make, teachers should:
 - in Reception classes, increase the level of adult support for children's freely chosen learning activities to match the good adult-led learning in these classes
 - in Years 1 and 2, ensure that introductory large group discussions in mathematics pitch learning at the right level for pupils.

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

Observations of the wide range of learning activities show that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those of high ability, make excellent progress. Pupils also greatly enjoy their learning and respond very positively to the close attention they receive from caring adults. The cumulative influence of these carefully planned learning experiences leads to the pupils' outstanding achievement. Over time, pupils' attainment has been consistently above average in mathematics, science and all aspects of English by the end of Year 2. Except in reading, the current level of attainment is not as high in Year 2, because of the large number of pupils with special educational needs who find learning difficult. Even so, pupils' attainment still represents excellent achievement in relation to their starting points and needs.

Visits to classrooms show accelerating progress as pupils respond to their targets for improvement and rise to many challenges presented by the teachers. In a literacy lesson in Year 2, for example, pupils reacted well as team members, taking turns to spell words correctly on behalf of their group. Significant learning takes place when pupils receive small group or individual intervention support for their specific needs. Pupils' enjoyment and their communication, physical and especially their artistic skills are further enriched during a range of 'Healthy Lifestyle' activities which stem from their federated partnership with the junior school. Pupils show very positive attitudes and readily share ideas with each other and with staff, knowing that their contributions are valued. As a result of high quality support, the learning and progress of those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities show the same outstanding gains as other pupils. Pupils behave extremely well and readily acknowledge the care they receive at school and, as one little boy typically replied, 'Yes, we feel very safe indeed!' By taking plenty of exercise, for example on exercise equipment during the 'Walk in the Park' and on their climbing apparatus at playtimes, pupils fully live up to the school's Healthy School award. Pupils' great enjoyment of school is also reflected in their good attendance and was beautifully illustrated, for example, by the delight shown by the Reception children

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during their role play presentation of 'The Wild Things' in assembly. Members of the school council contribute ideas very enthusiastically and all pupils have a very good awareness of their place in the local community and support church events. Pupils have a sound awareness of Britain's culturally diverse community and happily support charitable fundraising activities such as the 'Meadows Sponsored Walk'. Pupils are also very keen in showing parents and other visitors around the school to see their work.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is typified by very warm relationships, excellent support of pupils' behaviour and effective use of interactive whiteboards that attracts the pupils' attention and stimulates their thinking. Teachers and their assistants consistently praise the pupils' efforts and, in turn, this is appreciated by the pupils who respond with renewed enthusiasm. These approaches were seen to good effect in a lesson in Years 1 and 2 where all pupils were stimulated by the challenge to predict what would happen to different materials, such as paper, plastic and play dough, when pulled, torn or screwed into a ball. High quality teaching extends beyond the classroom, for example, during the

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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whole-school 'Walk in the Park' when teachers and their assistants, with the support of many parents, continued their excellent guidance and questioning to strongly promote the pupils' understanding of healthy living. All staff emphasise the pupils' vocabulary effectively and teaching assistants support individuals and small groups in an exemplary way, for example, in developing their understanding of words, enjoyment of stories and ability to listen. Over time, this variety of teaching styles cumulatively enriches the pupils' developing confidence in speaking and listening and in applying their learning, and results in outstanding progress.

The curriculum is enriched by a very good range of clubs and visits. Literacy, numeracy, scientific enquiry and art are strongly promoted across a full breadth of subjects. Colourful displays of pupils' work promote the imaginative and community dimension of the curriculum. Interesting topics such as 'Fantasy Stories' stimulate the pupils' learning, for example in Year 1, where the pupils' own ideas for writing are developed from the popular Goodnight William story.

Pupils are given very clear guidance on how to improve their work, and targets for improvement are displayed in all classrooms. Staff use assessment information very carefully to make sure that group work and additional support match pupils' needs and help ensure that all groups achieve equally successfully. However, the progress of a few average- and lower- attaining pupils slows, at times, during large group discussions at the beginning of mathematics lessons, because work and questioning do not match their needs precisely enough. The outstanding pastoral support provided by all staff, and their excellent links with parents and outside specialists, are clearly apparent in the pupils' confidence and in the outstanding progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
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?

Leaders and managers, in keeping with the school's inclusive ethos, are very diligent and effective in ensuring that all pupils are treated equally and kept free from discrimination. Excellent safeguarding procedures are implemented with a high degree of consistency across the school to ensure that pupils' welfare is fully secured. Governors provide excellent support to the staff of the school and their work as a federation affirms the clear intention to promote further improvement. The benefits of the federation are already clear. Team leadership and the sharing of staff expertise

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during training sessions have strengthened provision and the monitoring of the school's effectiveness. School improvement is underpinned by excellent self-evaluation. This ensures that all pupils, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and others with more ability, benefit from well-targeted teaching, small group and one-to-one support. The executive headteacher is particularly tenacious in developing exemplary links with the community and outside agencies, to broaden the support and learning opportunities provided for the pupils and, at times, for their parents. The school promotes community cohesion effectively. The school and local communities are promoted extremely well through end-of-topic theme exhibitions, very close links with the parish church and its partner school, and with other local organisations. The school has made, and continues to develop, global and national links with schools in Africa and Southampton, but accepts that these links are still under development.

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	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
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 enjoy their learning and, in response to effective teaching, behave well and make good progress across the areas of learning. The spacious, well-resourced indoor and outdoor areas, the latter partly covered by an impressive canopy, represent significant improvements which have extended learning opportunities since the last inspection. Activities include, for example, role play in the understairs and upstairs 'Land of the Wild Things' and sand and water play activities. Strong leadership and excellent links with parents help the children settle confidently into school life and provide a boost to their successful learning, and the potential exists for continued rapid improvement.

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Currently, two Reception classes share these facilities and, in response to excellent care, guidance and support, children make very good gains in their social development and in developing very positive attitudes to learning at school. Occasionally, children's learning slows when adults do not give enough questioning support to the children's freely chosen activities.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents' and carers' responses to the Ofsted questionnaire showed very high levels of agreement with all the positive statements. Additional written comments, very largely expressing full support of the school, included, 'I have been extremely impressed with the teachers and teaching methods in place at this school. It's a very efficient and caring environment for children and parents alike', and, 'We have been immensely pleased by all aspects of the school, how happy our child is and how much effort is put in by all the staff, in all areas.' A very small minority of parents outlined concerns, including about future class structures, and the inspectors examined them all during the inspection. They concluded that the staff are very mindful of the mixed ages and abilities of pupils in their classes and include all pupils and promote their progress equally successfully regardless of which class they are in.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Rumon's C of E Infants 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 75 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 123 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	60	28	37	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	53	71	22	29	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	45	60	26	35	3	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	49	65	22	29	3	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	50	67	23	31	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	46	61	27	36	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	46	61	29	39	0	0	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)	34	45	29	39	2	3	2	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	40	53	31	41	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	41	38	51	0	0	3	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	45	37	49	2	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	42	56	28	37	3	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	51	68	20	27	1	1	1	1

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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



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19 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Rumon's C of E Infants School, Tavistock PL19 9EA

It was a privilege and a real pleasure to visit your school and we would like to thank those of you who took the time to talk to us, particularly the school council. We were very interested to hear what you had to say about your school. We agree with you and with many of your parents who feel that St Rumon's is an outstanding school.

- You make excellent progress and really enjoy school. This is because the teachers and their assistants help you to learn happily across a very interesting range of activities.
- Your behaviour is first class and you respond very enthusiastically to the very caring adults in your school. You clearly understand how to keep safe and healthy.
- Teaching is excellent, in and out of classrooms, because teachers and their assistants work very closely together and with your parents and other people. As a result, they know you very well, treat you equally and are always trying to help you do even better.
- Your school is led very well indeed.

Even the best of schools can improve and so I have asked the leaders and managers of the school to:

- give more support when children choose their own activities in Reception classes
- ensure that large group discussions in mathematics in Years 1 and 2 can be easily understood by all pupils.

Keep giving of your best and good wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Alex Baxter

Lead inspector

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