

Rookhope Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114063
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	338291
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2010
Reporting inspector	John Paddick

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	20
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Joseph Bergin
Headteacher	Mrs A Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	19 April 2007
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. He visited five lessons and scrutinised pupils' written work. The two teachers in the school at the time of the inspection were observed. The inspector held meetings with governors, staff and a group of pupils, and also scrutinised the school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, and the school's child protection and safeguarding procedures. The inspector analysed 17 questionnaires from parents and carers, nine from pupils in Years 3 to 6 and eight from members of staff.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at the following:

- the rates of progress of all pupils including those who are more able
- standards in writing throughout the school
- standards in mathematics in Years 3 to 6.

Information about the school

Rookhope Primary School is situated to the north west of Stanhope in the North Pennines. It is much smaller than average and is one of the smallest schools in County Durham. Most of the pupils are drawn from the village of Rookhope and the surrounding rural area. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. Twenty per cent of the pupils on roll have special educational needs and/or disabilities which is broadly average. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Children in the Reception Year are taught with Year 1 pupils. The school has Artsmark, Healthy School and International School awards. It provides a breakfast club at the beginning of each school day. Recently, there have been five changes in staffing, including the 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

2

Main findings

Rookhope Primary School provides an outstanding quality of education for its pupils. The clarity of vision and commitment of the associate headteacher and the acting headteacher are central to its success in educating its pupils to a high standard. Staff changes are being managed superbly well so that the education on offer to pupils continues to be of high quality. School self-evaluation is accurate so that staff have a clear idea what improvements need to be made. Capacity for improvement is good; the school has addressed all the areas for improvement from the previous inspection and moved on from then when it was judged to be a good school.

Pupils' academic progress is good. It is accelerating in response to consistently good and sometimes inspirational teaching. This applies to all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are more able. They are all challenged strongly to achieve their best and to meet the targets set for them. Consequently, academic standards are above average throughout the school. Pupils are very confident and interested in their work. They thoroughly enjoy their lessons and speak highly of their teachers and of the help that they receive. Parents and carers are justifiably pleased with the way that the school is providing for their children and fully recognise that academic achievement is good.

The excellent quality of the curriculum and of care, guidance and support firmly underpins the good academic progress that pupils make and their outstanding personal development. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Teachers and their classroom assistants provide lessons of good and frequently high quality to promote good learning outcomes. Since the last inspection, the school has been successful in improving pupils' attainment in writing to firmly above average standards. Pupils now practise and apply their writing skills in many subjects, but they are not given the same opportunities to apply their numeracy skills. Good provision in the Reception Year ensures that children get off to a brisk start with their education. The indoor facilities for this year group are excellent, but there is scope for those outside to be improved further.

The way in which the school engages with parents, carers, and other agencies and establishments to enhance pupils' chances is first class.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment in mathematics further, by:
 - increasing the proportion of pupils in Years 5 and 6 reaching the higher levels for their age

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- providing more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills in a wide range of subjects.
- Improve the range and quality of equipment in the outside area used by Reception children and Year 1 pupils so that it matches the high quality evident indoors.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Standards are rising very quickly. They are above average throughout the school because all pupils are making good and accelerated progress in their learning. This is particularly evident in written work in a wide range of topics, for example, studies of aspects of the rainforests, transport and the Second World War. Pupils make better progress in English than in mathematics, because they have more opportunities to apply their skills in this subject across the curriculum.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their education and speak enthusiastically about the topic work that they do and the many visits that are associated with it. They feel safe and say that the atmosphere for learning is universally good. During the inspection, behaviour was impeccable and pupils impressed with their maturity and the way in which they gave full attention to their work. Pupils' contributions to the school and wider community are extremely extensive. Examples include the way in which older pupils help to look after the younger ones in school and how they organise celebration assemblies for the whole school and coffee afternoons for senior citizens. All aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent because of the school's exceptionally strong emphasis on them. Pupils know what constitutes healthy eating and take care with the types of food they consume. They really enjoy sport and outdoor activities and participate in them widely. By the time they leave Year 6, pupils are very well prepared for transfer to secondary schools and are eager to do so.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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

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

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 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 Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The atmosphere for learning is excellent because teachers and classroom assistants present work to pupils in an interesting and compelling manner, using plenty of visual stimuli. They manage their classes extremely well and fully engage pupils' interest and attention. The lessons were at least good and some outstanding. This quality enables pupils to make good and often exceptional progress in their learning. Good lesson planning provides pupils with many challenging opportunities to use and develop their skills in reading, writing and speaking. However, teachers do not always plan enough opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in other subjects.. Teachers plan a rich variety of activities that the pupils really enjoy. Assessment is of exceptional quality because members of staff know precisely what standards pupils attain and make it perfectly clear how they can improve their work. Marking is thorough and extremely helpful to pupils.

The outstanding curriculum is one of the school's major strengths. It provides very secure pathways for all pupils to make good progress in their basic skills and exceptional progress in their personal development. Pupils all have bespoke education programmes which promote their good quality learning. Interesting themes capture pupils' interest and imagination because they are brought to life through excellent displays and visits. Visitors to the school provide eagerly anticipated illustrated talks on a wide range of topics. Consequently, pupils' general knowledge is good. The weekly visits by sports coaches enable pupils of all ages to improve their fitness and develop good skills of coordination from an early age.

The exceptional quality of care very strongly supports the excellent progress that pupils make in their personal development. They are kept perfectly safe and have immediate access to help whenever they need it. Parents and carers fully recognise the quality of the school's welfare provision and know that it firmly underpins the excellent total learning experience that pupils enjoy.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	1

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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?

Good leadership and management through the period of staff changes have ensured that the quality of pupils' education has continued to improve. Beneficial extra funding from the local authority has enabled the school to employ some very experienced teachers to sustain good quality lessons and drive standards up. Governors challenge strongly when appropriate because they have a genuine interest in providing only the very best. They provide good support to the school, especially within the community, so that families understand the reasons for changes and maintain confidence in the quality of education being provided. The partnership with parents and carers strongly supports the good progress that pupils make. Parents and carers are fully involved in and informed about their children's education and recognise the value of this. The outstanding planning for the incorporation of links with other agencies and providers helps to ensure that pupils' experiences are fully enriched by visits, and other professionals and speakers apart from the staff in the school. Excellent links with local secondary schools mean that pupils are fully prepared for the next stage in their education.

The school promotes equal opportunities extremely well and ensures all groups of pupils do equally well both in their academic or personal development. It is always looking to improve further and there is absolutely no evidence of any type of discrimination. There is a good development plan for community cohesion. Currently, its work is extremely effective in enabling pupils to take responsibility in school and the immediate locality. Links with other countries are growing and pupils raise money for those who are less fortunate than themselves. There are direct links with people from other cultures, but so far they are quite limited. Safeguarding and child protection procedures fully meet requirements. The recently formed breakfast club is well run and provides pupils with a valuable opportunity to socialise and get ready for the school day. Staff morale is excellent and the school is well placed to develop further. It provides good rather than outstanding value for money because the cost of educating pupils in such a small school is relatively high.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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

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 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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good provision for children in the Reception Year enables them to thrive and make good progress in all areas of their learning. Staff quickly form productive relationships with all the children and provide for each as an individual. The inside area provides them with a very stimulating and attractive environment in which to make choices, explore and develop social skills. All adults who work with the children use the outside area well to provide a series of exciting and beneficial experiences. However, there is still scope to develop this further by increasing the range of available equipment.

The current intake joined the Reception Year with skills that were broadly expected for their age. As a result of good and sometimes exceptional teaching, children's skills are above average. For example, they are confident, express themselves well, listen intently and usually behave impeccably because they are fully engaged. Writing and number work are developing well. Good leadership and management ensure that the curriculum is planned well and constantly under review. Children are well taught in a happy environment.

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	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers have a very positive view of the school and the quality of education it provides for its pupils. The inspector received several written comments praising the school for the quality of its curriculum and the high level of support that it gives to

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parents and carers and to their children. A minor concern was connected with the recent changes in staffing. The inspector looked carefully into this and is of the firm opinion that the members of staff currently in school are continuing to improve standards and accelerate learning. He confirms that all of the parents' and carers' positive views are fully justified.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rookhope 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 inspector received 17 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 20 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	16	94	1	6	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	13	76	4	24	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	10	59	6	35	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	65	6	35	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	12	71	5	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	76	4	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	82	3	18	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)	10	59	5	29	1	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	65	6	35	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	53	8	47	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	47	9	53	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	8	47	8	47	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	11	65	6	35	0	0	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 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.



18 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rookhope Primary School, Bishop Auckland, DL13 2DA

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave me when I came to inspect your school recently. A particular thank you goes to those of you who filled in questionnaires and those who talked to me about your school or what you were doing in class. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit and I am delighted to report that Rookhope Primary School provides you with an outstanding quality of education.

The school is well run. Even though there have been staff changes, they are not affecting your education. The school is providing you with good and often outstanding lessons which help you to make at least good progress in your learning. This is why your standards are above average throughout the school and rising quickly, particularly in your writing. I am glad to hear that you thoroughly enjoy school because teachers make lessons extremely interesting and all the adults who work with you are very kind and approachable. I would like to congratulate you on your excellent behaviour and the way that you cooperate in class. It is good to know that Year 6 pupils are well prepared for their next school and eager to join Year 7 in September.

I have asked your headteacher, the staff and governors to do two things to make your school even better. These are to:

- improve your mathematics skills in Years 5 and 6 so that they are as good as your writing
- make sure that children in Reception have more toys and equipment to work and play with in the outside area.

With very best wishes for the future

Yours sincerely

John Paddick

Lead inspector

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