

St Mary's Rawtenstall Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119368
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339422
Inspection dates	11–12 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Marie Cordey

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	187
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Steven Martin
Headteacher	Mr Ian Holden
Date of previous school inspection	26 April 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons and observed seven teachers. They held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including the school's updated self-evaluation evidence, the school improvement plan, internal and external monitoring of the school and 152 questionnaires returned from parents and carers, 70 questionnaires from pupils and nine from staff.

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

- achievement and attainment in English in order to determine whether teaching and the curriculum are sufficiently challenging
- provision and outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage linked to children's starting points and how much progress they make by the time they join Year 1
- the capacity of the acting senior leadership to sustain improvement.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. There are a large number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. Above average numbers of pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status and the Eco-Schools Award (Silver). The school is led and managed by an acting headteacher and acting deputy 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school where pupils thrive in an atmosphere of high expectation. The Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding: children are cared for exceptionally well and make excellent progress. Parents and carers of children across all ages comment on the 'very good education for [their] children'. Many pupils comment on how much they enjoy lessons and 'all get on very well together'. Sharply focused leadership and management involve all staff in driving the school's commitment to the personal and academic development of individuals. Pupils feel exceptionally safe and secure. They have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and are keen participants in the many sports activities on offer. They particularly relish the outstanding quality of the school dinners. Although pupils' attendance is broadly average, it is declining. Attendance targets are not high enough and a significant minority of families take their children out of school for breaks in term time. This means these pupils miss much learning. Pupils respect and celebrate people from different backgrounds, both in their community and internationally.

The quality of teaching is predominantly good and some is outstanding. Pupils' extremely positive attitudes and exemplary behaviour help to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well. Pupils enjoy their learning and make good progress to attain above average standards in most subjects by the end of Year 6. Pupils' attainment in English is average; writing is less assured than many other basic skills because it is not fully developed in other subjects. The school has an accurate understanding of its strengths as well as areas to improve. There have been some improvements in systems to record pupils' progress, but the system is overly complicated and so information does not enable staff to tailor lesson planning easily and precisely on a detailed knowledge of pupils' previous learning. The governing body is well led and focused on the school's improvement. Indeed, the school has acted effectively on the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Pupils' understanding of how well they are doing in their work as well as what they need to do in order to move forward in their learning is a significant improvement. This development and strong leadership and management demonstrate the school's good capacity to sustain further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment in writing by developing its use across the majority of subjects by 2012.
- Improve the systems of tracking pupils' progress by 2011 so that all staff can more

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precisely base their lesson planning and implementation on detailed knowledge of pupils' learning.

- Reverse the decline in the rate of attendance by 2011 through raising targets and reducing the number of absences caused when families take their children on breaks in term time.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils achieve well. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Pupils enjoy learning, particularly in lessons where they are active and involved. For example, in a Year 6 lesson pupils thrived in their individual challenges and were impatient to show their teacher how well they could work and achieve. Pupils' attainment is above average overall. Pupils make good progress from their broadly average starting points in Key Stage 1. Standards in writing were below average last year and lessons are increasingly well planned in order to focus on improving pupils' writing skills. Consequently, attainment in English is now average. The school's concentration on pupils' speaking and listening has stimulated pupils' imagination and writing quality. A Year 3 pupil writes tantalisingly, 'She saw a shadow in the mist, it came closer, and?' Writing is improving yet has further to go. Vulnerable pupils are rapidly identified and provided with sharply focused support. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation ensures that marking is up to date and pupils know what to do to improve their work in most lessons.

Pupils are very polite and courteous young people because they are valued and respected. They welcome opportunities to take on responsibility and take great pride, for instance, in their roles on the school council and as 'buddies' helping younger pupils. They are very keen to recycle waste and vigilantly monitor the recycling around school. They make good contributions to the school and local community and are further developing their contributions to the wider community. Parents and carers are becoming much more involved in their children's learning through small-group and individual meetings with staff. Good preparation for secondary education, above average standards, overall, and their very good social skills all contribute to preparing pupils well for their future.

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	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
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Mostly well-planned lessons provide a range of activities which engage pupils' interests. For instance, Year 2 pupils enjoyed acting and energetically participating in 'wake up and shake up' activities. Lesson planning is generally well matched to the needs and interests of each pupil but is not always precise enough to fully reflect pupils' previous learning. Meaningful and enjoyable tasks and extremely positive relationships characterise lessons. In a small number of lessons pupils have insufficient opportunities to work together and discuss their learning because their teacher speaks for too long. Skilful teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities well and help them learn effectively. Occasionally, teaching assistants are under-deployed, in particular when the teacher is introducing the lesson.

The lively and enjoyable curriculum is deliberately designed to develop pupils' curiosity and interest in learning. Good provision for information and communication technology (ICT) stimulates broader learning across subjects and leads to standards in ICT higher than typically expected for pupils' ages. There are missed opportunities to develop the provision for writing in a similar way. The school environment is welcoming, very attractive and conducive to learning because of the numerous displays of pupils' good-quality work.

Each pupil is valued as an individual. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress because of carefully planned support; they develop their confidence and self-esteem through the individual support that is provided. The school works very effectively with outside agencies, such as speech and language therapists, to meet the needs of

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individuals.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher, acting deputy headteacher and governors are highly committed in their drive to improve outcomes for pupils. All staff share this vision because of the leaders' determination to involve them in all aspects of the school's performance. Work is mostly well adapted to meet pupils' requirements and, overall, pupils meet, and often exceed, their challenging targets. Clear marking communicates this well to parents and carers through their children's work. Parents and carers are supportive and increasingly involved in the school's work. Leaders acknowledge that attendance targets are insufficiently high and have an action plan in place to reduce absence but the outcome has yet to be seen.

Governors ensure that safeguarding procedures are robust and meet current requirements. The school is active in the local community and works with local primary and secondary schools to improve its work further. Community cohesion is actively promoted and the school has correctly identified the need to evaluate its strong contribution and further develop its links with the wider community. Good partnerships with local community groups lead to a strong focus on pupils' personal and academic development. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and has led to effective monitoring of the school's performance. Equality of opportunity for all and tackling discrimination are cornerstones of the school's character and they are promoted well.

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
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	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 with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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

Children make outstanding progress from their mostly well below average starting points, particularly in the areas of communication, language and literacy, problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. By the time they leave the Reception class their skills are broadly in line with national expectations. Excellent overall progress is made. This can be seen, for example, in their personal, social and emotional development because of exemplary arrangements to welcome children to the setting and the outstanding care provided for them. Requirements for their safety, health and welfare are fully met.

A broad range of well-prepared indoor and outdoor activities encourages children to explore and enjoy their learning. Outstanding teaching ensures that children become very skilful in counting, linking sounds and letters, and playing and learning; particularly when using role play. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader is uncompromising in her commitment and drive to make a significant difference to children's lives. This zeal is shared and acted upon by all staff in the setting.

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

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded through the completed questionnaires were happy with the school's provision and indicated that their children enjoyed school. The vast majority of parents and carers also agreed that the school helped their children to have a healthy lifestyle and that the school met their children's individual needs. Inspectors agree that these aspects are at least good and some are outstanding. There were a very small number of concerns about behaviour but inspectors found no evidence to support these. The school is working hard to improve communications and increase parents' and carers' involvement.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary's Rawtenstall Church of England 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 152 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 187 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	80	53	70	46	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	99	65	49	32	2	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	57	38	89	59	5	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	62	41	83	55	3	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	88	58	61	40	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	57	38	93	61	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	88	58	62	41	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)	68	45	74	49	4	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	51	34	95	63	2	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	51	34	81	53	13	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	47	31	88	58	13	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	66	43	74	49	10	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	82	54	67	44	2	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 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.



15 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Rawtenstall Church of England Primary School, Rossendale, BB4 8RZ

It was delightful to visit your school. The inspection team thoroughly enjoyed talking to you and listened carefully to what you had to say. The inspectors also looked carefully at your comments in the questionnaires. You told us how happy you are at school and your enjoyment was clear to see. Yours is a good school and it is outstanding in the Early Years Foundation Stage. You are exceptionally well behaved, polite and welcoming. Well done to each one of you! Like you, we were impressed by how much fun you have in lessons and the lovely displays of your work around school. You love the school dinners and you were right to recommend them to us.

You help and care for each other. Younger children settle down exceptionally well in the Reception class and you make sure that older pupils look after the younger ones. You are well cared for and feel very safe in school. This makes an important contribution to your future because your work is good and you are confident young people.

You are very keen to learn and this helps you to achieve well. We would like you to improve your standards in writing and have asked teachers to include opportunities for you to write in most other subjects. Your attendance is not as good as it used to be. You and your families can help improve it. Your headteacher and all the staff are working hard to make your school even better. I wish you every success for your future.

Yours sincerely

Marie Cordey

Lead inspector

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