

Rufford CofE School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119483
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339452
Inspection dates	25–26 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Kevin Johnson

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	110
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sandra Nickson
Headteacher	Miss AR Farrington
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's policies and other documentation. Inspectors studied assessment data, pupils' work, monitoring records and 58 questionnaires returned by parents as well as those from pupils and staff members.

- the progress of all pupils and especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- standards of current work, particularly writing
- the quality and consistency of teaching throughout the school
- the extent to which pupils contribute to the wider community
- how well school leaders have brought about improvement.

Information about the school

This small school serves a semi-rural community. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is very low. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also below average. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Reception class. The school possesses the National Healthy Schools award, Activemark and the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark.

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. Ambitious and effective leadership has enabled the school to build well on its earlier achievements. Robust monitoring and accurate self-evaluation have resulted in an improved curriculum, effective teaching, and improved standards and achievement. Any sign of under performance is swiftly and effectively dealt with. These advances amply demonstrate the school's good capacity for sustained improvement. It is a very caring school where children and adults are warmly welcomed. The supportive environment ensures that all pupils are safeguarded well and equally given opportunities to achieve. Very good pastoral care and guidance enables pupils to develop some outstanding personal qualities. Pupils are invariably polite and well mannered and show both diligence and pride in their attitudes to work. They are highly regarded within the local community because of the way they involve themselves in the village life.

From broadly typical starting points for their age children make good progress so that most work securely within their early learning goals by the time they leave Reception. This is because of consistently good provision and support for their learning and development. The small cohorts in Key Stages 1 and 2 make good progress so attainment is above average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Reading is a continued strength throughout the school and in 2009 pupils made significant improvements in mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Attainment in English although above average dipped slightly at Key Stage 2 and is a relative weakness. Consequently, raising standards in writing, particularly for the more able pupils is rightly the school's main focus for improvement

Pupils' achievement has improved significantly. The headteacher's skilful leadership steered the school around recent staffing difficulties within Key Stage 2 and ensured a sustained pace of learning through good teaching. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities learn well due to the very effective support they receive. Increased breadth and challenge in the curriculum, a successful response to the previous report, have raised both teachers' and pupils' expectations and contributed to more enjoyment for learning.

The headteacher has established a cohesive and supportive staff team. All are committed to school improvement and share the process of self-evaluation with a challenging governing body. Morale is high. Staff feel valued and that there is clear understanding of what the school has set out for its continued development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing by the end of Year 6 by increasing the number of pupils

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who reach Level 5.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' attitudes to learning and their enthusiasm are very good. Older pupils are confident enough to question, and at times challenge, their teacher's ideas in lessons. Pupils work very well in small groups such as when investigating in science. When working alone, their concentration levels are high because they enjoy the challenges set for them and the opportunities to work creatively. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities enjoy the additional support they receive. The trusting relationships they share with their teachers helps them to learn well and make good progress.

From entering Reception with abilities broadly expected for their age, pupils achieve well to reach above average standards by the time they leave the school. A vigorous drive to improve mathematics and science has successfully pushed those standards up. The school is now aiming to raise standards in writing to similar levels by the end of Key Stage 2. Current attainment in Year 6 is similar to that achieved in 2009. Most groups of pupils are currently working beyond expectations for their age. Standards at Key Stage 1 also show improvement in 2009. They were the highest standards achieved for some time, moving to well above average in reading and mathematics with a particularly good performance in writing.

Pupils show exceptional maturity in the way their behaviour contributes to the life of the school and its credibility beyond the school gates. They are very active in the playground and there is a high take up of places for after school sports. They fully understand the need for fitness and a sensible diet in order to remain healthy. Their self-awareness and respect for others are among the personal qualities that contribute to their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and the caring roles of buddies in the playground help to make everyone feel safe. Attendance is above average, punctuality is excellent. Given their well developed skills in literacy and mathematics, coupled with some outstanding personal qualities, pupils are extremely well placed to move on to the next stages of their education.

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.

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

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	2
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is consistently good throughout the school and explains why pupils make good progress. Lessons are prepared well and there is always a good level of challenge. Teachers use assessment well. The results of the checks on pupils' progress are used well to plan lessons and set appropriate targets. Assessment in lessons is used effectively to measure progress. For example, when a group of Year 1 pupils proved that doubling numbers to ten was too easy for them the teacher quickly raised the challenge so that some were calculating well beyond what might be expected for their age. Good use is made of resources to stimulate and interest pupils. Teachers use electronic whiteboards well and pupils have good access to laptops as well as desktop computers. Good subject knowledge allows teachers to question pupils effectively in order to extend their thinking and improve speaking skills. Occasionally, older pupils especially are given too little scope to tackle problems and find solutions in their own way.

Much work has been done to improve the curriculum since the last inspection. Subject leaders work effectively to plan topics, which embrace a range of subjects so that pupils can apply skills more purposefully. Good quality art work and some lively history displays are examples of how much pupils enjoy applying their skills in different ways. Literacy skills are generally promoted well across subjects despite occasional over-use of worksheets. Learning is enriched very well through an impressive range of visits, visitors to school and after school clubs. There are memorable residential visits. Teachers capitalise well on such experiences, for example, to boost writing when pupils produced well written diaries of their visits to York.

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

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Pupils benefit personally from outstanding pastoral care and support. That the most vulnerable pupils are exceptionally well cared for is fully endorsed by parents' comments. The school liaises very well with external agencies in order to secure the best provision possible. The school works hard to ensure that parents understand how they can best support their children and how they are progressing in school. There is a well established programme for pupils' personal, social and emotional development so that pupils are prepared well to make informed decisions about their personal safety and relationships.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school continues to improve because the headteacher has harnessed the loyalty of all staff members to establish an ethos of care and determination. Discussion with teachers and responses to questionnaires signal a strong commitment to driving the school forward by ensuring that every child is valued and supported individually whatever their particular needs. Safeguarding procedures are robust and the school works well with parents and outside agencies to ensure pupils' well-being and progress. Governors are highly effective critical partners. They have a precise understanding of what is required to develop the school further and ensure equality of opportunity in all that the school does. The depth of their experience and expertise enables them to challenge the school vigorously, whilst at the same time providing strong support. For example, they recently helped to monitor and develop the school's successful action plan to improve standards in science.

The school continues to build on the already very strong contribution which it makes to community cohesion. Pupils take part in many village activities and community projects, such as the Humanity in Harmony project organised by Lancashire constabulary. They have strong links with schools in the United Kingdom which have contrasting social and economic features. These have resulted in an impressive joint art project. E-pals in American schools and visits from children from Belarus give pupils' awareness a global dimension.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

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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	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start in Reception with typical skills for their age. Effective provision, including good teaching, enables them to make good progress so that many reach almost all of their early learning goals and a few are more advanced. When they leave the Early Years Foundation Stage most show good levels of independence and can express themselves clearly and confidently. For example, when a group of children were asked if the Three Bears lived in the outdoor playhouse they replied adamantly, 'Of course the Three Bears don't live here. This is our house.' Children have good opportunities to play and explore independently through activities of their own choosing. These are balanced well with activities led by adults. The strong focus on teaching letters and sounds gets children off to a good start with their reading and writing. This practice underpins the strength of reading throughout the school. Provision for children's welfare is good. Children, parents and carers are welcomed warmly during pre-school visits, and relationships built up with their key workers ensure that children quickly 'find their feet' within a supportive, safe environment. Parents are encouraged to share in their children's learning and development and typically remark that they cannot praise the staff enough for how their children settle into school. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well. The team leader and support staff have a good understanding of all children's needs and plan purposefully to improve on what they already provide.

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

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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

Fifty eight parents returned questionnaires. A very large majority indicated that they were entirely satisfied with the school. The general consensus is that staff work hard to ensure that children are happy, enjoy school and grow in confidence. The inspectors do not support the views of a small number of parents that information about their children's progress is difficult to obtain.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rufford CoFE 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 58 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 110 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	44	76	12	21	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	46	79	12	21	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	29	50	23	40	5	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	57	21	36	4	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	36	62	20	34	0	0	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	52	22	38	5	9	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	71	16	28	1	2	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)	32	55	20	34	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	53	20	34	4	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	59	21	36	2	3	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	55	20	34	4	7	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	38	66	18	31	1	2	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	64	19	33	1	2	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



27 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rufford Church of England School, Ormskirk L40 1SN

Thank you for making my colleague and I so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. We were both very impressed by the friendly way in which we were received and the way you all helped us to find out about your school. You showed us just how polite and well mannered you are. We agree with you about your lessons being fun and that the grown-ups in school take excellent care of you and make sure that you are safe

Rufford Church of England is a good school. You make good progress because you are taught well. Your headteacher and all of the staff work hard to make your learning enjoyable and exciting. Your behaviour is excellent and we were delighted to see how well you attend school. Both of those things are very important so do keep them up.

Your parents, teachers and school governors are just as proud of your school as you are and would like it to continue to do well. In order to make that happen I have asked teachers and governors to:

improve standards in writing by helping more of you to achieve Level 5 by the time you leave Year 6.

You can help by continuing to be as hard working and cooperative as you already are.

Best wishes to all of you and good luck for the future

Yours sincerely

Mr Kevin Johnson

Lead inspector

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