



Rainford CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104790
LEA St. Helens
Inspection number 277218
Inspection dates 1 February 2006 to 2 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Colin Smith CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Cross Pit Lane
School category	Voluntary controlled		Rainford
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		St Helens, Merseyside WA11 8AJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01744 883281
Number on roll	278	Fax number	01744 886495
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Rev N Michell
Date of previous inspection	13 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs J Cutler

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4 to 11	1 February 2006 - 2 February 2006	277218

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school has a distinctive Christian ethos. The proportion of children entitled to free school meals and with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than the national average, reflecting the degree of social advantage in the area around the school. The vast majority of children are of white British heritage. A very small number of children are from minority ethnic backgrounds but none of them are at an early stage of learning English. On the whole, children enter school with attainment that is above that expected for their age. The school has gained Investors in People status and achieved Healthy School and Environmental Awareness Awards.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The effectiveness of the school and value for money provided are satisfactory. However, there are many positive features and the school is close to being a good one, in all respects.

Reception children make a good start. This good progress continues through the infants and standards are high by the end of Year 2. Standards in Year 6 are above average in mathematics and science but only average in English. Given their capabilities, children's progress through the junior classes is satisfactory. Whilst whole class teaching is good, teachers do not provide enough time for children to practise and improve their skills. This is largely why their achievement is not better. In contrast, children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve particularly well because of the excellent provision made. Very productive links with outside agencies ensure that children's safety and well-being are assured.

The school is regarded highly by parents and the local authority, deservedly so in terms of children's personal development, the level of care and quality of the curriculum provided, which are all good. However, the quality of teaching and learning and leadership and management are satisfactory and not quite as good as the school believes. The performance of the school is kept under review by checking teaching and assessment results. However, subject leaders do not examine children's written work sufficiently to identify and remedy weaknesses. Individual target setting is not used enough to involve children in raising their own achievement.

Above average standards have been maintained since the previous inspection, which indicates the school's satisfactory capacity for self-improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve children's progress, particularly in English, by ensuring that they have sufficient time to practise and improve their skills.
- Increase children's involvement with their learning by setting individual targets for improvement in the key subjects.
- Inject more rigour into checking how well children are learning so that subject leaders know what needs to be done to raise achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards of achievement are satisfactory overall. Reception children achieve well and reach the learning goals expected comfortably. Good achievement in Years 1 and 2 enables infant children to reach high standards in reading, writing and mathematics, as the 2005 assessments illustrate. The rate of progress through Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory, although results overall have kept pace with national improvements. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average in mathematics and science but are only average in English. The school sets very challenging targets. These are largely

met in mathematics but not always in English. Achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) and art and design is good throughout school.

In relation to their starting points, children make satisfactory progress overall. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve very well in response to caring and highly effective support. The progress made by average, able and gifted children is largely satisfactory, as recent test results show. However, their progress is hampered through lack of time and encouragement to persevere with written tasks, in order to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. This is the main factor that prevents children's achievement from being good throughout the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development and well-being is good and there are outstanding features. Children behave well and they are confident, polite and helpful. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in the excellent levels of attendance. Children are attentive listeners and eager to discuss their ideas although they do not always show the same enthusiasm for written work.

All children are welcomed and valued, particularly those with learning or social difficulties, some of whom transfer from other schools. Such inclusion promotes tolerance, understanding and respect. As one child commented, 'We really like helping others who aren't as lucky as us'.

Children develop an excellent awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles and the personal, social and health education programme is particularly successful in raising awareness of personal safety by avoiding dangers, such as substance abuse.

Children's spiritual, social and cultural development is good. Vibrant displays reflect children's awareness of beauty and the richness of other cultures and they have valuable opportunities for spiritual reflection.

Children's outstanding contribution to the community is evident in winning the regional award for environmental enhancement of the area. Through the work of the school council, children develop clear insights into how society operates. Many worthwhile opportunities to work independently and in teams, taking on responsibilities, such as running the tuck shop, help to promote children's future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teaching is good in Reception and consistently good in the introductory part of lessons throughout the school. This is because teachers manage children well, explain new learning clearly and ensure that they understand what they are expected to learn. These factors encourage children to listen, think and share their perceptions enthusiastically.

Some teaching is outstanding. Year 2 children were highly stimulated to write about their experiences after meeting an alien visitor (teacher in disguise). Similarly, Year 1 children became totally absorbed in learning because of the excellent use of computer programs that set tasks at precisely the right level.

The assessment of children's learning is satisfactory. Assessments are used purposefully to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Although children are taught in sets according to ability, their learning needs are not all the same. Some teachers use assessment more effectively than others in providing tasks that match children's different levels to ensure that all learn successfully.

A recurring weakness is the balance of time spent on whole class teaching and the time left for children to complete tasks, which is sometimes little more than ten minutes. This is why good teaching is not always converted into effective learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum with some outstanding features.

Provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is exemplary. This has a profound influence on their self-esteem and progress. The school has adapted the curriculum to increase the appeal for boys and this is helping to raise their achievement. However, the school is only just beginning to consider the needs of the gifted and talented children.

The school provides a very rich and diverse curriculum that helps children to study subjects in depth, such as art, history and ICT. The curriculum is highly enriched by visits, visitors and additional activities. The excellent links with the community, along with the impressive personal, social and health education programme earns the school deserved recognition, for example in competitive sports and Environmental and Healthy School Awards. In helping children to be aware of potential dangers, the school ensures that children are well prepared for the future.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good with outstanding elements. Parents speak highly of the care and support provided and they are very pleased with arrangements for settling children in. As one parent commented, 'I couldn't really ask for more.'

The high regard for health and safety is evident in the comprehensive risk assessments made. Children feel safe and have trusted adults to turn to if they wish to share any anxieties. Instances of bullying are rare and dealt with swiftly. Child protection procedures are fully understood by all staff and children are very well supervised.

The support provided for vulnerable children, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is pronounced. No stone is left unturned in the endeavour to care for and protect children, often through very good links with external agencies.

Procedures for guiding children's academic progress are satisfactory. Marking children's work is very constructive but individual target setting, to signal the way forward, is not fully established throughout the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher makes a good contribution by setting clear direction, providing a positive learning atmosphere within a stimulating curriculum and creating a very inclusive ethos. This leads to very good provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and, through highly effective links with external agencies, ensures that children's personal development and safety are very well provided for. Increasingly, the school is taking account of the views of stakeholders to guide strategic planning.

Although children make a good start in Reception and progress well through Years 1 and 2, progress between Years 3 and 6 is only satisfactory. Data is collected and analysed conscientiously and the information is now being used to measure children's progress from one year to the next. From this, senior staff have realised that some children could achieve more.

Checking the quality of teaching is done regularly and effectively. This is why teaching of the whole class together is largely successful. However, measuring how well children are learning by examining their written work is not sufficiently rigorous to give subject leaders a clear understanding of the areas for improvement. The limited amount of written work produced in some classes makes this task even harder.

Governors provide good support and are holding the school to account effectively. Above average standards have been maintained since the previous inspection and most of the issues have been tackled. This indicates that the school's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for your help when we inspected your school. We enjoyed our stay and would like you to know what we found out. Everything about your school is at least satisfactory and in many instances, good. The good features are:

- your good attitudes, behaviour and personal development
- the very good level of care provided for you
- the good start made by children when they begin school
- the good progress made by children who often find learning difficult
- the interesting curriculum that helps you to enjoy learning
- the quality of your artwork and your skills in ICT are very good.

Your teachers are trying to make the school even better. We think these things will help

- Your progress could improve further if you had more time to practise and improve your literacy and numeracy skills. You need to play your part by trying really hard to complete more work in your books, especially in writing.
- We feel that you and your teachers should set individual targets to help you to know what you need to do to improve in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers in charge of subjects need to look more closely at the work in your books to find out how well you are learning and what more they can do to help you.