

Rivington Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104761
Local authority	St. Helens
Inspection number	377123
Inspection dates	11–12 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Geoffrey Yates

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	260
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Heyes
Headteacher	Glenys Chalk
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Eighteen lessons were observed, taught by nine members of staff. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the tracking of pupils' progress and the school's monitoring, self-evaluation and planning for improvement. The inspectors also analysed 100 questionnaires returned by parents and carers. Discussions were also held with parents and carers.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work looking in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well pupils achieve as they move through the school.
- How well the Early Years Foundation Stage is planned and organised to meet children's needs.
- How successful the school is in ensuring teachers use assessment information well.
- How well the school provides for pupils' personal development.

Information about the school

This is a slightly above average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average and the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The school has gained many awards, including the Healthy School status and the Artsmark gold.

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

The school provides an outstanding education for its pupils. Pupils achieve exceptionally well because of outstanding leadership and management, high quality teaching and an exciting curriculum. Lessons are sharply focused on pupils' learning. Pupils are challenged well and make outstanding progress from their starting points which are typically below those expected for their age. Excellent care, guidance and support lead to very positive personal development for pupils. In the 2011 national tests at the end of Year 6, overall attainment was high in English and mathematics, continuing a trend over recent years. Pupils relate extremely well to adults and to their peers. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles well. They feel very safe and well cared for at school because of the good safeguarding procedures. Pupils make exceptionally valuable contributions to the school and to the wider community.

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides children with a good start to their formal education. However, while every possible opportunity is taken in the Reception class to develop children's independent learning skills, opportunities are sometimes missed in the Nursery to develop these skills especially in the outside area by using a wide range of imaginative activities. Throughout the school, pupils are enthusiastic learners. Attendance has improved and is above average, demonstrating pupils' enjoyment of school.

Teaching is outstanding overall. Pupils know what they are expected to learn because teachers make clear the lesson's learning objectives and the pupils use these to evaluate their progress. Teachers have high expectations and pupils respond accordingly. The teachers use assessment information very well to plan work that challenges pupils of different abilities, which results in pupils making rapid progress. Pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve because they are set clear individual learning targets. The school's excellent curriculum has been extremely well developed to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The innovative curriculum provides considerable enjoyment for pupils. Interesting links between subjects add great relevance to learning.

The outstanding achievement of pupils is the consequence of highly effective monitoring and professional guidance provided by skilled leaders. Self-evaluation is accurate, systematic and thorough. The findings are used well to inform planning

and action to bring about improvements where needed. For example, the whole-school focus on developing pupils' writing skills has ensured pupils use them exceptionally well across the curriculum. The drive and determination by the enthusiastic headteacher has been at the heart of the school's improvements. She is well supported by senior staff and other leaders who are all effectively involved in developing their areas of responsibility. The governing body has an excellent understanding of its strategic role in the school's development and has good systems for checking on its effectiveness and holding the leaders to account. This school demonstrates an outstanding capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide a wider range of imaginative outside activities in the Nursery for children to choose from, so that they can enhance their independent learning skills in all areas of the curriculum.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Throughout the school, pupils achieve exceedingly well and enjoy their learning. All groups of pupils, including the most able and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress in both key stages. High quality learning experiences are the reason for the school's success along with the excellent use made of assessment data about pupils' progress. Pupils are very keen to succeed. For example, in a Year 4 literacy lesson focusing on developing pupils' understanding of similes, pupils were bursting with enthusiasm to offer their ideas. One child when asked to express her thoughts about a picture of three girls on a beach contributed to the discussion, 'Their clothes flap like eagles wings.' In another class pupils were totally involved in a dance lesson linked to a project about Divali and clearly enjoyed taking part. Older pupils concentrated exceptionally well in developing their understanding of ratio working in teams to measure out different combinations of liquids and assess their findings. In another lesson they talked confidently about the possible meaning of words such as 'altercation' and 'aforementioned'. All age groups demonstrate excellent concentration in lessons because the work set is interesting and challenging and pupils know teachers value their contributions.

When children enter the school, their development is below that expected for the age group. Inspection evidence shows that a high proportion of pupils in Year 6 are already working above the expected levels in both English and mathematics.

Pupils are very proud of what they do. They know who they can talk to if they have any problems. Pupils display a high level of respect for one another and their teachers. They contribute willingly to help those less fortunate than themselves. The school council gives pupils a good say in everyday school matters. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities, for example, as Eco litter pickers. They are adamant that bullying is not tolerated and take on the role of 'bully busters' very seriously. For example, at playtimes and lunchtimes older pupils are allocated to every class to look

for any signs of bullying and to mediate in any small disputes. With high academic standards and good habits of attendance and punctuality, pupils are extremely well prepared for their future education.

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	1
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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2

How effective is the provision?

Staff know their pupils exceedingly well and ensure the learning experiences are well matched to pupils' needs, these are the main reasons that teaching and the curriculum are of a high quality. Good and usually outstanding teaching captures pupils' interests and ensures that they work very hard and produce work of quality. Teaching assistants play a full part in lessons, working with small groups, ensuring all pupils work productively. Adults use questioning very effectively to challenge pupils to think more deeply. Excellent use is made of assessment information in ensuring any gaps in pupils' learning are identified and addressed. Teachers mark pupils' work supportively and provide some very good pointers as to how it could be improved.

Curricular provision is outstanding and pupils say they enjoy everything that is on offer. It is very well organised to meet the differing needs of pupils and provides imaginative opportunities for learning which contribute effectively to the very strong promotion of pupils' personal development and well-being. It is adjusted effectively to meet pupils' different needs, especially for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is a very strong focus on pupils developing not only their basic skills but also on using them effectively in other areas of the curriculum, with some excellent examples of writing skills being used very well in different subjects. The curriculum is enriched greatly by a varied range of opportunities; including well-planned themed weeks. The specialist skills of a support teacher enhance the quality of the music and performing arts provision.

Support staff also ensure that the personal and social needs of pupils are met outstandingly well because every child is known as an individual. A particular

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

strength is the use of the tracking systems to identify pupils’ needs, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their progress, as a result of highly accurate and targeted intervention, is very closely monitored and this helps to explain why it is outstanding.

Parents and carers are mostly appreciative of the support their children receive. Pupils are secure in the knowledge that adults always listen to them. Highly effective links with other schools and external agencies ease transition between different schools. The school works successfully to encourage above average attendance.

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?

The headteacher and her staff have created a very positive climate for pupils to learn in. There is a culture of continuous improvement among the staff. This can best be seen by the fact that over a five-year period attainment has been significantly above the national average. Excellent leadership and management by the headteacher and senior staff have created a very strong sense of teamwork. Leaders and managers at all levels are given the responsibility to develop their areas. An accurate self-evaluation by the school results in well-formulated plans targeted to appropriate areas for development, for example, in increasing pupils’ use of information and communication technology across the school. The school’s pupil tracking systems are excellent and the information is used very well. The quality of teaching is carefully monitored and outcomes are shared and fed into performance management targets.

The governing body is excellent; it discharges its statutory duties very well and is highly effective. Members of the governing body possess a wide range of expertise and this is used extremely well to the benefit of the school. For example, the governing body was effectively involved in ensuring the extension to the building was carried out smoothly. The school implements good safeguarding practices so pupils feel very safe. Child protection training is fully up to date, procedures and policies follow best practice, evident in all aspects of the school’s work. The school has a strong commitment to inclusion and leaders and the governing body promote equal opportunities outstandingly well and are very active in tackling any form of discrimination. Community cohesion is promoted well, based on an in-depth analysis of the area the school serves. Particularly strong features include the work done locally. Excellent partnerships with outside organisations provide further experiences for the pupils which the school alone cannot provide.

These are the grades for the 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	2
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	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. As a result, children make good progress and sometimes more rapid progress in the Reception class. They are cared for well, and the staff team works closely together, within their separate buildings to assess children's learning. The school is taking action to bring planning across the setting more closely together. Children enter school with skills and knowledge below that which is typical of children of this age. Children settle quickly and enjoy their learning. This is a direct result of good quality teaching including that provided by the teaching assistants.

Children's more formal learning is well planned and is purposeful and they have some opportunities to follow their interests in self-chosen activities, which they set about with enthusiasm, even more so in the Reception class. For example, learning was clearly fun for those children involved as detectives in trying to hunt down the (imaginary) fox in the Reception class outside area, with excellent use being made of the resources provided. As a result, pupils had an abundance of opportunities to develop their independent learning skills in all areas of the curriculum. This high quality experience is not as apparent in the use made of the separate outside area of the Nursery. Staff in the Nursery are not always clear as to what they want children to get out of the activities the children have chosen. There are good links with parents and carers, enabling them to support their children's learning well at home.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Less than 50% of parents and carers returned completed questionnaires, but this can be partially explained by the fact the school conducts its own surveys of parental views. A small number expressed specific concerns which the inspectors shared with the school's leaders who took careful note of them. Inspection findings bear out the positive views held by most parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rivington 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 100 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 260 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	73	73	26	26	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	67	67	30	30	3	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	35	35	53	53	9	9	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	45	47	47	5	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	54	54	43	43	0	0	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	42	48	48	7	7	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	52	52	44	44	3	3	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)	47	47	47	47	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	48	51	51	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	36	48	48	6	6	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	33	55	55	6	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	41	41	48	48	5	5	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	56	56	37	37	5	5	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



14 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rivington Primary School, St Helens, WA10 6LF

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school. All the inspectors thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and appreciated all the help you gave us. The pupils who spoke to my colleague during one of the lunchtime breaks were extremely polite and helpful. It was good to hear that they all felt that any form of bullying was dealt with well. I am sure the 'bully busters' play a very strong part in this. It was wonderful to see how keen you all were to show your parents and carers the high-quality art work you had completed after school on the first day of the inspection. I will long remember helping children in the Reception class trying to track down the imaginary fox!

You go to an outstanding school and by the time you leave your attainment is high. You behave well, get on extremely well together and take great care of each other. You are a credit to your families and your teachers. I think the members of the eco council, and those with other responsibilities, do a wonderful job. I know you like school otherwise your attendance would not be as good as it is. Keep up the good work!

You can help to keep your school an outstanding one by maintaining your hard work and by continuing to take good notice of any comments the teachers provide to help you improve further. In order to ensure the youngest children in the Nursery get the very best opportunity to develop their independent learning skills well, we have asked the school to give them more opportunities to develop these skills in the outside area.

Please accept my best wishes for the future. I hope you continue to enjoy your very caring school.

Yours sincerely

Geoffrey Yates
Lead inspector

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