

Rothersthorpe Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122014
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	327622
Inspection date	25 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Gulshanbir Kayembe

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	88
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joe Considine
Headteacher	Jane Battams
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Church Street Rothersthorpe Northampton NN7 3HS
Telephone number	01604 830995

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated in a village on the outskirts of Northampton and draws its pupils from both the village and Northampton itself. The large majority of pupils are White British. A small number are from mixed race backgrounds. All speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is high and, in some cases, is as high as a third or even close to half of the year group. Most of these pupils need additional help with literacy or numeracy. A small number of pupils have a hearing impairment. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are organised into mixed age classes because of small numbers. However, the Early Years Foundation Stage class has only Reception-aged children.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good education for its pupils. They make good progress and usually reach standards that are above average by the end of Year 6. The warm and welcoming atmosphere nurtures pupils' personal development effectively, enabling them to develop into confident youngsters who enjoy school.

The small numbers in each year group mean that attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage varies from child to child, some being below that expected for their age, especially in literacy and numeracy, others being in line with expectations. Overall, children make good progress, although aspects of literacy and, at times, numeracy often remain below average at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils make consistently good progress in reading and writing across Years 1 to 6 and standards in English are usually above average by the end of Year 6. Although many pupils make good progress in mathematics, overall progress is not as good in that subject as in English. Standards in mathematics are usually average by the end of Year 6. The school has had a good focus on developing writing and this has helped to improve both progress and standards in English. Good quality marking and the effective use of personal targets also support good progress in English. In mathematics, however, the use of marking and personal targets is less well developed. In addition, pupils are not always given challenging enough work. There has been a good focus on developing pupils' mental arithmetic skills, and this is an improvement since the last inspection. However, there is insufficient focus on developing pupils' problem solving and investigative skills. Lower attaining pupils, including those who find learning difficult, make good progress in both English and mathematics because they are well supported.

Good teaching accounts for the good progress made by pupils. Effective relationships, well-planned and well-organised lessons lead to good learning. The well-planned curriculum supports teaching and learning. It also promotes pupils' good personal development effectively. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and most make good efforts to put this into practice. Their social, moral and spiritual awareness is promoted well through the curriculum. However, pupils' understanding of cultural diversity, though satisfactory, is not as well developed. A caring and supportive environment ensures that pupils are well looked after. Behaviour and attendance are good. Overall, parents are pleased with the school and feel that it provides good support for their children's individual needs. Given their good progress and the good social and teamwork skills they develop, pupils are well prepared for their future.

The school is well led and managed. There is a clear direction for development which has seen the school improve its provision from satisfactory to good since the last inspection. Effective self-evaluation, including some very good work in consulting parents and pupils, ensures that the school has an accurate view of how well it is doing, and it identifies the right areas for improvement. There is sound tracking of pupils' progress, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and from the end of Year 2 to Year 6. However, tracking is not rigorous enough across Years 1 to 2. Governors provide good oversight of the work of the school. They know its strengths and weaknesses and contribute to the good links the school has with the local community. Community cohesion is promoted well within the school and local community and pupils have sound opportunities to learn about different cultures in the United Kingdom and abroad. However, they do not have enough opportunities to learn about cultural diversity through first-hand experiences limiting their understanding and appreciation of its variety.

Given the progress made since the last inspection and the improvements to both teaching and progress, especially in writing, the school is well placed to make further improvements.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The area is well led and managed and children make good progress whatever their starting points. In 2008, with an academically more able group, standards were above average at the end of Foundation Stage in most areas although lower than average in writing and dealing with shapes and measurement. Children do very well in developing early skills in reading. A new programme for teaching letters and sounds is having a positive impact on further improving children's literacy skills. Personal and social skills are usually as expected for their age when they start school. The good focus on developing these skills further enables children to reach above average standards in this area of learning. Children learn to work together well and share equipment and resources. Most concentrate well, sustaining good levels of interest in activities.

Good teaching includes practical tasks, some of which are outstandingly well planned, that engage the children's interests, maximising their learning and their enjoyment of it. Adults interact well with children and encourage them to talk and hence develop their vocabulary. However, questioning does not always probe children's thinking enough or encourage more detailed responses. A well-planned topic-based curriculum promotes good links across the different areas of learning. Whilst children are encouraged to write independently and given regular opportunities to do so, there is scope to extend these even further and eliminate the occasional use of worksheets. Effective use of the outdoor area provides some excellent opportunities for number work. Children's learning is assessed well and the information used effectively to support their learning. Links with parents are strong, ensuring that children settle quickly and their welfare and well-being promoted effectively. The small number of children with hearing impairments are extremely well supported.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils are sufficiently challenged in mathematics, especially in relation to developing their problem solving skills, and that they know what to do to improve their work in order to raise standards.
- Develop a formal system of tracking of pupils' progress across Years 1 and 2.
- Provide pupils with more opportunities to learn at first hand about cultural and religious diversity in British society

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In 2008, results of national assessment at the end of Year 2 were average. Pupils performed best in reading where results were above average. They were average in writing and mathematics. This represents good progress from their below average starting points in literacy and numeracy. In 2008, results at the end of Year 6 were above average overall and in English. They were in line with national averages in mathematics and science. In 2007, results were well above average. Both the 2007 and 2008 results demonstrate overall good progress for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Progress in English across the school is consistently good and many pupils make very significant progress in writing. In mathematics, overall progress is satisfactory and, therefore, not as good as in English. Nonetheless, many pupils notably lower attainers and those who find learning difficult make good progress in mathematics..

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Good attendance reflects pupils' enjoyment of school and the range of activities on offer. They particularly enjoy and value school visits. Pupils participate well in lessons, showing good attitudes to learning, though occasionally some, usually boys, lose focus because teachers sometimes talk for too long. Pupils' behaviour is good and supports their learning well. Good relationships with one another and with staff mean that they cooperate well in lessons. During playtimes, they are considerate to one another and older pupils readily look after younger ones. Behaviour in and around the school is also safe. Pupils play a positive and effective role on the school council and readily take on jobs around the school, thus making a good contribution to the school community. There are some good opportunities for pupils to contribute to the local village and wider community, such as work on road safety and raising funds for good causes. Through activities such as these, pupils learn to understand and appreciate those from other walks of life. However, their knowledge and understanding of people from different ethnic backgrounds is not sufficiently well developed

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Staff establish good working relationships with pupils who, consequently, want to do well for them. Classes and resources are managed effectively, thus maximising the use of time in lessons. A good variety of teaching methods are used, successfully ensuring that pupils are actively engaged. The practical nature of much of the work provided goes down well with them. Planning generally ensures that work is matched to the needs and capabilities of pupils but on some occasions work is not challenging enough, particularly in mathematics. Support staff know what they are expected to do and are well deployed in lessons. They provide very good support to individual pupils and small groups. Questioning is often good but occasionally pupils are not given enough time or encouragement to provide extended answers. Marking of work is regular and comments in literacy books are helpful in identifying next steps for learning. Such comments are less evident in numeracy books.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the needs of mixed age classes well. Work in literacy and most aspects of numeracy is successfully planned to develop new skills and knowledge in a systematic way. However, the development of problem solving and investigative skills is not as thoroughly embedded in the curriculum as, for example, the development of reading and writing skills. Support programmes for pupils who are finding learning difficult are well developed and, consequently, enable these pupils to do well. There is a good programme for personal and social development so that pupils learn about healthy lifestyles and how to keep themselves safe. There are good opportunities for pupils to reflect on important issues in life. Subjects such as religious education and geography, along with visitors from other faiths, occasional visits to different places of worship and links with a school in Uganda, all successfully increase pupils' understanding and appreciation of different cultures and beliefs. However, overall, there are too few opportunities for them to learn about these things at first hand to bring this learning to life and consolidate it. The range of extra-curricular activities is good, especially given the

size of the school. Enrichment activities such as trips, visits and visitors to the school are a strength of the school and highly valued by pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff demonstrate a high level of commitment to the care of pupils in their charge. Health and safety are promoted well and statutory checks to safeguard pupils are in place. Good support is provided to pupils who find learning difficult and those with hearing impairments. Overall, the school makes good use of external agencies to support individual pupils. Good links with parents help pupils to settle in, and for parental concerns to be addressed effectively. Most pupils are aware of the progress they are making. A few remain unsure and this is more the case in relation to numeracy than literacy. Pupils are involved well in evaluating their work in writing but this good practice has yet to be extended more widely to other subjects. Personal targets in literacy are better known and understood than those in numeracy.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has effectively created a cohesive and supportive staff team. She is well supported by the senior management team. There is a good focus on pupils' learning and on raising standards. Systems for tracking pupils' progress through the school are in place for the Early Years Foundation Stage and from the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 6. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 have a secure grasp of each individual pupil's current progress. However, there is insufficient formal tracking of progress from the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage to the end of Year 2 to either hold staff to account or to gain a clear overview of performance and progress across these year groups. This limits the school's capacity to manage pupils' performance and ensure consistently good progress both for individuals and the whole year group. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school and have a secure grasp of its strengths and weaknesses. They are involved well in the school's self-evaluation. Community cohesion is promoted appropriately at school level but there is scope to increase pupils' awareness and understanding of the cultural diversity in British society.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

26 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rothersthorpe Church of England Primary School, Northampton NN7 3 HS

We enjoyed visiting your school and would like to thank you for making us feel welcome. It was very nice to meet you and watch your lessons. The school gives you a good education and ensures that you are ready for the next steps in your lives.

- These are some of the best things about your school.
- You develop into confident and self-assured youngsters who are polite and considerate to others.
- You all get off to a good start in your education in Reception.
- You are taught well and, as a result, make good progress in your learning, especially in reading and writing.
- Those of you who find learning difficult are well supported and, as a result, make good progress in English and mathematics.
- Your headteacher ensures that staff are working together to help you learn.
- I have asked Mrs Battams and your teachers to do the following to help you make even better progress:
 - make sure that in mathematics, your work is not too easy and that you are more confident about the next steps you need to take to improve it
 - put in place a more formal system to check progress across Years 1 to 2
 - give you more opportunities to learn at first hand about the different cultures in Britain today.

You can contribute to improvements by making sure you keep trying hard to improve your problem-solving and investigative skills.

We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Gulshan Kayembe Lead Inspector