

# St John Rigby RC VA Lower School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109632
<b>Local Authority</b>	BEDFORDSHIRE
<b>Inspection number</b>	288460
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Speakman

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	304
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr J McGivern
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs M Clewlow
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 May 2005
<b>School address</b>	Polhill Avenue Bedford Bedfordshire MK41 9DQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01234 401900
<b>Fax number</b>	01234 401661

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<b>Age group</b>	4–9
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average school, drawing mainly Roman Catholic pupils from Bedford. Pupils have a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, including many from Italian and Polish families. About a fifth of pupils receive extra support to learn English. 5% are at an early stage of learning the language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is broadly average. The school has achieved Investor in People status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school that provides an education of high quality and enables all pupils to make excellent academic and personal progress. It gives excellent value for money. The pace of improvement has been rapid over the last three years under the leadership of the headteacher. All key areas show significant, continued improvement.

- Achievement is excellent across the school and enables pupils to reach standards above those expected nationally.
- Increasing numbers of pupils join the school with little or no English, but make excellent progress in learning the language.
- The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding.
- Leadership and management of key staff, especially that of the headteacher, are excellent.
- Assessment procedures are robust. Monitoring information is used extremely well to identify what the school does well and where it needs to improve.
- Pupils' personal development and behaviour are excellent.
- Personal and academic care and guidance is of a high quality.
- The curriculum is good and the school has identified areas for further development.

Pupils greatly enjoy school. They say it is a very pleasant place to be because all pupils get on very well together and behaviour is excellent. They adopt a healthy lifestyle, eat healthily and stay physically fit. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school and wider communities. They help to keep the school a very safe place to learn and play. They develop good literacy, numeracy and computer skills and work well together, giving them an excellent preparation for the future. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

The quality of education is excellent. Provision in the Foundation Stage and the key stages are outstanding and has improved significantly since the previous inspection. The positive learning ethos includes excellent teaching and learning at all stages and takes account of the very wide range of pupils' needs. The curriculum is good. It is rich and varied but links between subjects to help pupils' understanding are still to be fully developed. Care, support and guidance are excellent. The school works extremely well with other schools and with agencies, such as medical services and the police to raise pupils' awareness of safety issues and promote their well-being.

The school's self-evaluation is excellent. Leaders at all levels and the governing body are fully involved. They analyse a wide range of assessment data and monitoring information to identify the most important areas for development. This has led to rapid and sustained improvement since the headteacher was appointed. The high quality of education provided, and the excellent record of sustained improvement indicate outstanding capacity for further improvement.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that learning is supported by closer links between subjects.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 1

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. When they join the Reception class, their attainment spans the full range of ability, but the growing number with little or no English makes entry standards below average overall. They make outstanding progress across the school, and when they leave at the end of Year 4, standards are above those nationally expected for pupils at that age.

Pupils make excellent progress in Reception. By the time they move into Year 1, many have already achieved the standards nationally expected at Key Stage 1. Following a number of years when standards at the end of Year 2 were below expectations, they rose significantly in 2006 and were above average. The trend of improvement has continued this year. Many pupils join the school at different stages with little or no English. These pupils soon acquire enough knowledge of the English language to enable them to access the curriculum fully and achieve as well as other pupils in their class. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve very well against their targets due to timely intervention and high-quality support.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They very actively adopt a healthy diet and life style. They enjoy being in school very much, and they attend well. Excellent moral and social development results in exemplary behaviour in lessons and around the school. Pupils' very good spiritual understanding is reflected in their respect for the beliefs and feelings of others. Consequently, they fully appreciate their own and others' achievements. Pupils warmly welcome others from different ethnic backgrounds into the school. The wide range of backgrounds helps all to develop a broad awareness of diverse cultures. Pupils work enthusiastically, and through life-skills lessons particularly, develop exceptionally well the skills to prepare them for the next stage of education. They make an excellent contribution to the school and the wider community. They support a number of charities, often initiating and managing fund-raising themselves. Older pupils especially, take pride in the range of responsibilities they undertake and the impact this has on the school community is excellent. Pupils of all ages feel safe in school and are confident that any harassment will be dealt with effectively.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teaching and learning are outstanding and key factors in ensuring that all pupils, including those pupils with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language achieve as well as they can. Lesson planning is excellent. The teaching of different classes in each year group is well coordinated. Activities are interesting and engage pupils' attention from the very beginning of lessons to make learning enjoyable. Assessment information is used very effectively to match tasks to individual pupils' needs. Even when pupils of similar ability are grouped together, teachers still adapt work to meet the needs of every pupil. Teachers share fully with pupils what is to be learned in lessons and help them to evaluate what they have achieved at the end. This enables pupils to understand very well what they need to do to improve. Lessons are managed very well and pupils are given excellent opportunities to practise and consolidate skills. Respectful relationships and a caring approach ensure that pupils' behaviour is excellent and that they learn at a rapid pace.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

Curricular provision is good. Since the last inspection, the timetable has been altered to make better use of time. The strong emphasis on language and mathematical development has helped to raise standards in these subjects. The outstanding Foundation Stage curriculum embraces

the spirit of exploration and learning through play to a very high standard to enable pupils to make excellent progress. At Key Stages 1 and 2, subject work is well provided for. Some steps have been taken to link subjects but there are plans to move more strongly towards a curriculum which closely links different areas of learning. Curricular enrichment is outstanding. Clubs are well attended. There is an innovative 'roundabout' of activities for Years 1 to 4, such as French, gardening and cookery, run by teaching assistants and visiting adults.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for pupils' personal and academic development. Staff know pupils very well, provide an extremely caring environment and ensure the full inclusion of all pupils. Provision for health, safety and welfare is excellent. Procedures for safeguarding children are fully in place and all the staff are aware of the action to take if necessary. The school ensures that all activities involving children are fully assessed for safety. Pupils are aware of what they should do in lessons, and are encouraged to assess their own progress against their targets. The school's procedures for tracking and monitoring pupils' academic achievement ensure that those at risk of underachieving are identified early and appropriate support is provided. Pupils with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language receive excellent levels of support.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership and management are excellent. The headteacher provides extremely strong leadership and a high level of clarity in her vision for further development. She shows a robust determination to improve the quality of education so that standards rise further and pupils' academic and personal development benefits. She is extremely well supported by the deputy head and other key staff. She has quickly established a highly committed team with very strong professional skills, who share her drive for excellence. The performance of both teachers and pupils is monitored very closely. Careful analysis of assessment data and tracking of individual pupil's progress against their targets are used extensively by the senior leadership team to hold teachers to account for pupils' achievement. The excellent school development plan has pupils' learning at its core. Data from monitoring and subject leaders' action plans are carefully considered to establish priorities for improvement. Resources are deployed very efficiently to improve the learning environment and to ensure there are enough highly skilled adults to provide the very high quality of education seen in this school. The governing body is a federated board and has the overall responsibility of governing four schools. However, a core group of seven governors make the school a priority. They are highly supportive and challenge the school to account for its performance, and work very closely with the headteacher and the senior leadership team.

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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	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

11 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John Rigby RC Lower School, Bedford, MK41 9DQ

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We were really impressed by what we saw over the two days and we are very pleased to be able to report that you go to an excellent school.

Since Mrs Clewlow took over, there has been rapid improvement. Outstanding teaching helps you all to make extremely good progress. The staff take excellent care of you. They know very well what each of you is capable of doing, and they make sure that you all do as well as you can. You have exciting lessons, which you say you find very interesting and enjoy very much. We have asked the school to continue its work to link subjects better into topics to add even more interest and meaning to your learning.

You play an important part in the school's success. We were impressed by how well you behave in lessons and how keen to learn you are. This means that teachers and other adults can get on with helping you learn without interruption. You say how well you get on together, feel safe in school, and have a great deal of enjoyment in being there. We feel sure that your positive attitudes will help the school to go from strength to strength.

We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

David Speakman

Lead Inspector