

Romsey Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 134945 |
| Local Authority | Hampshire |
| Inspection number | 360661 |
| Inspection dates | 16–17 November 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Diane Wilkinson |

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

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|--|--|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 217 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Jane Hodgson |
| Headteacher | Ruth Linsley |
| Date of previous school inspection | 17 September 2007 |
| School address | Mercer Way Romsey SO51 7PH |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons and observed 10 teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and pupils and the views of a small number of parents and carers collecting their children from school were noted. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at analyses of pupils' progress, development planning and monitoring, a range of policies and procedures including those associated with safeguarding, curriculum planning documents and a small sample of pupils' work. They also scrutinised questionnaires returned by 96 parents and carers, 92 pupils and 30 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The effectiveness of strategies to improve pupils' attainment and progress in writing and mathematics.
- The level of challenge and support, especially with regard to boys, higher attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The extent to which the school is successfully encouraging good attendance.

Information about the school

Romsey is an average-sized primary school. As well as the Reception class, the Early Years Foundation Stage has a nursery class which children attend part time. The school holds a range of before- and after-school activities each day. The site is shared with a children's centre which was not inspected at this time. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average, although the proportion of these pupils who have a significant need is above average. The most commonly identified of these needs relate to specific and moderate learning, behavioural, emotional and social needs, physical disability and the autistic spectrum. Most pupils are of White British heritage, with only a few speaking English as an additional language. The school holds the Healthy School award and an award for financial management. The school moved to a new site in April 2008. Subsequent to the resignation of the previous substantive headteacher, the school was led by a number of acting headteachers for two terms. The current headteacher took up post in April 2009.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Romsey Primary provides a satisfactory standard of education. The school has been through an unsettled period since its last inspection, especially with regard to changes of headteacher. During this period, the quality of provision declined, as did some important aspects of pupils' development, especially in the acquisition of writing and mathematics skills and in behaviour. Since the arrival of the new headteacher last year, these weaknesses have begun to be remedied successfully, with good improvement in important aspects. The school's reputation for providing good quality care and support is well justified. Rigorous attention to safeguarding keeps pupils free from harm at all times and their knowledge of how to keep safe and healthy is good. The calm, purposeful atmosphere of the school is one reason why pupils behave well and develop positive attitudes to their learning, resulting in the rising attendance levels. The care provided for the most vulnerable pupils and their families is very good, enabling them to be fully included in all the school has to offer.

Improvements in the curriculum and teaching have led to better learning. This is clearly seen in the Nursery and Reception classes where provision is good and children progress well. In Years 1 to 6, curriculum planning provides good advice on how to develop important skills, including in writing and mathematics. Progress in writing is good, resulting in rising attainment in English. In mathematics, there has been much more to do, especially in developing pupils' calculation skills and their ability to use these in a range of practical situations. As a result, although overall attainment is broadly average, pupils' attainment in mathematics is not as secure as in English.

Good systems have been put in place to provide lesson activities that provide both challenge and support according to the needs of different groups. This helps to ensure that all achieve satisfactorily, including boys, the higher attainers and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Although progress has improved, there are still a small minority of occasions when teachers do not encourage pupils to work at a good rate. This limits what pupils can achieve, especially in mathematics. Over the last year, the new assessment and tracking systems have begun to support pupils' learning successfully, especially in the use of targets and effective marking to encourage and guide pupils to improve. A development priority for this year is to provide relevant and exciting lesson activities that engage and motivate pupils. This is already apparent in some classes. For example, in one mathematics lesson, pupils enthusiastically calculated provisions in multiples of three for the astronauts on Apollo 11, making good progress as a result. However, not all staff are as skilled as this in their approach.

As well as the strong leadership of the headteacher, the school has benefited from good governance over the past two years. Teamwork amongst the whole school community is good so the headteacher is well supported in her drive to move the school forward. This

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also extends to the good partnerships the school has forged with parents and other schools and agencies which benefit pupils' learning and welfare. Self-evaluation is accurate, with development planning effectively focused on remaining weaknesses. This, together with evidence of improvement over the last 18 months, gives the school a secure capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics in Years 1 to 6 through:
 - achieving a consistent approach to building on pupils' previous learning in mathematics, especially with regard to calculation work
 - taking every opportunity to provide practical activities in which pupils can use their mathematics skills
 - making pupils more aware of the time limits for completing their work.
- Build on and extend the strategies for improving the quality of provision by ensuring that:
 - lesson activities engage, motivate and inspire pupils to do their very best
 - teaching maintains a rigorous pace throughout lessons in order to raise the rate of pupils' progress further.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Although attainment on entry is below the expected level, Nursery and Reception children's good progress is evident in the skills they develop that are in line with expectations for their age by the time they move into Year 1. The improved teaching and curriculum have developed positive attitudes to learning, although pupils in other year groups are still making up for slower progress made in the past. Accelerated progress in writing over the last 18 months is raising attainment in English well. The quality of language used to write effectively for different purposes is greatly improved. Older pupils confidently use alliteration, similes and metaphors to enliven their work, as was evident in an atmospheric rainforest poem in a Year 5 lesson.

Good activities foster pupils' enjoyment of writing, although sometimes their enthusiasm leads to careless spelling and handwriting. An effective focus on developing calculation skills is beginning to pay off. Most Year 6 pupils add, subtract, multiply and divide with numbers which include two decimal places. Careful work ensures they are nearly always accurate. However, pupils' capacity to apply these skills in a range of situations is less well developed and a small minority of pupils still work too slowly. Pupils' development for their future life is satisfactory. Pupils' personal development is good. Despite a small number finding good behaviour difficult, a very large majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils contribute to school life in many ways, for example in managing and running the healthy tuckshop. They enthusiastically take part in local events such as performing in the school choir in Romsey Abbey. Pupils support each other well, helping those who find a task difficult. They develop a real empathy for other cultures and religions, enthusiastically sharing in Eid celebrations with Muslim pupils. Effective opportunities in assembly develop good spiritual awareness.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attainment ¹ | 3 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 3 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 3 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 2 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attendance ¹ | 3 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

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

How effective is the provision?

Weaknesses in teaching have been successfully addressed by ensuring there is a consistent approach to important features in all lessons. For example, different lesson activities are provided for each ability group and those pupils who find learning difficult receive well-targeted support, including from skilled teaching assistants. Pupils' individual improvement targets are used to good effect, with marking consistently indicating what they need to improve. Strengths such as these are improving progress, but teaching is judged satisfactory rather than good because these positive features are relatively new. However, they are a sound basis for moving teaching forward with good and occasionally outstanding lessons being observed during the inspection. In the Nursery and Reception classes, early literacy skills are exceptionally well taught, providing an excellent platform for other staff to build on. Curriculum planning for English has developed well, providing really interesting activities to motivate pupils, especially the boys, to read and write. In one lesson, very good use was made of technology to show contrasting settings, helping Year 4 pupils write very effectively, for example about 'a dark, spooky room where the pillars are like trees'. Staff recognise this approach could also help improve motivation and progress in mathematics although development in this aspect is still at the early stages. Throughout activities, most teachers are very vigilant as to how well pupils are working, although few give regular time reminders to help increase the rate of progress.

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Assessment information is now used more effectively to plan the next steps in learning, with topics being linked together well to make this relevant. However, there has been insufficient time for the full effect of this on attainment to be seen.

A comprehensive range of before- and after-school activities, including for Reception children, effectively support pupils' learning and enjoyment of school. Pupils are also well cared for on these occasions. The school has worked extremely hard, liaising exceptionally well with other agencies, to encourage good attendance, with the 'Early Club' before-school provision effectively supporting this. Good behaviour is promoted especially well. Support to enable those pupils who have fallen behind to catch up is good, with the special educational needs co-ordinator supporting this aspect well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 3 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 3 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 3 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 2 |

How effective are leadership and management?

In the short time available, the new headteacher has done much to start the process of turning around the school and halt pupils' declining attainment. Good professional development and a shared commitment to improvement are raising the quality of provision. The senior leadership team provides good support. Subject leaders are beginning to drive forward improvement with more determination, but all staff know there is still more to be done to raise the school's effectiveness further. Systems for monitoring provision and pupils' progress have also improved. Leaders know exactly where the remaining weaknesses lie, for example, in the need to improve the way pupils apply their mathematical skills or to develop the school's promotion of community cohesion. Regular progress meetings held with class teachers ensure there is swift intervention when pupils' progress slows. This has helped pupils to achieve satisfactorily, although they achieve better in English than mathematics. Nevertheless, developments so far ensure that all pupils have satisfactory equality of opportunity and give confidence that the school has a secure capacity to improve further.

Governors have played a leading role in supporting the headteacher. They are very knowledgeable about all aspects of the school's work, supporting monitoring and development work well. Governors use their expertise to very good effect, for example in health and safety aspects, which helps ensure the policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils are good. Financial resources are securely targeted to support pupils' education and welfare. Staff engage well with parents, who feel well informed and fully involved in supporting their children's education. Links with local schools and groups are good; for example, the Schools Sports Partnership supports pupils' health awareness well. The school has worked successfully to promote a cohesive community for pupils and their

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parents. However, links with different communities in the United Kingdom and overseas to promote wider community cohesion are at the early stages of development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 3 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 2 |
| 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 | 3 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 3 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

Adults have a really good understanding of how children learn and plan well to promote this. They are exceptionally good at developing communication, language and literacy skills so children make outstanding progress in this area. For example, the quality of language the Nursery teacher drew from children to enthusiastically 'narrate' a story through the pictures was of exceptionally high quality. Every opportunity is taken to extend oral language throughout both the Nursery and Reception. For example, in an outstanding music activity in Reception, children were very perceptively explaining how the music made them feel. Staff skilfully build on these very good oral skills to introduce children to reading and writing. These strengths give children a very good platform to support their learning in other areas where their progress is uniformly good. Children have many opportunities to explore things for themselves both indoors and out and there is always an adult on hand to tease out what children have discovered in their investigations so they develop a good understanding of what they are learning.

Resources are very well organised to promote learning across all areas although, on a small number of occasions, boys could be encouraged further to participate in all activities available to them. In addition, as in other year groups, opportunities are sometimes missed to enhance children's excitement and motivation, for example in turning some role-play areas into a setting which really stimulates their imagination. Regular assessments of children's progress help staff to plan well for future activities and good leadership and management result in effective self-evaluation and continuous improvement. Children's welfare is given high priority, including in after-school activities where their learning also is

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promoted well. Good induction procedures and the effective engagement with parents helps attain a cohesive approach to children's learning.

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

The vast majority of parents and carers have positive views of the school, a few having told inspectors they drive a considerable distance so their children can attend. Parents and carers are totally confident that their children are well taught, make good progress and are kept safe. A small number who returned the questionnaires wrote in praise of the school, especially with regard to the staff and how easy they are to communicate with. Only a very small minority raised concerns, the most common being with regard to poor behaviour and how it is dealt with. The school acknowledges that this has been a concern in the past, but inspectors support its view that good behaviour management strategies ensure almost all pupils behave well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Romsey 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 96 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 217 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 65 | 68 | 28 | 28 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 67 | 70 | 27 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 65 | 68 | 28 | 29 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 53 | 55 | 41 | 43 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 53 | 55 | 42 | 44 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 52 | 54 | 37 | 39 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 65 | 68 | 29 | 30 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 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) | 53 | 55 | 30 | 31 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 50 | 52 | 42 | 44 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 41 | 43 | 45 | 47 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 52 | 54 | 39 | 41 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 54 | 56 | 35 | 36 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 57 | 59 | 37 | 39 | 2 | 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 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 | 58 | 36 | 4 | 2 |
| Primary schools | 8 | 43 | 40 | 9 |
| Secondary schools | 10 | 35 | 42 | 13 |
| Sixth forms | 13 | 39 | 45 | 3 |
| Special schools | 33 | 42 | 20 | 4 |
| Pupil referral units | 18 | 40 | 29 | 12 |
| All schools | 11 | 42 | 38 | 9 |

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 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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. 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 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.



18 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Romsey Primary School, Romsey SO51 7PH

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We very much enjoyed our time seeing all the things you do. I particularly want to thank those of you who gave your time to talk to us. We think your school is satisfactory, but that things are improving and we are pleased that you and your parents are aware of this also.

Here are some of the things we found out were especially good about the school.

- You are well cared for and staff provide good support when you need extra help. It is especially good for those of you who need a lot of help.
- The teaching and curriculum are improving so you are making better progress. Nursery and Reception children make good progress and all of you do so in writing.
- Your personal development is good. You behave well and we were really impressed by your politeness and friendliness.
- Staff and governors work well with your parents and other schools and organisations to help look after you and improve your education.
- Your headteacher has worked very hard since she joined the school to improve things for you. Staff and governors are supporting her well to help the school carry on improving.

Here are some of the things we have asked the school to improve.

- Help you to make good progress in mathematics as you have done in your writing over the past year. You can help by being as enthusiastic and working as hard in your mathematics lessons as we saw you were in your writing lessons.
- Find really interesting and exciting ways to help you learn as well as we saw in some lessons and help you all to work at a fast pace so that your progress can continue to improve.

Yours sincerely

Diane Wilkinson

Lead inspector

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