

Rossmere Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111641
Local Authority	Hartlepool
Inspection number	356957
Inspection dates	27–28 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Gordon Potter

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	325
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Maureen Smith
Headteacher	Mr Howard Underwood
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 21 lessons taught by 14 teachers, conducted visits to lessons with the headteacher and deputy headteacher and held meetings with representatives of the governing body, representatives from the local authority, staff, parents and carers, and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of school policies and documentation relating to safeguarding and strategic planning, examples of pupils' work, assessment data and monitoring records. They also scrutinised the 53 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as 80 questionnaires from pupils and 34 returned by staff.

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

- Inspectors examined whether teaching is at least satisfactory across school so that all groups of pupils can make satisfactory progress.
- They looked to see if assessment information about pupils' skills and abilities is well used to measure pupils' progress over time and to plan work that offers appropriate pace and challenge for all groups of pupils.
- Have the strategies introduced by the senior leaders successfully raised pupils' attainment and accelerated their progress?

Information about the school

This school is much larger than the average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status. The headteacher has been in post since September 2009 and is retiring in August 2011. The school is supported by the local authority and a National Leader of Education.

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

This is a satisfactory school. Effectively supported and rigorously challenged by the governing body, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have initiated appropriate strategies that are securing improvements to teaching, the curriculum and marking. However, these initiatives have not become sufficiently embedded to have an impact on pupils' attainment, and the rates at which pupils make progress remain inconsistent across school. While leaders have a clear view of what needs to be done, the capacity to improve remains satisfactory as many key roles and responsibilities, along with skills in monitoring and analysis, are still being developed. Highly successful strategies to improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, have been introduced, consequently, children make a flying start to their learning.

In the best lessons, teachers make clear to pupils what they will learn and challenge them to improve. They involve pupils in interesting activities, use effective questioning and check pupils' understanding as the lesson progresses. In these lessons, pupils make rapid progress. However, teaching and progress are satisfactory overall because, in too many lessons, teachers offer too much help, the pace of learning drops and progress slows. The curriculum has a strong emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills in English and mathematics and this focus enables pupils to have broadly average attainment at the end of Year 6. However, curriculum planning does not ensure that work builds progressively on pupils' skills and there are too few opportunities for pupils to work together, solve problems and apply their skills in writing and mathematics. As a result, pupils' enjoyment and behaviour are no more than satisfactory because they do not always find the work they do sufficiently engaging.

The school has much clear information about pupils' skills and abilities and it is increasingly well used to ensure that pupils know at what level they are working and have clear targets for improvement. It is less well used to ensure that work is sufficiently challenging for all pupils. Marking is improving and is used increasingly to tell pupils how to improve their work, although teachers do not always allow pupils sufficient opportunities to act upon this advice.

Staff provide sensitive care and support, which ensures that pupils work and play well together, feel safe and have a good awareness of how to stay fit and healthy. Pupils contribute satisfactorily to developments in school through the school council and have a clear sense of how to help others. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school and the way it involves them in their children's learning. There are many partnerships with outside agencies to support pupils with a range of complex needs, although they are not as yet used well enough to impact on pupils' learning. The school offers satisfactory value for money.

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Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the summer of 2012, further accelerate pupils' progress and raise their attainment, by improving teaching and the curriculum so that:
 - all lessons include interesting activities, have appropriate pace and challenge and provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to work together, solve problems and apply their skills in English and mathematics in practical and investigative activities
 - work is well matched to the needs of individual pupils and builds progressively on pupils' skills
 - pupils have opportunities to act upon advice about how to improve their work.
- Develop the capacity of leaders at all levels by:
 - ensuring there is accurate monitoring of the impact of initiatives designed to improve school effectiveness
 - providing high-quality continuing professional development in data analysis, lesson observation and planning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their work is satisfactory. In some lessons they especially enjoy challenging and lively activities, such as solving mathematical problems, talking and writing about their visit to Durham Cathedral, debating about whether animals should be kept in zoos and researching about life in the rainforest. They are courteous, form positive relationships and wish to do well in their work, although they are not always encouraged to present their work neatly.

While cohorts differ, the skills and abilities with which pupils enter school are typically below those expected for their age. In the past, pupils have made good progress in Key Stage 1, but progress in Key Stage 2 has been satisfactory so that pupils typically attain standards that are broadly average at the end of Year 6. Pupils currently in Years 4 and 5 have low attainment and this represents satisfactory progress from their starting points. While there is some good teaching, it is not yet strong enough to raise their attainment. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress as a result of the caring support they receive.

Pupils care for one another well. They have respect for each other and for the adults in the school. Pupils are confident that they know exactly what to do in the event of a concern. They are very aware of the importance of a healthy diet and of taking plenty of exercise. This is reflected in the high take-up of healthy school meals and their involvement in physical education.

Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the school community through the school council which meets regularly and listens to pupils' concerns and ideas. They willingly take on roles, such as playground friends, monitoring behaviour and helping everyone to feel safe. Pupils support a range of charities and participate in competitions with other local schools

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and in activities in the local community. They have a satisfactory understanding of life in different faiths and cultures and of Great Britain as a diverse, multicultural society. Average attendance and attainment, allied to pupils' satisfactory skills in team work and developing use of information and communication technology (ICT), mean that pupils are soundly equipped for their future economic well-being.

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	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	3

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?

Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to learn through talking to their friends and assessing one another's work, or practical activities, including research and writing stories. They make the purpose of the lessons clear to pupils and questions are used effectively to ascertain what pupils already know and to check that they have made progress. There is some highly effective use of assessment information, which tells pupils the level of their work and exactly what they need to do to improve. Despite these many good features teaching is satisfactory overall because in too many lessons, the pace of learning drops and teachers offer too much information, limiting opportunities for pupils to get on with tasks independently or to explore together. Work is not always well matched to pupils' individual abilities because information about pupils' skills and abilities is not yet used well enough to ensure that activities are sufficiently challenging for all pupils. Marking is used increasingly effectively across school to tell pupils how well they have achieved in

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individual tasks and to ensure they are clear about how to improve their work, although opportunities are missed for pupils to act upon this advice.

The curriculum contributes to pupils' satisfactory progress by offering interesting activities which are beginning to help them to see the links between subjects and develop and apply important skills. For example, work on measuring nautical miles has been linked to pupils' reading of Kensuke's Kingdom and this successfully developed their imagination, and investigative and mathematical skills. However, there remain too few opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in investigative and challenging activities in subjects across the curriculum. There are well planned enrichment activities, including visits from artists, and visits to a residential centre. These help to develop pupils' skills in art, science and geography. There are some extra-curricular clubs, which promote learning and enjoyment in sporting and arts activities, including football and learning to play the ukulele.

The effective work of all staff and the parent support adviser ensures that pupils' individual needs are recognised and strategies are put in place to help those pupils who have a range of complex social, emotional and behavioural needs, and their families. Rigorous procedures are having a positive impact on raising attendance with a decrease in the number of pupils who are persistently absent. Nevertheless, a few parents and carers fail to ensure their children attend regularly. Effective practices involve parents and carers when their children enter school, move from class to class and transfer to secondary school. Despite these many positive features, care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall as outcomes for pupils remain satisfactory.

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	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The effective governing body has engaged outside assistance to support and challenge the school's leadership team to implement strategies designed to bring about improvements in school effectiveness. As a result, the school has detailed plans for development that include robust timescales, rigorous procedures for monitoring and evaluation and identified responsibilities. These have already led to improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage, in teaching and the use of assessment information to measure the progress pupils are making. All staff increasingly value the opportunities to participate in this planning process, contribute to school improvement and advance their professional development, although this is not yet sufficiently focused on the development of leadership skills. However, the effectiveness of leadership and management overall is satisfactory as some leaders are new to their roles and initiatives have not become sufficiently embedded to have an impact on pupils' attainment. This can be seen especially

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in the monitoring of teaching and learning, which is developing but not yet effective enough to eradicate the identified weaknesses.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are satisfactory as all aspects meet government requirements and procedures are in place to monitor and review their effectiveness and to ensure pupils' safety. The school has satisfactory links with outside agencies to support the pupils' wide-ranging needs, including partnerships to develop pupils' learning and economic awareness. There is a commitment to promoting equal opportunities and to ensuring that discrimination against any group is avoided at all times, although this is satisfactory because, as yet, pupils' progress is not rapid enough.

The school is proud of its inclusive nature and makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. The sense of community in the school is strong and there are developing links with the local community. Pupils know about different faiths and do not tolerate racism, but their understanding of other cultures, of life in different countries and of Great Britain as a diverse, multicultural society is underdeveloped. The school has good relationships with parents and carers, who are provided with frequent information about their children and how to support their children's learning at home.

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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
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

Staff give high priority to developing children's speaking and social skills so that children are enabled to make good progress from their starting points across all areas of learning. As a result, they now enter Year 1 with abilities that are broadly in line with national expectations. Children particularly enjoy construction, games which encourage their physical development and role-play activities, for example on the beach. There is a strong commitment to outdoor learning and children enjoy digging, collecting worms and insects and exploring together in the wildlife garden. Children enjoy lively and effective

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interventions by their teachers, especially the skilful teaching of writing, phonics (letters as sounds) and counting to groups of pupils, although these are not always sufficiently focused on the needs of individual children.

Staff ensure that requirements regarding children's safety are rigorously met. They encourage children to share, to take turns and to behave well so that they develop into confident and caring individuals. Children show independence and a good understanding of how to stay healthy, when they choose activities and enjoy healthy snacks and drinks. The leader of the setting provides a clear model for planning and assessment and shares her vision with the staff team and this supports continued improvements. All adults have a very clear understanding of how children learn so that work is well planned and based on detailed and accurate observations of children's learning. There are clear arrangements for the imminent move to a new building which will offer even more opportunities for children's learning. Positive partnerships with parents and carers and the adjacent Children's Centre enable children to settle quickly into the classes and clear arrangements exist for transition into Year 1.

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

Approximately one-sixth of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. The respondents support the school strongly. Most parents and carers are happy with their child's experience at school. Likewise, a very large majority is strongly supportive of the way the school informs them about their child's progress and helps them support their child at home. Most believe that the school helps children stay healthy. The inspection also found that these are positive features of the school.

Almost all parents and carers believe that teaching is good and that pupils make good progress. While the inspection acknowledges that the school strives hard to achieve these things and that teaching is improving, inspectors judge that opportunities are missed to make lessons more challenging and this slows pupils' progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rossmere 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 53 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 325 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	66	17	32	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	74	13	25	0	0	1	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	28	53	23	43	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	45	28	53	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	51	24	45	0	0	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	51	25	47	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	42	29	55	2	4	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)	23	43	25	47	1	2	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	43	29	55	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	30	29	55	6	11	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	34	30	57	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	28	34	64	1	2	2	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	45	29	55	0	0	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 31 December 2010 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.



29 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rossmere Primary School, Hartlepool, TS25 3JL

On behalf of the inspection team, thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school.

You go to a satisfactory school and your teachers know how to make it better. The team was impressed by your politeness and the care you show for one another, although you told us that sometimes a few of you can become distracted in lessons. Your teachers look after you well and your parents and carers like the school very much. You told us that you look forward to coming to school because you like your teachers and after-school clubs and visits. However, you think your lessons could be more exciting. Your teachers have agreed with us that they should help your school to improve even more by:

- helping you reach higher standards at the end of Year 6, by providing more opportunities for you to apply your skills and to answer probing questions, investigate together and solve problems
- making sure that all your lessons have pace and challenge
- making sure that all the information that teachers have about how well you are doing is used to plan work that is at the right level for all of you
- making sure that you have opportunities to improve your work
- checking that the things they are doing to improve the school are making your lessons better.

You can help by continuing to do your best and attending regularly. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Potter

Lead inspector

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