

Romsey Abbey Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116368
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	366607
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Gehane Gordelier HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	184
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Riley
Headteacher	Louise Rosen
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majestys Inspectors and one additional inspector. They observed 14 lessons and 11 teachers. Meetings were held with: a group of parents and carers; some pupils; senior and middle leaders; the Chair of the Governing Body; the governor responsible for leading on safeguarding; and the schools leadership and learning partner, formerly known as the School Improvement Partner. The inspectors looked carefully at: the schools work, including teachers planning; a sample of pupils workbooks; the schools evaluation of its own performance; data about how well pupils are progressing; and action and improvement plans. They also looked at reports produced by the local authority and a sample of the schools policies and curriculum planning. Systems to ensure the suitability of staff to work with children and pupils health and safety documentation were also scrutinised.

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

The extent of the schools success to date in accelerating the progress made by pupils.

The schools success in raising levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics for all pupils and particularly for the more-able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The extent to which the school has developed the role of middle and senior leaders, as well as that of the governing body, and whether the school now has sufficient capacity to sustain improvement.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A small number are from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has risen and is close to the national average. The school has a significant number of more-able pupils.

The new headteacher took up her post in September 2010, and there have been significant changes to staffing in the last 16 months. The school is currently without a deputy headteacher but has appointed two assistant headteachers from within the school. The governing body has gained three additional governors.

The school provides a breakfast club and a range of after-school activities.

There is nursery provision on the schools site, but this is led and managed by a separate organisation and was not evaluated as part of this inspection.

In November 2009, the school was put into special measures. It has received a succession of monitoring visits since that time.

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

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

This is a satisfactory and improving school. Some aspects of its work, also recognised by parents and carers and pupils, are now good. The main driver for the progress made has come from an inspirational headteacher, who has galvanised the entire school community to work more effectively as a team. Consequently, pupils are now eager to come to school, staff are clear about what is expected of them and parents and carers and pupils feel valued, respected and listened to. The quality of teaching and learning, although still satisfactory, is much improved and includes increasing amounts of practice that are good. This has led to the rate of progress pupils make in their learning accelerating since September 2010. Levels of attainment are rising throughout the school and pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress given their starting points, and are making up the ground that was previously lost.

However, those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in Key Stage 1 have not progressed as well in their reading as their peers. The school is already working effectively to remedy this.

Pupils are polite and respectful to each other and to adults. They feel safe in school and make a good contribution to the school and the wider community. They know how to keep themselves safe and healthy, and appreciate the increased emphasis on sporting activities. The school is rightly proud of its many musical and sporting achievements. The good partnerships with parents, carers, local schools and outside agencies enable the school to provide high quality care, guidance and support for pupils. Some of the work with families and pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable is exceptional.

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and are well prepared for when they enter Year 1. Although much improved, too much teaching in the rest of the school remains satisfactory especially in mathematics. Not all teachers transfer the effective strategies they use in English and science lessons to their teaching of mathematics. Consequently, pupils ability to use the four operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division remain relatively weak. Mathematical activities are, at times, without relevance or purpose. They are occasionally pitched at an inappropriate level given pupils abilities. Teaching does not always make sufficient use of the good assessment information that is now available about every pupil. Consequently, teaching does not always identify the most appropriate next steps in learning in mathematics.

In the last 10 months, the quality of leadership and management in the school has been transformed. However, some leaders and managers are relatively new in post and are not contributing as well as they could to helping the school to improve. Consequently, they are

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not yet sharing enough of the leadership responsibilities to help increase the amount of teaching that is good or better so that standards continue to rise rapidly.

The quality of governance has improved and governors contribute more rigorously to the direction and work of the school. There is more regular self-evaluation, although this is still undertaken mainly by the headteacher. Nevertheless, leaders, managers and members of the governing body now have a more accurate view of the schools strengths and areas in need of improvement. The school is already focusing its efforts on the right priorities, the results of which are evidenced in the improving outcomes for pupils. This, together with the progress made by staff and members of the governing body in remedying weaknesses, demonstrates that the school has satisfactory capacity to sustain improvement.

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?

- Raise levels of attainment in mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2 by:
 - improving the teaching and learning of calculation skills
 - making better use of assessment information so that teachers identify the next steps in learning in their planning
 - raising teachers expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - ensuring learning is purposeful.
- Increase the proportion of teaching that is good or better by:
 - ensuring that teachers meet the needs of all pupils equally well in lessons
 - demonstrating to pupils the skills and strategies they will be expected to use to support and extend their learning
 - providing pupils with the necessary resources to enable them all to work successfully as independent learners
 - ensuring that key vocabulary is displayed in lessons, exemplified by staff and used routinely by pupils
 - embedding the use of assessment strategies in lessons, so that teachers check pupils understanding, learning and progress at appropriate intervals, and resolve misconceptions swiftly.
- Develop the role of middle leaders and those new to leadership roles by:
 - providing more opportunities for them to coach, undertake lesson observations and lead demonstration lessons
 - ensuring they set challenging targets for pupils as well as staff
 - evaluating the impact of their work against outcomes for pupils
 - ensuring that agreed policies and practice are securely embedded across the school.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enjoy their learning so much that at times they struggle to contain their enthusiasm. In a mathematics lesson in Year 2, one pupil was so excited that the work they were doing was linked to their work in science that he exclaimed I love science.

The school has placed a strong emphasis on improving the reading skills of pupils. As a result, levels of attainment in reading are high across the school. Pupils secure knowledge of letters and sounds enable them to read and write with confidence from an early age and to identify key features of texts. A good example was seen in Year 1 with pupils taking turns at reading out their own versions of well-known songs and stories. One pupil shared her version with the class which started with, I know an old woman who swallowed a shed... One of the more-able pupils in this young class was able to identify the use of rhyming couplets in a friends composition.

Pupils make more progress in their reading and writing than in mathematics. This is partly due to the gaps in their learning due to historical weaknesses in teaching. Inspection evidence and school data show that levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 are broadly average but are above average at the end of Key Stage 1.

More pupils are now gaining the higher Level 5 in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 than has previously been the case.

As a result of well-targeted support, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make particularly effective gains in their reading and writing, and progress as well as their peers. The school has been successful in closing the attainment gap between girls and boys and there is no longer a significant difference.

The behaviour of pupils is at least good and is at its best when teaching captures their interest and when learning is very well matched to pupils needs. Pupils feel safe and are secure in the knowledge that staff will support and guide them if needed. They speak confidently about how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. They recognise the importance of exercise and eating a balanced diet. Pupils enjoy the many and varied opportunities of taking responsibilities in and around the school, for example acting as peer mentors and helping with gardening at the local Memorial Park. The school council has made a significant contribution to helping the school to improve the learning and play environment.

Pupils have an improved appreciation of multicultural Britain and other cultures and faiths. They have produced impressive Aboriginal artwork and have enjoyed learning about Islamic birth rights such as whispering in a babys ear to wish a new born a happy and peaceful life. Pupils' spiritual development is enhanced by the contribution made by the local vicar to school activities including assemblies. Pupils learn to be appreciative of the many wonders that surround them and to give thanks. They also attend Eucharistic services at the local church, where everyone, including those who are not practising Christians, are invited to receive a blessing from the vicar.

Levels of attendance are rising and are broadly average. Parents and carers support for the school and commitment to their childrens education have resulted in pupils attending more regularly and arriving on time and ready to learn.

Pupils are suitably prepared for the next phase of their education and future economic well-being.

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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?

Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, particularly in English but less so in mathematics. They have benefited from support and guidance to improve the quality of teaching and learning in science. As a result, they plan work that provides pupils with good opportunities to investigate, solve problems, and work collaboratively as well as independently. Lessons are generally well planned and many lead to memorable learning experiences, for example, in a good lesson in Year 4 when pupils worked together to turn a simple story into a play script and added stage directions. However, planning is not always sufficiently differentiated to ensure there is sufficient challenge for the more-able and good enough strategies to support those of lower ability. Additional adults generally make an effective contribution to pupils learning. Although support staff and volunteers are usually well deployed, teachers are at times over-reliant on the additional support to meet the needs of those who sometimes find learning difficult. Where this is the case, preparation and planning have not been sufficiently well refined to take full account of how pupils needs could be met. Examples that were observed in both Key Stages 1 and 2 included insufficient demonstrations of skills and new learning. This resulted in pupils not being clear about what was expected of them and how to proceed with their work; new and unfamiliar vocabulary was all too often not displayed. This limited pupils ability to talk about their work using the correct terminology.

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The progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is, at times, a result of the additional support as opposed to the planned opportunities for them in everyday lessons. Although still not consistently good for all classes, the quality of marking and teachers assessments is much improved. Teachers do not, however, check how well pupils are progressing routinely enough during the course of lessons. This leads to a slower pace of learning than is necessary.

Good partnerships and after-school clubs enrich a curriculum that is now well planned. The school has been successful in developing a curriculum that links learning and promotes the progression of skills. However, this new curriculum is still in its infancy and has yet to be fully implemented. The school now ensures that there is a suitable curriculum for teaching pupils about information, communication and technology (ICT), but pupils still do not use or apply their ICT skills enough to support or extend their learning. Aspects of the curriculum which stand out as particular strengths over and above the teaching of reading are the high quality provision for music, sport and French.

The quality of care, guidance and support is at least good. Effective partnerships help pupils to receive the additional guidance and support they need. At times, this also includes the school ensuring there is adequate support for families whose circumstances may make pupils vulnerable. The impact of the school's work in this area is evidenced in the significant personal, social, emotional, behavioural and academic progress made by pupils identified as being in need of additional support. The school is very inclusive and ensures that all pupils, including those with long-term medical conditions, are able to participate as fully as possible in all aspects of school life.

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?

The headteacher has introduced clear systems of accountability as well as methods to track and monitor the progress made by pupils. This has enabled staff to work together to target areas of underperformance and raise standards. Teachers are held closely to account for how well pupils are achieving. The progress made by pupils is reviewed at least three times a year and much more frequently for pupils considered to be at risk of underachieving. With good support from the local authority, the leadership and management of the school, together with the governing body, have been successful in driving and embedding the improvements required from the previous inspection. However, aspects of leadership and management are no better than satisfactory due to the roles of new leaders and managers being underdeveloped. Leaders and managers have

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contributed to the school's detailed improvement plan but, as yet, do not evaluate fully the impact of their work in improving outcomes for pupils.

Members of the governing body have a better understanding of the school and have a much higher profile with the whole school community. Parents and carers particularly appreciate the governors newsletter. Members of the governing body have always been supportive of the school, but now hold the school to account for the progress made by pupils. However, they have yet to report to parents and carers on the impact of the schools equality of opportunity policy or on the schools review of its accessibility plan. Furthermore, while risk assessments are undertaken, systems are not robust enough to ensure actions points have been acted upon as quickly as possible.

Parents and carers feel well informed about most aspects of school life and appreciate the efforts made by staff and the headteacher to engage with them and take account of their views. They recently raised a substantial amount of money for the school at the school fte. However, some parents and carers continue to have concerns about communication between home and school relating to homework. The school has been made aware of this and is considering how improvements can be made.

Partnerships with local schools make a significant contribution to many aspects of the schools work. This includes support for learning and raising standards in art, science, mathematics, writing and sports. The headteacher has also appreciated the leadership support provided by a neighbouring school.

There have been no reported incidents of discrimination and the school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily. This is evidenced in the improvements made in the work of targeted groups, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Child protection procedures are secure and relevant policies and procedures relating to safeguarding meet requirements and are reviewed regularly.

The schools commitment to community cohesion is evidenced in pupils appreciation of other cultures and faiths, their spiritual and moral development and in the cohesive community that now exists within and beyond the school. However, the schools plan has yet to be formally evaluated.

The school has successfully cleared its deficit budget and now provides satisfactory value for money.

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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	3
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	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

Outcomes for children in this part of the school are good. Children work well together and can sustain their concentration during independent activities as well as when working with an adult. One child, who chose to do some writing, wrote her own prayer thanking God for the food we eat and for mini-beasts. Children make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy. The good teaching of sounds that correspond to the letters in the alphabet helps children to develop the skills they need to become confident and independent readers from an early age. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the good support they receive. The key worker system contributes to children feeling safe and well cared for. Additional adults have improved their levels of skills and contribute well to childrens learning. The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is largely due to the good leadership and management in this part of the school.

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

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Views of parents and carers

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



30 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Romsey Abbey Church of England Primary School, Romsey SP10 3QP

Thank you for making the inspectors welcome when we visited your school again recently. We were very impressed by your good behaviour and enjoyed seeing you working hard and playing nicely together. We were very interested to hear your views as well as those of your parents and carers. I am pleased to tell you that your school is no longer in special measures. Although your school has now been judged to be satisfactory there are a number of things that are good.

These are some of the things we found to be best about your school.

You have good social skills, a good understanding of right and wrong and are learning about other peoples cultures and faiths.

You feel very safe in school and you make healthy choices.

You help to make your school and local community a better place to work and play.

Staff at the school care for you well and make sure you get support and help when you need it.

The school works well with your parents and carers as well as other people.

The youngest children in the school get a good education.

To help your school to become even better we have asked the staff and members of the governing body to do the following.

Help you to do even better in mathematics.

Make sure that more of the teaching in the school is good or better.

Help those staff with leadership and management responsibilities to do an even better job in helping the school to improve.

You can continue to help your school by letting your teachers know if the work they give you is too easy or too difficult and by coming to school regularly.

I wish you every success and happiness for the future.

Yours sincerely

G Gordelier

Her Majestys Inspector

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