

# The Ropsley Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120536
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	380052
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Terry McDermott

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 controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	93
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bob Sheard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ann Cook
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 February 2007
<b>School address</b>	School Lane Ropsley Grantham NG33 4BT
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons and observed seven teachers. They held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work and looked at its methods for tracking pupils' progress; a range of school documents, including policies; minutes of governing body meetings; monitoring records; an extensive sample of pupils' work; and reports from the School Improvement Partner. Thirty five responses from parents or carers to the Ofsted questionnaire were received and considered, along with questionnaires completed by staff and pupils.

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

- Whether the quality of teaching in English and mathematics is inconsistent, since the school's own data appears to suggest that pupils progress at different rates in these subjects
- Whether pupils repeat work in mixed-aged classes as they move from one year to the next.

## Information about the school

Ropsley is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Three of the four classes have pupils from two year groups. A Reception class comprises the Early Years Foundation Stage. A much lower than average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background is well below average. All pupils speak English fluently. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is average.

A new headteacher is in post since the last inspection. The school holds the International Schools and Healthy Schools awards.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good school. It has outstanding features in pupils' high level of attendance and their outstanding behaviour. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school because, 'It is such a happy place where we have lots of friends.' They are quite sure that bullying does not take place and most can explain clearly why they are safe. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. All groups of pupils make good progress from starting points that can vary widely from year to year due to relatively small cohort sizes. Some make outstanding progress. There is no underachievement by any group of pupils, though pupils progress at a faster rate in English than they do in mathematics. This is clearly demonstrated in the school's reliable and accurate assessment and tracking system.

The quality of teaching is good. Some outstanding learning was seen in English. Excellent relationships between adults and pupils are a clear feature of all lessons. Pupils often share their thoughts to sharpen and clarify understanding for all. However, there are inconsistencies. Occasionally, in a small number of lessons and mostly in mathematics, teachers either talk for too long explaining while pupils sit waiting patiently to begin learning for themselves, or do not plan and set tasks which meet the needs of individual pupils well enough. Pupils' learning is then not as crisp as it might be. The curriculum is good and provides some memorable experiences to widen horizons, raise aspiration and inspire ambition. The use of modern technologies sustains interest well and underpins pupils' independence. Good longer-term planning ensures that topics are not repeated in mixed-aged classes from one year to the next. The school's procedures for care, guidance and support to help any pupil overcome uncertainties and difficulties are good. Adults in the school know pupils and their families very well, and are quick to discern when pupils may be having difficulties. A well organised, swiftly implemented, and closely evaluated system provides good support for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Parents and carers strongly appreciate the work of the school, making comments such as, 'I am very impressed by the school' and 'This school offers an excellent environment for my child to grow and develop.'

A strong team spirit and sense of pride pervades the school. Whole-school self-evaluation is accurate because it is linked to learning outcomes for all pupils. Sometimes, when monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in lessons, leaders do not identify areas for improvement clearly enough. Nonetheless, the school knows what to do maintain or improve pupils' attainment and progress. When coupled with the successful actions taken to bring about improvements since the last inspection,

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this means that the school's capacity to improve further is good.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning by:
  - making better use of assessment information to plan and set work which meets the needs of all pupils accurately, particularly in mathematics
  - spending less time talking about what pupils are going to do and giving them more time to be involved in active learning
  - giving more precise feedback when monitoring teaching on the reasons that cause learning to slow in lessons.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils of all abilities are attentive in lessons. Their excellent behaviour is readily apparent. They sustain concentration well and work hard at any task they are set. They respond with enthusiasm when given opportunities to work independently. They quickly do as they are asked and listen closely to each other's views. For example, in a Year 6 lesson pupils became completely absorbed using computers to compile and layout a newspaper front page. Towards the conclusion of the lesson, they exchanged computers and gave constructively critical peer assessments on each other's work. Throughout, they discussed their reasoning in detail, using appropriate persuasive language, while working largely without direct intervention from adults. Learning was rapid, understanding was complete, and progress was excellent.

Children join the school in Reception class with skills that are usually close to those typical for children of a similar age. By the time they left Year 6 in 2011, pupils' attainment was a little above average from a below average starting point and with a well above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This represents good progress. Achievement is good, even though the pace of learning can sometimes vary a little between classes. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their classmates because of the skilful and dedicated support they receive in helping them learn in small steps. Pupils from a minority ethnic background make equally good progress because they are included fully in the life of the school.

Pupils say they feel safe here, and can explain why this is so. They say there is no bullying, though they know what to do if it happens. They enjoy taking on responsibility, whether as members of the active elected school council or simply tidying up after an exciting lesson. The strong community spirit in the school is exemplified through links with the church, through participation in team sports and not least through pupils' responses to a false fire alarm. The sight of the whole school, in perfect unison, singing 'Head, shoulders, knees and toes' in French, with actions, on a drizzly day, while waiting on the school playground for the fire brigade

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to arrive was simply outstanding to behold. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a good understanding of other faiths and cultures, though their first-hand experiences of life in multicultural Britain are limited by the school’s geographical isolation. By the time they leave school at the end of Year 6, pupils have developed into polite, mature and confident young citizens, well prepared for the next stage of their education.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

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

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are good. Some outstanding learning was observed, as was some satisfactory learning. Classrooms are colourful and well-resourced places of learning. Relationships between adults and pupils are consistently good, and underpin pupils’ very good attitudes to learning. Teachers and other adults are well deployed to ensure that their skills make the biggest possible impact on pupils’ learning. This is done very successfully through setting and withdrawal. Close scrutiny of pupils’ books shows that learning is good over time, though there are some inconsistencies in the level and range of challenges set for pupils. Marking is regular, and some but not all, gives good advice to pupils on how to get better. Teaching assistants are well deployed and play a very important role in supporting all groups of pupils to make good progress over time.

The well-thought-out curriculum is one reason why pupils’ achievement and personal development are good. It links subjects together in themes with a strong focus on building pupils’ basic skills particularly in English, and respect for the individual and

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

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the environment. It does not offer as strong a range of opportunities to extend pupils’ mathematical skills. Visits by the police and the fire brigade bring learning to life, and links with other schools contribute well to broadening pupils’ horizons.

The school knows the pupils and their families well. Strong links between school and home are established early, and are sustained and grow over time. This allows the school to identify and address any personal issues which might arise. Arrangements for supporting those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are good. This ensures that these pupils are able to access all the school has to offer, and make the same good progress as their peers. This work is recognised by parents and carers with comments such as, ‘The teachers give extra time to support a child if they are struggling.’ A weekly newsletter, and very effective and proactive staff, ensures that the school’s links with parents are good. Transition arrangements are well managed and ensure that pupils transfer into school, from one class to another and on to secondary education, with the minimum of fuss or misunderstanding. Extra-curricular after-school clubs offer a range of well attended activities including sport, art, gardening club and cookery.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

The calm, quiet and determined leadership of the headteacher is at the root of the maintenance of the good aspects of the schools work during recent significant staff changes, particularly at leadership level. She has a very clear picture of the school’s strengths and weaknesses, and an uncomplicated focus on improving the rates of progress for all pupils. Staff morale is good, adults are well motivated, deeply committed, and feel part of a good team. School development planning is short, sharp, shared and correctly focused. Some aspects of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning lack precision.

Adults promote equality for all pupils through their accurate tracking of the progress made by different groups of pupils, thus ensuring that no group or individual underachieves. There is no evidence of any sort of discrimination in this inclusive and happy school. Procedures to safeguard pupils are implemented well. They are regularly updated and rigorously applied. In consequence, the safety and safeguarding of pupils pervades the school’s life. This is reflected in the views of pupils and in the unanimous and strongly positive responses from parents and carers.

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Governance is good. There have been significant changes in governing body membership in recent times. Current members are knowledgeable and active, working closely with the school to set its strategic direction. The governing body is scrupulous in ensuring safety measures and procedures to safeguard pupils are in place and are effective. Members give good attention to the welfare of pupils and staff.

Community cohesion is promoted well within and outside the school. The school’s leaders have a thorough understanding of the needs of the community they serve. Good partnerships with local secondary schools and community groups support pupils' learning well, and make transition arrangements straightforward. Links to help pupils understand better the wider world in which they live are well developed through links to Kindergarten No. 19 in Elblag, Poland, with Arkatan Primary School in Tanzania, and with Emasangweni Primary School in Pretoria, South Africa. Direct links to schools of a different character within Britain are not as well developed and are restricted by the school’s isolation.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Pupils join Reception class having had a range of previous learning experiences. Their skills and understanding are often close to those normally found in children of their ages, but can vary markedly from year to year. Close links with parents and carers help children to settle into the school very quickly. Parents often support and encourage their children by coming into school. They value what the school offers and recognise the good progress the school helps their children to make. Good teaching, with a strong emphasis on building communication and interpersonal skills,



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ensures that children make consistently good progress from their starting points in all areas of learning. In 2011, all pupils reached the early learning goals. There is a good range of opportunities for children to choose their activities and develop the skills for independent learning inside and outdoors, though sometimes the necessary challenge for higher attaining children is not presented. Nonetheless, children gain a sense of curiosity and enjoyment in learning which stays with them as they get older. They can sustain their concentration well, sharing their thoughts, ideas, and toys as they work and play in complete harmony. This provides a solid basis for their good personal development in succeeding years

Leadership and management are good. The skills of adults are deployed well to give consistently good outcomes for all children. Accurate assessment of what new understandings children have gained enables adults to plan further interesting learning opportunities. Adults also use this information very well to support those children who might require additional help. Resources are good and particularly well used in imaginative role play. Adults take good care of children to ensure their health and welfare.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

A slightly greater proportion of parents and carers than is usual responded to the Ofsted questionnaire. The very large majority expressed strongly positive views about most aspects of the school’s work. Parents and carers were unanimous that the school keeps their child safe and that their children enjoy school. Small numbers of parents and carers held differing views about one aspect or another of the school. Inspectors looked into these matters, some of which related to individuals, and have included the outcomes in the report.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Ropsley Church of England 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 35 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 93 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	83	6	17	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	86	5	14	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	20	57	14	40	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	69	10	29	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	77	5	14	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	22	63	10	29	2	6	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	71	6	17	3	9	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)	20	57	12	34	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	24	69	9	26	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	63	12	34	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	49	16	46	2	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	66	11	31	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	27	77	7	20	1	3	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



10 November 2011

Dear Children

**Inspection of The Ropsley Church of England Primary School, Grantham, NG33 4BT**

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful to us when we inspected your school recently. We were really impressed with your excellent attendance and with your outstanding behaviour, particularly when the fire alarm went off. We found you to be polite, well-mannered and well-spoken young people.

We found that Ropsley is a good school. It is helping you to make good progress. All adults in the school, including your headteacher and the members of the governors body, work hard to keep you safe and happy.

We found that the school could do some things a bit better, which would help you learn even more than you do now. We have asked the teachers to do the following:

- make sure that lessons are planned more carefully so that each one of you is set work which is neither too easy nor too hard, particularly in mathematics
- spend less time explaining what you are going to be learning about and get you started sooner on doing more actual learning.

We have also asked those adults who lead the school to check more closely and identify more clearly what causes your learning not to be as fast in mathematics as it is in English.

Please continue to come to school as often as you do, and to be the polite, friendly and helpful young people you already are.

Best wishes to you all for the future.

Yours sincerely

Terry McDermott  
Lead inspector

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