

The Roebuck School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119237
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	379760
Inspection dates	9–10 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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	296
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Brownjohn
Headteacher	Jackie Burns
Date of previous school inspection	24 June 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors who observed 17 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 13 teachers. The inspectors held discussions with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation, particularly relating to safeguarding, records of meetings of the governing body, assessment information and curriculum planning. Work in pupils' books and displays around the school were examined. Questionnaires from staff, pupils and from 90 parents and carers were scrutinised

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

- How effectively the school is working to raise attainment in English and mathematics.
- How successfully leaders are working to narrow the identified gaps in the achievement of different groups.
- Whether there is consistency of teaching throughout the school.
- The extent to which all leaders are involved in promoting school improvement.

Information about the school

The Roebuck School is larger than the average primary school. 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 broadly average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The school experienced significant disruption to staffing, including to the senior leadership, during 2009 and 2010, due to illness and extended leave. The school holds a number of awards including the Activemark and has Healthy School status. The on-site before- and after-school clubs are privately managed. They will be inspected and reported upon separately.

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

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. The period of staffing disruption slowed the pace at which the school was improving. During this time, the headteacher provided firm leadership to minimise interruption to pupils' learning. Since then, she has played a pivotal role in working closely with the local authority to successfully accelerate the pace at which the school is moving forward. As a result, the proportion of good teaching has improved, increasing numbers of pupils are making better than expected progress and reading standards have risen. The role of senior leaders has been developed to include identifying areas for development and planning for improvement. As a result, self-evaluation is accurate and gives a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Nevertheless, they are not fully involved in taking action to bring about improvement or in evaluating its impact. Out of necessity this has been the responsibility of the headteacher and it has not been delegated evenly among other leaders. The governing body is supportive of the school but not fully engaged in monitoring and evaluating its performance. The improvements made over the last 12 months show that the capacity to take the school forward is satisfactory.

Children flourish in the Nursery class and make good progress. Throughout the rest of the school, pupils make satisfactory progress and, by the end of Year 6, attain broadly average standards in English and mathematics. Writing is a weaker aspect of their performance in English. This stems from pupils' lack of accuracy in using correct grammar, punctuation and spelling in their sentences. In mathematics, pupils' mental-recall skills are not well developed and pupils are not adept at solving number problems in different contexts. Leaders have worked effectively to narrow the identified gaps between the learning of different groups, including those pupils eligible for free school meals. Consequently, the overall progress of different groups is satisfactory. Nevertheless, there is more to do to ensure all pupils are consistently challenged to achieve to their full capability, especially the more-able.

The curriculum is extended by a range of enrichment activities that enliven learning. Pupils are adopting healthy lifestyles well and make a good contribution to the life of the school and the wider community. They enjoy coming to school as shown by their quickly improving attendance. Teaching has a variety of strengths but there are times when the activities provided for different groups lack sufficient challenge. This is particularly the case for more-able pupils. Staff successfully ensure pupils' safety and well-being while in school, which is much appreciated by parents and carers.

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 attainment in writing and mathematics to above the national average by:
 - improving pupils' ability to write sentences that are structured correctly
 - improving pupils' mathematical problem-solving and quick mental-recall skills
 - making sure different groups are always challenged effectively, especially the more-able.

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - the headteacher delegating to leaders relevant responsibility for taking action to promote improvement and in evaluating its impact on learning
 - fully involving the governing body in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance.

- Continue the rigorous focus on improving attendance in order to raise it to at least the national average.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils achieve satisfactorily from their skill level on entering school, which is generally below that typical for their age. They are interested in their work and maintain concentration for lengthy periods. Pupils work steadily and show interest in the views of others. They speak confidently when contributing to discussions and listen attentively. This was evident in an English lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6 in which they were developing their understanding of how to frame open-ended questions. They applied these skills successfully the following day when interviewing a soldier, who had recently returned from a tour of duty in Afghanistan, about his experiences.

Pupils' reading skills have improved and are secure. They have improved their ability to write stories and accounts that capture the interest of the reader. Nevertheless, they do not consistently use accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling to structure their sentences. The school has successfully developed pupils' basic calculation skills and these are now as expected for their age. They lack proficiency in using these skills to solve number problems. Their quick mental-recall skills are not well developed. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same progress as other pupils because of the extra support they receive. There is no significant difference between the achievement and learning of different groups.

Pupils willingly take on a variety of responsibilities in school, such as school councillor, monitor or play leader. They also add to the life of the wider community by raising funds for charity, taking part in local events and planting bulbs to enhance the local park. Pupils generally behave well but there is a minority of pupils who have

behavioural difficulties and are unable to act responsibly at times. Staff respond to, and manage, this behaviour effectively. Pupils know the importance of eating a healthy diet and in taking regular exercise. They say they usually feel safe at school and know what risks might threaten their own and others' safety. They say that any misbehaviour or bullying are dealt with promptly by staff. They show a satisfactory understanding of the values and beliefs of cultures different to their own. Pupils' broadly average attainment and rapidly improving attendance mean they are prepared in a satisfactory way for their future lives.

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	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	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good classroom management skills throughout the school, which is important as some pupils show challenging behaviour at times. They use questioning successfully to find out what pupils know and can do, and to develop their speaking and listening skills. Teaching ensures that pupils are usually engaged in their work and little time is wasted. As one pupil commented, 'We enjoy lessons because teachers make them interesting'. Planning generally meets the needs of different groups of pupils. At times, activities lack sufficient challenge, particularly for more-able pupils, and this slows progress. Teachers do not place sufficient emphasis on pupils structuring their sentences accurately in English and in other subjects. Teaching assistants are deployed appropriately to support all pupils and especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The curriculum is enlivened by out-of-school clubs and educational visits such as to Ribchester, as part of historical studies into Roman Britain. Themed activities, including Science Day and Art and Drama Week, add further interest and diversity to the curriculum. There are limited opportunities for pupils to refine and extend their mathematics skills by taking part in practical problem-solving activities. Partnerships with local schools support pupils' learning and development, particularly in sport, drama and science. The Activemark award and Healthy School accreditation reflects the commitment to encouraging pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles.

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

The school provides a safe learning environment. Staff know the steps to take if they have any concerns about the well-being of a pupil. The support for pupils who are potentially vulnerable due to their circumstances plays a useful role in promoting their learning and development. This has recently been enhanced by the creation of a nurture group in the Rainbow Room to provide additional support for pupils with emotional and social development difficulties. Links with a variety of outside agencies ensure that further support for individual pupils is readily available. Leaders are working successfully to improve pupils’ attendance. This is seen in the improved liaison with the educational welfare officer and more rigorous tracking of individual pupil’s attendance.

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?

Leaders work well to motivate staff and there is a common vision for taking the school forward. The role of senior leaders, however, in taking action to promote improvement and evaluating its impact is underdeveloped. The governing body is supportive of the school but not all members are fully involved in monitoring and evaluating its performance. The arrangements and policies for safeguarding meet requirements and are systematically reviewed. Staff have been appropriately trained and have the necessary expertise to make sure pupils are safe in school.

The promotion of equal opportunity and tackling of discrimination are satisfactory. No form of discrimination is tolerated. The school regularly checks the performance of different groups, which has enabled leaders to rightly identify the need to ensure effective challenge at all times, particularly for more-able pupils. Close partnership with the local authority over the last 12 months has led to improvement in provision and outcomes and has contributed positively to pupils’ satisfactory achievement and well-being.

Leaders are actively promoting community cohesion within the school and reaching out to other communities. Evaluation of the school’s work in promoting community cohesion is patchy but provides some useful information. The school has generally positive relationships with parents and carers and keeps them regularly informed of the progress and achievement of their children.

These are the grades for the 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	3
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

Children make good progress in the Nursery because adults provide them with activities that effectively match their individual abilities and maintain their engagement. Well-established routines give the children the confidence to explore ideas for themselves and take part in new learning experiences. This was evident in a session in which they were developing their understanding of why they might feel different emotions, such as happiness and sadness. Progress in the Reception classes is satisfactory. Everyday routines are not as well developed and there are times when the level of challenge for children is insufficient, especially for the more-able. Adults miss relevant opportunities to intervene in children’s independent activities to effectively take their learning forward.

Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, children enjoy their activities and play happily together, willingly sharing resources and taking turns fairly. The curriculum is enhanced by the opportunity to take part in visits, such as to local shops and a centre in Lancaster that promotes outdoor activities. Staff make the best use of the limited outdoor area to promote children’s development across the areas for learning. Welfare requirements are fully met and due care and attention are paid to the health, safety and well-being of all children. The leader is working diligently to improve provision in Reception by sharing with staff the good practice evident in the nursery. Parents and carers say that staff are approachable and keep them informed of their children’s progress and how they can support learning at home.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who returned questionnaires were positive about the school’s work and the efforts of all staff. Two comments were typical, ‘I can see that ongoing progress is being made’ and, ‘my child is happy at the school.’ A small minority did not agree that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. This aspect was looked at closely during the inspection; no such behaviour was

observed during the inspection and pupils say it is dealt with promptly when it occurs. A few parents and carers thought that their children were not making enough progress. The inspectors judged progress to be satisfactory but have asked the school to improve it. The inspection team saw many examples in school that reflect parents' and carers' positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Roebuck 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 90 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 296 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	51	40	44	2	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	41	46	45	50	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	33	37	47	52	8	9	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	36	46	51	10	11	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	33	37	47	52	5	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	33	47	52	8	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	33	50	56	3	3	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)	31	34	44	49	6	7	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	36	49	54	6	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	26	47	52	12	13	4	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	26	52	58	5	6	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	25	28	50	56	7	8	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	41	43	48	7	8	1	1

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).

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.



11 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Roebuck School, Preston PR2 2BN

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave the team when we inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the many interesting things you do.

The inspectors judge that yours is a satisfactory school and that:

- you make satisfactory progress and attain broadly average standards in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6
- staff look after you well and make sure you are safe in school
- you make a good contribution to the life of the school and the local community
- the school helps you to be healthy, as you indicated in your questionnaires
- you enjoy school, as shown by your improving attendance
- staff and governors are working hard to help you do better.

What we have asked your school to do now is to:

- improve your ability to construct sentences accurately, your quick mental-recall skills and ability to solve real-life number problems
- make sure that teachers always give you work that makes you think hard
- fully involve all leaders and governors in helping the school to improve
- ensure that your attendance continues to improve.

All of you are a credit to your school and can help it improve further by continuing to try your best in your activities.

Yours sincerely

Melvyn Hemmings
Lead inspector

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