

Rossmore School

Red Lion Lane, Little Sutton, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, CH66 1HF

Inspection dates

28 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress and leave school with standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils supported with extra funding, known as the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good and sometimes outstanding progress. This is because teachers spot quickly when they need extra help and provide this most effectively.
- Teaching is typically good. Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach. Lessons are interesting and include activities like drama and writing about recent visits.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress because of the focus on enjoyment and practical activities.
- Pupils say they feel safe and confidently approach staff with any worries. Their behaviour is typically good and most are eager to learn. Attendance is above average.
- The leadership team works closely together and has a clear view of what is needed to make the school outstanding. Improved systems to check on pupils' progress provide a precise overview of how well pupils are doing.
- Effective leadership has ensured standards and the quality of teaching have improved since the previous inspection. The school is well placed to continue to get better.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The more-able pupils do not always have enough opportunities to work independently at hard enough work. Occasionally, pupils have to listen for too long and start to lose interest in the lesson.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils' writing is not always neat and includes errors in punctuation.
- The governing body needs to check more closely that extra funding to support pupils under the pupil premium initiative is being allocated specifically to the intended pupils and is having a positive impact on their education.
- Pupils are not well informed about what life is like in a multicultural society.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. They visited six lessons.
- Meetings were held with staff, a group of pupils, members of the governing body and a phone call discussion was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Pupils from different classes read to the inspectors.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' books with a focus on writing in Years 2 and 6.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's plan for future improvements, information about pupils' progress and safeguarding.
- The views of nine parents were analysed through the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) website. Other parents shared their opinions about the school at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors analysed 11 returns by staff to the inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jennifer Platt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lenford White

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding provided for children in local authority care, those from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve progress and the quality of teaching to outstanding by:
 - ensuring that teachers consistently meet the needs of pupils more precisely throughout lessons, especially those of the more able
 - checking work is always hard enough and pupils have enough opportunities to work independently
 - keeping the pace of lessons brisk and adjusting lessons when pupils get restless
 - having higher expectations of handwriting and punctuation in Key Stage 1.
- Improve the impact of the governing body by checking that pupil premium funding is spent on the needs of the pupils for whom it is intended and that it has a positive effect on their achievement.
- Extend opportunities for pupils to learn about other faiths and cultures.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with knowledge and skills that are generally below those typical for their age although this varies because of the small numbers involved. They make good progress especially in their reading and writing skills and in their ability to work with others. The children are well prepared for learning as they move to Year 1.
- Success in teaching pupils their letters and sounds is evident in the above average results of the national assessment in Year 1.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 make good progress. Attainment at the end of Year 2 has generally been above average over the last three years. Attainment is higher in reading and mathematics. Pupils make good use of their skills to tackle new words when reading and apply their number skills to solve simple problems. Although pupils' attainment in writing is above average, it is not quite as high as the other subjects because pupils do not always present their work well ensuring it is neat and accurate.
- At the end of Year 6, attainment has been more variable although it has now risen to above average. The results of national reading tests in 2012 were disappointing for the school as fewer pupils than predicted exceeded the level expected for their age. Swift action, including an improved library and more attention to reading in small groups, resolved this weakness. Currently, attainment is above average with a half of the pupils on track to gain the higher level and pupils showing more enthusiasm for reading.
- Writing improves in Key Stage 2 and most pupils write neatly with accurate use of grammar and punctuation. The school is continuing its focus on raising pupils' confidence to solve problems in mathematics. Attainment in this subject is above average.
- Although more-able pupils make good progress overall, there are occasions in lessons when they could be given more opportunities to work independently at even harder work to make sure their progress is consistently good.
- The school provides good support for those pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium. Staff focus on their social as well as academic needs, for example in bringing pupils to school in the mini-bus, so that they take full advantage of what the school offers. As a result, they make good progress.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress and some make outstanding progress. Every class has a teaching assistant who is trained and involved in planning with teachers. As a result, they play a key role in supporting pupils in class as well as leading small groups.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good with only a few inconsistencies between classes. All lessons are organised efficiently and teachers explain very clearly what pupils are to learn. Teachers have good subject knowledge and check that skills learnt in one lesson are developed in the next so that pupils make good progress.
- Most lessons are enjoyable and often include a variety of activities that make learning more interesting. This is certainly the case in the Early Years Foundation Stage where teachers focus on learning through practical experiences. The children enjoyed acting out the role of Goldilocks, discovering which bed was the biggest and writing a letter to the bears apologising for the mess made by Goldilocks. This combination of activities under one theme sustained the children's pleasure in learning.
- In Years 1 to 6, teachers also add interest to lessons by effective use of technology. They use a visualiser that enables teachers to display pupils' work on screen to great effect. It allows pupils

to share good quality work as well as spot how it can be improved.

- The practice of involving pupils in checking their work is apparent in most lessons. As a result, pupils in Year 6 declare confidently when they have a problem and the teacher encourages others to offer advice before stepping in to check all are ready to move on. This enables pupils to become independent learners. However, this is not the case in some lessons when teachers provide too much guidance rather than allowing pupils to come up with their own ideas.
- Most lessons go at a brisk pace but at times teachers talk for too long or include just that extra bit of advice which leads to pupils, especially the more-able, losing interest. The pace of lessons picks up as pupils move to their tasks that are usually matched more closely to their needs. However, this is not always the case and more-able pupils say that work is sometimes too easy.
- Support staff play a crucial part in lessons and are deployed most effectively to where they are needed. This enables pupils of all ability to be fully involved in lessons and reflects the school's good promotion of equality of opportunity.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour effectively and only occasionally do pupils' actions disturb others. Overall, the good teaching prepares pupils both socially and academically for the next stage of their education.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy school and make friends quickly. They understand it is important to share and most behave well.
- In Key Stages 1 and 2, behaviour is typically good. Pupils are eager to be involved and there is always a positive response to questions. Minor disturbances occur when pupils lose interest but support staff are quick to move in and refocus their attention.
- A discussion with pupils revealed good understanding of all types of bullying. They do not see bullying as a major problem although they identified some name-calling which they felt was unkind. Pupils in this group did not fully appreciate that some comments were of a racist nature and they were not well informed about life in a multicultural society.
- Pupils are polite and friendly. They are courteous to visitors and proud of their school. Great pleasure is drawn from collaboration and partner discussions. Pupils enjoy helping each other.
- Pupils feel safe. They are aware of the dangers of using the internet and explain how to block any dangers and avoid sharing information. They know they can approach staff with any worries and they will sort them out.
- Parents are positive about behaviour and the support their children receive.

The leadership and management is good

- The headteacher has changed the way that the school is led since the last inspection. All staff are now members of a leadership team rather than having individual leaders of subjects. For a small school this is effective in ensuring that no member of staff has too many responsibilities and that all feel involved. As a result, leadership is very much a team approach and all are clear about how well the school is doing as well as what needs to be improved.
- The checking on pupils' progress has improved and more attention is given to those who may start to underachieve. As a result, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs often make more progress than other pupils. There are regular meetings between teachers and the headteacher to discuss pupils' progress, and staff are now more responsible for the achievement of pupils in their class.
- The headteacher checks on the quality of teaching. Other members of staff check on what is happening in lessons by examining pupils' work and observing specific aspects, such as the guided reading sessions. Staff are keen to share their experiences and adjust their teaching in

the light of feedback they receive. As a result, teaching is consistently good with only minor variations between classes.

- Training for all staff is linked to the school's priorities. For example, the focus on including pupils in assessing their own learning was seen to be very effective in lessons during the inspection. The evaluation of teachers' performance and the award of salary increases are closely linked to the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- The curriculum includes memorable experiences and pupils enjoy special topic weeks. Displays show this produces high quality work. It is a great achievement for a small school to have a band and a choir. Visits are the highlight for many, with Year 2 going on residential and Year 6 planning their future stay in London. The curriculum promotes pupils' personal development effectively except for limited opportunity to learn about other cultures.
- Links with the local authority are effective. Support is made available as it is needed. For example, advice was offered to raise pupils' skills in problem solving.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have resolved the issues identified in the previous inspection and now ensure targets set are very challenging. They are linked to a specific class and a management team and so have an accurate picture of performance and the quality of teaching. Members of the governing body review data about pupils' progress and are clear about actions taken to raise attainment. They seek support from the local authority when setting performance targets for the headteacher and are sure that targets for other members of staff are sufficiently ambitious. Governors take advantage of training especially on health and safety. They ensure safeguarding meets requirements. They keep a close eye on overall spending and ask questions to ensure money is spent wisely. However, governors need to check more closely that the extra resources to support pupils under the pupil premium initiative are having a positive outcome. Nevertheless, the governors are effective in their role and their impact can be seen in the improvements in the school.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	111112
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	401170

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	124
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anthony Williams
Headteacher	Susan Davis-McCoy
Date of previous school inspection	26 May 2010
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