

# Rothwell Victoria Infant School

School Lane, Rothwell, Kettering, NN14 6HZ

**Inspection dates** 16–17 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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 attainment overall is above average. They do particularly well in writing and mathematics where attainment is rising year by year.
- Children thrive in the Nursery and Reception classes, and enjoy the exciting opportunities to work and play. Parents and carers say how quickly they settle and look forward to school.
- Pupils behave well and say how safe they feel at school.
- Parents and carers appreciate the way the teachers keep them informed about their children's progress and the way they are always there to hear any concerns.
- Good teaching ensures that pupils achieve well in all classes. Teachers are very skilled at using new technology in their lessons and pupils say how this makes learning fun.
- The executive headteacher leads well and has helped create a good team of staff who work closely together to improve the school. The leaders employ good systems to check on pupils' achievement and teachers' performance, and set them challenging targets for the future.
- The school makes effective use of the Pupil Premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils, and this helps to ensure they make good progress.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement in reading is not as good as in writing and mathematics. Not all staff have the skills to show pupils clearly how to build sounds into words when reading.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage classrooms do not always provide exciting places for children to sit and read independently and for pleasure.
- Leaders do not check on the teaching of reading sufficiently.
- A small minority of pupils have too many absences, and this affects their progress.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 26 lessons, of which one was a joint observation with the executive headteacher.
- The inspectors also made a number of brief visits to other lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 22 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) at the time of the inspection. They observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents, including the school’s own data on pupils’ progress, planning and monitoring files, behaviour records, and documents relating to attendance and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Terry Elston, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Patricia Wright

Additional Inspector

Marian Driver

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The proportion of the pupils who are eligible for the Pupil Premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those supported at school action and school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, are all average.
- The school has recently achieved The Eco Schools and Healthy Schools awards.
- The school is part of a federation with the nearby junior school. The executive headteacher has led both schools since September 2011. The schools share a governing body.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in Nursery and Reception classes.
- All pupils are educated on site. The school does not use alternative provision to support any of its pupils.

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

- Ensure that pupils make faster progress in reading by ensuring leaders:
  - provide training to ensure that all staff have the skills to teach pupils how to build sounds into words
  - give children in the Early Years Foundation Stage somewhere stimulating to pick up a book and read
  - check carefully on pupils' progress to identify those falling behind in their reading
  - evaluate the teaching of reading with greater rigour.
- Improve attendance by working directly with those parents and carers who keep their children off school without good reason.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress from starting points that are below those typical of their ages. Pupils, as well as all the parents and carers who completed the on-line questionnaire, believe they do well at school and are rightly proud of their good achievements.
- The staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage prepare children well for starting school and they skip happily into the classrooms. Children make a good start at recognising the sounds letters make in the regular phonics sessions. However, while they enjoy books, the classrooms lack an exciting place for them to sit and read independently and their progress, consequently, does not always accelerate as much as it should.
- In both the Nursery and Reception, children develop a good feel for mathematics and enjoy activities such as measuring parts of Pinocchio's body and working out how to build a bridge to keep them safe from the Troll. Children's creative skills are enhanced by stimulating tasks such as creating giant paintings in the style of Jason Pollock.
- In the 2012 assessments for Year 2 pupils, results were above average in reading, writing and mathematics. These were the highest figures for some years and confirm the upward trend in pupils' attainment.
- Pupils enjoy books and by Year 2 some read with great confidence. A few, particularly younger ones, struggle with unfamiliar words, and their scores in the 2012 Year 1 assessments were below average.
- Pupils write well and use descriptive words very effectively to capture the reader's interest. In mathematics, pupils calculate quickly in their heads and make good use of 'number lines' to work out larger numbers. Their mathematical skills are enhanced by many good opportunities to solve problems.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress, and their parents and carers speak highly of the support that teachers and teaching assistants provide.
- Pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium achieve well. The school carefully checks their progress against that of other pupils and uses the designated funds effectively to support these pupils, including providing individual teaching and extra support in classes.
- The few pupils who speak English as an additional language benefit from good support and make good progress, particularly in their speaking and listening skills.

### The quality of teaching is good

- In typical lessons, teachers ensure that pupils know precisely what they will be learning and remind them about what they need to do to succeed during the lesson. This helps pupils check on their learning and see what they need to do next.
- Lessons in the use of phonics, where pupils learn how to build sounds into words, are not always taught with the consistency needed to ensure that pupils make the best possible progress. While some staff are very precise in their use of letter sounds, others are less so and this confuses

pupils.

- In mathematics, teachers focus sharply on improving pupils' basic number skills with quick-fire questioning and exciting, timed tasks on computers. Pupils respond very well to this approach and it gives them the confidence to tackle all aspects of the subject.
- Teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to write stories and factual accounts. Their expectations of what pupils can achieve are high and pupils rise to the challenge. In some of their best work, pupils wrote vividly about the journey of a dinosaur's egg took as it became a fossil discovered in modern times.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour are high. They make the rules clear and lessons move at a fast pace.
- Teachers check on pupils' progress rigorously and provide helpful comments in their marking that help them do better next time. Pupils enjoy some good opportunities to assess their own work using the 'thumbs up, down and sideways' technique, and this helps both them and the teachers to assess their understanding.
- Teachers and teaching assistants plan well to meet the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. In class and in small groups, adults provide work that is often demanding yet always achievable. This ensures that all pupils, including those who are disabled or with special educational needs or in receipt of the pupil premium, gain the confidence to work independently.
- There is some outstanding teaching that inspires pupils and ensures that they make excellent progress. In these lessons, pupils are captivated by the way the teacher explains things and can hardly wait to move on to challenging tasks that make the best of their abilities.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils' good behaviour is an important reason for their academic and personal successes. They appreciate the way teachers treat them with respect and expect that they will do the same. They talk of teachers being 'firm but fair' and say how this helps them learn.
  - Pupils listen carefully in lessons and persevere well with their work. They show a high level of courtesy with adults and one another and this helps to maintain very good relationships throughout the school.
  - Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage learn the rules for good behaviour quickly and choose activities sensibly. They persevere well with their tasks and work well with each other. Children develop their independence well by registering themselves on arrival, putting on their own coats and washing after messy activities.
  - Pupils arrive punctually and the vast majority attend regularly. However, a few have persistent absences.
  - Pupils show a very good awareness of all forms of bullying and are adamant that it very rarely happens. They know that adults handle any instances of aggressive behaviour well, and appreciate the regular lessons that show them how unkind actions affect others. Records show
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that instances of poor behaviour are decreasing year by year and there have been no racist incidents.

- Pupils develop a good awareness of hazardous situations and speak knowledgeably about the potential dangers of using the internet. All parents and carers who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said their children feel safe at school.
- Pupils take responsibility well, and enjoy representing the views of others as members of the school council. Members of the eco-committee lead the way in encouraging others to conserve energy and do everything to recycle materials.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The executive headteacher, well supported by senior staff, leads well and has clear and high expectations of all members of the school community. He, together with the governing body, makes very good use of the strengths of the two federation schools to share expertise and provide cost-effective training to meet the school's ambitious goals.
- The rigorous and accurate evaluation of the school's performance by the headteacher and senior leaders provides a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This has led to the marked improvement in attainment over recent years, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Leaders show a good commitment to providing equal opportunities for all pupils. Their careful analysis of the achievements of different groups, such as boys and girls, pupils who speak English as an additional language and those known to be eligible for free school meals, enables them to provide support to any pupils who are underachieving and ensure they catch up.
- Generally, leaders evaluate the quality of teaching and learning well and give teachers clear guidance on how to improve. These targets form an important part of the annual meetings on teachers' performance and decisions about their pay. However, the evaluation of phonics teaching lacks the rigour needed to ensure consistently good practice by teachers and teaching assistants.
- The school has a good partnership with parents and carers. Their comments to inspectors and responses to the on-line questionnaires were very positive. The vast majority acknowledge the importance of regular attendance, but a few persist in keeping children off school without good reason.
- The activities provided for pupils are interesting, and pupils enjoy the broad themes such as 'Up and Away' that give them good opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects. Pupils benefit from a wide range of clubs at lunchtime and after school that enhance their sporting and creative talents.
- The school gives pupils many opportunities to reflect on issues such as the world of nature and the richness of different cultures. Lessons are often inspiring, as was seen in a science lesson when pupils gasped in awe as the teacher showed how steam could be turned back into water.
- The school has made good use of the expertise from the local authority in the past to raise the quality of teaching and learning. This support is less evident now that the school has made such good improvements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has a good understanding of the school’s effectiveness gained through regular visits, meetings with senior leaders and observations of lessons. Governors have the skills and confidence to hold the leaders to account. They know how the school compares with others and take a full part in improving the school. They ensure safeguarding requirements are met and are closely involved in the evaluation of teachers’ performance and its impact on their pay. Training for the governing body is comprehensive and matched well to the school’s needs. Governors have a good awareness of the school’s budget. For example, they know how the funding for disadvantaged pupils is spent, why it is allocated in this way and the impact it has on pupils’ academic and personal development.
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## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	121856
<b>Local authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	406057
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	350
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Steve Hill
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lee Hurling (Executive)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 February 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01536 710363
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