

Rossmere Primary School

Catcote Road, Hartlepool, County Durham, TS25 3JL

Inspection dates 14–15 May 2013

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, including those with special educational needs, achieve well from their individual starting points.
- They make good progress overall in literacy and mathematics.
- Pupils write well. Their attainment in writing is above average.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Year 6 because teaching is outstanding in these classes.
- Pupils are taught well, especially in literacy. Pupils say, 'The work is just about right, we have challenges and fun activities.'
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are happy, polite and chatty. They are clearly very proud of their school and keen to do well.
- Pupils feel safe. They say that adults in school look after them well and there is always someone to help them if they need it.
- The school is well led and managed. Teachers have a share in leadership and management and so the school is improving at a good rate.
- The leadership of teaching is a strength. As a result, teaching is now good and pupils' achievement improves each year.
- Governors give good support to the school and help it to improve further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding. Some teachers do not ask questions that make pupils think. Some marking does not tell pupils what they need to do to improve their work.
- Attainment in mathematics of more-able pupils in Key Stage 1 is not as high as it should be.
- School development planning is over-complicated and there are too many priorities.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 25 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 16 teachers.
- The inspectors held meetings with staff, the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body and one other governor, three groups of pupils and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection took into account the 15 responses in the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the parental views in a recent school questionnaire for parents.

Inspection team

Lesley Clark, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Michele Crichton	Additional Inspector
Barbara Hudson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- A few pupils have dual registration with a local special school to support their learning and behavioural difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is high. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The provision for two-year-olds is inspected separately. The report can be found on the Ofsted website.
- The school has had three headteachers and two periods of acting headship within the last four years. The headteacher joined the school at the start of January 2012. The school has had several changes of staff since then.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to improve teaching so that it is outstanding, the school should:
 - give excellent practitioners the opportunity to work alongside colleagues so they can share very effective ways of teaching
 - ensure that teachers ask questions that make pupils think for themselves and give them the chance to ask questions and find things out for themselves
 - make sure that marking points out to pupils what they need to do to improve their work and teachers give pupils time to act on these suggestions so that they learn from their mistakes.
- Increase the level of challenge in mathematics in Key Stage 1 by:
 - making sure that teachers expect the most from more-able pupils
 - giving pupils of different abilities suitably different and challenging tasks.
- Simplify the school development plan so that it focuses on the main priorities.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well from their individual starting points. They make outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Year 6. Progress in mathematics is not as fast in Years 1 and 2 as in Years 3 to 6. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average in writing and broadly average in reading and mathematics.
- Nursery and Reception class children make rapid progress from starting points that are below those typically expected for their age. They quickly learn how letters and sounds link together to form words (phonics) because exciting activities involving treasure chests, for example, help them to remember. They turn into keen writers because so many activities, both indoors and outside, have enticing writing materials such as sticky notes, envelopes and clipboards. They make equally rapid gains in number and physical skills.
- Pupils make good progress in reading from Years 1 to 6. Pupils read fluently and expressively. They understand what they read and talk animatedly about favourite books. More-able older pupils competently skim read or scan texts for information. In Year 6, those who struggle with reading tasks ask reading buddies for advice, which helps to develop their confidence.
- Pupils write well. Their handwriting is neat and legible. They write fluently, using several clauses to make their sentences interesting. Pupils pounce on interesting words and phrases, such as 'drowsily' or 'not to mention' to enliven their writing. By Year 6, they paragraph and punctuate their work effectively, using commas and dashes competently.
- Attainment in mathematics is below average in Key Stage 1. Few are above the level expected of this age group because the work does not challenge more-able pupils and is comfortably within the range of average-attaining pupils. Progress accelerates in Key Stage 2, especially in Year 6. Attainment is rising. Currently, in Year 6 one third of pupils are ahead of the average for this age group and a small number are nearly three years ahead.
- Pupils who are supported through school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs make good progress because they are given a great deal of individual help. Pupils supported through school action make equally good progress because their needs are swiftly identified so they get help speedily. Pupils who have dual registration make good progress because staff work together to ensure their needs are met. Parents are closely involved so they work in partnership with school staff.
- Pupils supported through the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make good progress. Their attainment mirrors that of other pupils in the school who are not known to be eligible for free school meals. Compared to similar groups nationally, pupils in this school do well, especially in English. The school has ensured this by tracking pupils' progress carefully and making sure that individual pupils have extra help when they need it. The school promotes equality of opportunity well and tackles discrimination effectively.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers give clear instructions. Pupils know what they are learning and how to tell if they have been successful. This leads to a good pace of purposeful learning, with pupils often working together to discuss different points of view. Pupils agree that 'lessons are practical and exciting'.
- Pupils say that their teachers 'give you ideas and sometimes write their own versions so you can work out how to make it better.' They like the way 'the topic links in with your reading and writing', explaining, 'Learning about mountains and rivers helped us to write extreme adventures!'
- Teachers plan their lessons carefully and base them on what pupils need to learn next in order to ensure they build on what they know and understand. Sometimes, the level of challenge is not always great enough in mathematics in Key Stage 1, and so pupils' progress slows because they do not move on to new or harder work fast enough. However, a strength is the emphasis

on active learning which enthuses Key Stage 1 pupils. This builds on the highly effective teaching methods used in the Early Years Foundation Stage where purposeful questioning and thought-provoking activities help children to learn through discovery and high-quality investigations.

- Outstanding teaching is characterised by teachers' excellent subject knowledge which enables them to challenge more-able pupils and set them off speedily on tasks which make them think, while they give further help to those who are less confident learners. In these lessons, pupils ask questions to which they want to find out the answers, thus challenging themselves, but this is not evident throughout the school.
- It is clear from looking at pupils' work in books that teachers expect high standards of presentation. As a result, pupils take pride in their work and try to do their best. They set mathematical calculations out clearly and this helps them to make good progress.
- Marking encourages pupils but it does not always tell pupils what they need to do to improve their work. Sometimes teachers ask pupils questions or give them a supplementary task, but these are rarely completed because pupils are not given sufficient time to do them.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils arrive in good time for school because they are keen to learn. Attendance has gone up from below 94% two years ago to above 95% currently. Persistent absenteeism has reduced dramatically. Pupils like coming to school because 'teachers do lots of things to make learning interesting.'
- Behaviour is good. Pupils get on well together. They respect that some of their friends have difficulties. They say that behaviour has improved and agree their school is better than it was. 'Pupils who get angry have stopped.' There is no racism or name-calling and very little bullying because 'teachers sort it out very quickly.'
- The school's records confirm pupils' positive views and show that firm rules and sanctions, together with rewards, have clearly improved behaviour because pupils know the boundaries.
- Pupils feel safe. They are very knowledgeable about different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, such as texts or e-mails.
- School council members feel they have an impact on the running of the school, giving playground equipment and fund-raising as examples of their work.
- Pupils are polite, confident, talkative young people who need few reminders to hold doors open or to say 'excuse me' when passing on the stairs. Older pupils show high levels of responsibility. They appreciate the care the school takes of them, such as the Year 6 'breakfast before tests'. Pupils clearly enjoy being part of the school and are proud of their uniform and the school song.

The leadership and management are good

- In just over four terms, senior leaders have turned the school into a thriving, learning community where pupils achieve well. Pupils now make rapid progress because strong leadership of teaching has improved teaching effectiveness from broadly satisfactory to good with some outstanding practice.
- Highly effective actions include: reorganising the Early Years Foundation Stage provision so it provides outstanding learning experiences; introducing a rigorous system to check pupils' progress frequently; giving subject leaders more responsibility for leading their subjects and checking on how well they are taught. In addition, creating a special team to oversee the learning and development of pupils who have learning, social or behavioural difficulties, or who are supported through the pupil premium has had a significant impact on these pupils' achievement.
- Senior leaders carry out rigorous checks on teaching quality. They have taken suitable action to eradicate weak teaching. They have made teachers accountable for the progress that pupils

make in their classes. Teachers check pupils' learning carefully to make sure that pupils who struggle get support quickly. This means that pupil progress meetings are effective at helping to drive up achievement.

- Performance management is used rigorously to make sure that teaching is effective. No-one has crossed a pay threshold this year because teachers are still improving aspects of their practice. At the same time, this rigorous approach has helped to create a strong, ambitious team of teachers who are keen to learn from each other.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate. School development planning is so detailed that it is almost unwieldy. This means that key priorities are buried in the maze of other actions, some of which are evaluated and others which are incomplete. This is because timescales are unrealistic, with too many actions requiring termly checks. Although development planning has clearly worked up to this point, it is unmanageable in the long term.
- The local authority gives light touch support to this school after an initial period of intensive support, at the school's request, with staffing and resource issues.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are knowledgeable and committed to school improvement. They know how well pupils, including those supported through the pupil premium funding, are progressing. They recognise that the additional staffing and small class sizes that some of the money is spent on clearly benefits all pupils. Governors check on pupils' progress through visiting school, working with an assigned teacher and looking regularly at pupils' work. From this, they understand first-hand how well teaching is led. Governors are closely involved in the management of staff and have tackled staffing issues capably.

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	111641
Local authority	Hartlepool
Inspection number	405348

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	379
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maureen Smith
Headteacher	Lynne Pawley
Date of previous school inspection	27 June 2011
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