

Romanby Primary School

The Close, Romanby, Northallerton, DL7 8BL

Inspection dates 13–14 June 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement. Pupils arrive in the Reception class with knowledge and skills in line with expectations for their age. They leave at the end of Year 6 with broadly average standards. This level of progress requires improvement to be good.
- Teachers do not always have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve and do not use the information gained from previous learning sufficiently well to plan future learning. As a result, work set is insufficiently challenging and the more-able pupils make less progress and have less opportunity to develop their thinking skills.
- In some lessons, particularly in Key Stage 1, the work of teaching assistants lacks direction from teachers and lower attaining pupils achieve more slowly.
- Where teaching requires improvement, pupils' behaviour is often less good. This is because in the words of one pupil: 'When lessons are boring people don't listen'. As a result, learning slows.
- Teachers do not always give consistent guidance to pupils on how to improve when they mark pupils' work.
- Support from senior leaders for the school's improvement is not always of sufficiently good quality and the leadership team does not always function as effectively as it should.
- The monitoring of teachers' work to bring about improvement in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement lacks rigour, and teachers do not always act upon the recommendations made.

The school has the following strengths

- The majority of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium funding make good progress.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are good and most pupils enjoy coming to school, as evidenced by their good attendance.
- The vast majority of parents hold positive views about the school and feel that their children are cared for well.
- Governors play an active role in the school and members have a wide range of skills.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons and parts of lessons taught by 16 teachers. Joint lesson observations were undertaken with the headteacher. The inspection team also listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 6 read and examined the quality of work in the books of pupils from across the school.
- The inspection team studied health and safety documentation, teachers' planning for different subjects, documents relating to the procedures to check the performance of staff and the quality of teaching, as well as the school's system for checking pupils' progress.
- Meetings were held with pupils, senior leaders, members of the school staff, five members of the governing body and with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team had informal discussions with three parents at the start of the school day. They also took into account the views of 57 parents who made their views known through the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- Eight members of staff also made their views known to the inspection team.

Inspection team

Marian Thomas, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Michele Crichton

Additional Inspector

Jan Lomas

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Romanby is an average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage with a small number from other ethnic backgrounds.
- A much smaller-than-average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for the pupil premium. This provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those children who are looked after and those from service families.
- There is a slightly smaller-than-average proportion of disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs who are supported through school action.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is much smaller than average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is a before- and after-school club on the school site run by a private provider, which is subject to a separate inspection. The reports for this provider can be found on the website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.
- The school has received several awards and accreditations, including Healthy School status, the Activemark, Committed to ICT, Basic Skills Quality Mark and North Yorkshire local authority Inclusion Quality mark.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to be consistently good or better and to raise standards in writing and mathematics, by:
 - increasing teachers' expectations of how much work pupils can produce and the speed at which pupils can learn in lessons
 - ensuring teachers consistently use information gained from pupils' previous achievement to plan future learning, particularly for more-able pupils
 - ensuring support staff are given more consistent direction on how to improve the progress of less-able pupils, particularly in Key Stage 1
 - improving the consistency and quality of marking and feedback to pupils so they are clear about how to improve their work.
- Increase the pace of improvement in the quality of teaching by:
 - increasing the rigour of checks made on the quality of teaching by senior leaders
 - ensuring that teachers act on the recommendations made to improve the quality of their teaching.
- Improve the capacity within the leadership team by ensuring senior leaders carry out their roles effectively in support of the headteacher.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Overall, achievement requires improvement because an insufficient number of pupils make good progress between Key Stages 1 and 2, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- The majority of children start in the Reception classes with social and language skills typical of those expected for their age. As a result of teaching that requires improvement, the majority make expected rather than good progress and develop early reading, writing, mathematical and social skills close to those expected nationally at the start of Year 1.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 have remained broadly average for the last three years. However, progress in Year 1 is not equal to the accelerated progress being made in Year 2, and insufficient progress, particularly for lower attaining pupils, is being made in Year 1.
- Last year, fewer pupils than expected in Year 6 achieved expected progress from their individual starting points in mathematics.
- Current school data show that the majority of pupils are now making better progress than previously in mathematics. This improvement is as a result of the school's introduction of a more effective approach to teaching mathematics. This has enabled staff to set realistic targets for pupils and to identify more quickly those who are falling behind.
- Whilst actions taken have had a good impact on pupils' achievement in mathematics, tracking data show that pupils' progress in writing has slowed, particularly in Key Stage 2. This is largely because more-able pupils are offered insufficient challenge in their work and as a result, do not make good progress.
- Although pupils' achievement in English in Key Stage 1 overall requires improvement, the school has recently successfully improved reading skills through the effective teaching of phonics (linking sounds and letters) in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1. As a result last year, pupils' scores in the phonics screening test, were in line with others nationally.
- Pupils throughout the school say they enjoy reading. Older pupils read regularly to a variety of adults and enjoy taking books out of the school library. The feelings of many were summed up by one pupil who said, 'Reading lets you look through a window into a different world.' Overall, pupils make good progress in reading.
- Approximately 8% of pupils in the school are known to be eligible for free school meals. This group attained standards above those expected in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2012. Their attainment was above those of other pupils overall and better by approximately two terms in English, but behind that of their classmates in mathematics, by more than one term. Current school checks show attainment for this group is continuing to improve. Consequently, the gap in attainment with other groups is narrowing and reflects the school's continued commitment to providing equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve in line with their peers as do the very small numbers of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds and those from White British backgrounds. Consequently, achievement for all groups requires improvement.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching across the school varies too much in quality and too much requires improvement. Although some good teaching was seen, there is not enough for pupils to make consistently good progress.
- Some lessons move along too slowly and fail to hold pupils' interest. In these lessons, pupils spend too much time listening while adults talk and teachers often have low expectations of what pupils can achieve or the amount of work they can produce in the time given. As a result, the quality of behaviour dips and pupils achieve less well, particularly the more able.

- In lessons in which teaching was judged to be good, learning was often fun, enjoyable and challenging for all groups of pupils. This could clearly be seen in a science lesson in which pupils were investigating the properties of bubbles. Pupils both in the classroom and the space outside were intent on discovering whether bubbles were heavier than air and the effect of the wind on their travel. Their good levels of engagement and interest led to some thought-provoking discussion, which in turn led to some interesting scientific hypotheses on the size and shape of bubbles, as well as the quality of bubble mixture used.
- The majority of teachers mark books diligently offering pupils positive comments and encouragement. However, they do not always give pupils sufficient guidance on how to improve their work. As a result, improvement is slower than it should be and poor presentation often goes unchallenged.
- Parents whose children attend the Reception classes feel that staff are approachable and that their children enjoy coming to school. While children benefit from a range of activities both in the classroom and outdoor areas, too often these activities are adult-led which reduces children's opportunities to explore and develop independence.
- Teachers do not always make sufficiently good use of information on pupils' previous achievement when they plan the next steps in learning. Work set in some lessons does not match the needs of pupils and often does not stretch more-able pupils sufficiently well. A scrutiny of pupils' books showed this clearly and pupils' comments that learning in some lessons was 'too easy and boring' further confirmed this.
- Good working partnerships between teachers and support staff are evident in some areas of the school. However, in some classrooms, particularly in Key Stage 1, too little direction is given and support staff play too passive a role in lessons. When this happens, the impact of their work on supporting less-able pupils is diminished and their progress slows.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Most pupils behave well in lessons. They show polite and caring attitudes towards each other, staff and visitors both inside and outside the classroom. However, in some lessons, often where teaching requires improvement, pupils' behaviour is less good and low-level disruption goes unchecked. This slows pupils' learning and progress.
- A small number of parents feel pupils' behaviour and incidents of bullying are not always sufficiently well managed. However, this view was not matched by the majority of pupils spoken with during the inspection, who felt incidents of bullying were rare and were dealt with effectively by staff and that school is a safe and happy place.
- The majority of pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and are proud of their achievements. Pupils show consideration and support towards each other. For example, older pupils act as playground buddies to ensure no one feels left out or lonely.
- Parents and pupils appreciate the friendly and approachable attitude of the majority of staff and the care they offer children and families. The recently introduced open-door policy at the beginning of the school day was particularly valued because parents felt this enabled them to discuss any areas of concern they may have quickly and effectively.
- Attendance overall has remained above average over the last two years. The vast majority of pupils arrive at school on time. This is because staff work in close partnership with parents to ensure that pupils are punctual.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Although, the headteacher has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, and has brought about some improvement, for example, the recent increase in

achievement in mathematics, the support from other senior leaders has not always been as effective as it could be. As a result, the changes implemented in order to improve pupils' achievement have been slow to show effect.

- Although teaching has been checked consistently, some staff have not responded to the advice given and this has not been followed up by the leadership team with sufficient rigour. As a result, the quality of teaching still varies across the school and several aspects need attention.
 - Nevertheless, school leaders ensure that performance targets for staff link directly to pupils' achievement and the targets set in the school's development plan. Checks on the performance of staff are undertaken regularly and the headteacher uses this information to make decisions on any increases or not in teachers' pay.
 - Pupils' progress is now more effectively checked and those who are not on track to succeed are given more effective support, which has led to an overall increase in the achievement of this group.
 - The school's curriculum meets the needs of the majority of pupils and offers good opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. For example, school leaders regularly take Year 6 pupils on a residential visit to London in order to broaden their horizons and improve their understanding of life in a multicultural city. The forthcoming trip was described by one pupil as, '...going to be the greatest experience I have ever had'.
 - Due to the previously good judgement for the school, and a lack of agreement between the school and the local authority on the level of service the school required, the local authority has, up until recently, offered school a 'light touch' level of support and guidance.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors come from a diverse range of backgrounds and bring a broad range of skills and experience to the governing body. They are actively involved in most areas of the school's work and, in partnership with the headteacher governors have developed an effective system for checking the performance of all staff, which rewards good teaching and addresses underperformance. They take a careful and measured approach to the management of pupil premium funding, which has enabled them to give support to those eligible pupils and which has improved their attainment and progress. However, although governors have completed recent and relevant training and have a good understanding of school data, they have not offered sufficient challenge to senior leaders on the achievement of pupils in the past. Safeguarding procedures and policies within school are undertaken to a good standard. The health and safety committee carries out regular inspections and ensures that safeguarding procedures meet current requirements.
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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

Unique reference number	121312
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	413036

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	275
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs P Dennis
Headteacher	Mr J Foxwell
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2010
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