

Roysia Middle School

Burns Road, Royston, SG8 5EQ

Inspection dates 20–21 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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 achieve well as a result of good teaching. Teachers plan interesting lessons that help to keep the pupils engaged.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and for the most part tell the pupils how they can improve their work.
- Pupils who need extra help to catch up and those with a disability or who have special educational needs are well supported. The school makes very good use of other adults to provide much of this support.
- Very good relationships and a genuine interest in every member of the school community contribute to the positive atmosphere found throughout the school.
- Behaviour is good both in and out of the classroom. Pupils are courteous and polite.
- Pupils feel safe and bullying is rare. They play an active role in school life and take advantage of the many opportunities provided for them to extend their learning beyond the classroom.
- The headteacher and her staff have high expectations for all pupils. They have rightly focused on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and have well-chosen plans to secure further improvement.
- The governing body is well informed and holds staff to account for the performance of the pupils and the quality of teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding and some requires improvement.
- Some lessons are dominated too much by the teacher so that insufficient time is given for the pupils to learn by themselves.
- Work is not always sufficiently well matched to each pupil's learning needs to enable them to make the maximum possible progress in every lesson.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons or part lessons, of which six were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with a wide range of staff, including the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders, and members of the governing body. The lead inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority on the telephone.
- Inspectors took account of the 29 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 24 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's summary of its strengths and weaknesses, records of pupil progress, other monitoring records and safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

David Talbot, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Bruce Clark

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized middle school.
- Since November 2011, it has been part of the Royston Schools' Academy Trust with one other middle school and a high school.
- The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and those who have a parent in the armed forces, is lower than the national average.
- The school receives additional government funds for pupils in Year 7 who did not achieve the expected Level 4 in English at the end of Key Stage 2.
- 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?

- Ensure that all teaching is at least good and that a higher proportion is outstanding by:
 - reducing pupils' reliance on the teacher by encouraging them to work for themselves more often and for longer
 - more accurately matching the learning activities in class to the precise learning needs of individual pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When pupils join the school in Year 5, they do so having reached standards that are broadly average. Staff work effectively with pupils to improve their skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics so that they make good progress across a range of subjects and in all years.
- Although national test results for Year 6 in 2012 varied and some pupils did not achieve as well as they should have done, the progress current Year 6 pupils are making in English and mathematics is improving strongly. School information indicates that the proportion of pupils making expected or more than expected progress in English will compare favourably with national figures at the end of Year 6. In the case of mathematics, improvements in the rate of progress have been rapid and significant. As a result, the proportions of pupils making or exceeding expected progress in mathematics is anticipated to be well above average.
- A very clear tracking system is in place gives an accurate picture of the progress pupils are making in all subjects. This information is used to identify areas in which individual pupils need additional support and this has helped to ensure that pupils make generally good progress in all year groups.
- There are very few pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium. In 2012, these pupils did not do as well as other pupils in Year 6 in English and mathematics. In English the gap has now closed, so that pupils supported in this way are about one term ahead of other pupils. In mathematics, these pupils are making good progress but they remain about two terms behind their peers.
- A very small number of pupils are supported through the Year 7 catch-up funding. The school uses this funding in a variety of ways, including providing one-to-one tuition with reading and extra support from other adults in English lessons. All pupils who are eligible are making good progress.
- The school's focus on ensuring the needs of all are met extends particularly to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Well-targeted support for these pupils from other adults in lessons helps them to overcome many of their difficulties and make progress that is very similar to their classmates.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work in lessons and in their books confirmed that they are making good progress across the school and in a range of subjects.
- Every parent who expressed a view was positive about the progress their child was making at the school. The overwhelming majority were positive about the information they receive about their child's progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers typically have high expectations of their pupils and manage classes well. In the best lessons, planning is thorough and well-structured, so that pupils are able to learn something new and make good progress.

- Outstanding teaching was seen in a number of subjects, including art, English, mathematics and physical education. In a Year 8 art lesson, the pace of work and engagement of the pupils was such that one pupil commented that 'time goes really quickly in this lesson'.
- There was evidence of good questioning by the teacher in the best lessons, with a mix of open-ended and closed questions. In a Year 6 religious education lesson, the pupils were given the opportunity and the time to respond to the question 'what is suffering?'; something they did with interest and energy.
- Some lessons require improvement. In these lessons, the pupils sometimes spend too long listening to the teacher and are not given enough opportunities to begin learning for themselves. In some lessons, teachers do not have activities that are sufficiently well-matched to the learning needs of the pupils.
- Teachers provide detailed and helpful feedback to pupils in most subjects. At its best, this gives pupils clear advice about how they can improve and they are given an opportunity to respond to the teacher's comments.
- Other adults are linked with particular year groups and are used very well to support pupils with additional learning needs. They know the needs of the pupils and are able to offer focused and well-targeted support that helps these pupils to make good progress.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons, particularly when given the chance to do something practical. They work well with each other and respond positively to opportunities to assess each other's work. In a Year 8 physical education lesson, the pupils both assessed the ability of other pupils to throw a javelin and offered helpful coaching tips on how to improve. This encouraged high levels of interest and enjoyment from the pupils, as well as helping them to make good progress.
- There is good support for reading and writing within lessons which helps pupils to be more confident in, for instance, using correct punctuation and making writing more interesting through the use of adjectives and adverbs. Reading is encouraged and the librarian is skilled at steering pupils towards the right level of reading book.
- Every parent who completed the on-line survey agreed that their child was taught well at the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They engage well in lessons and are keen to take part in learning activities. They particularly enjoy working with each other and sharing ideas.
 - Behaviour around the school is good, including at break and lunchtime. Pupils are polite, respectful and courteous to each other and to adults, including visitors.
 - More vulnerable pupils and those who have a disability or special educational needs are well supported. They mix well with other pupils, so that everyone has an equal opportunity to play a full part in the life of the school and take advantage of what the school has to offer.
 - Behaviour is well-managed and there are good systems in place for responding to any instances
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of poor behaviour by individual pupils. The pupils believe that behaviour is generally managed consistently by teachers.

- Pupils are proud of their school and respond well to opportunities to develop their leadership skills, such as through the school council or as house captains. The school council gives them the chance to make their opinions known as well as represent their fellow pupils when, for instance, the mayor visits.
- Attendance is broadly average and punctuality is good. Pupils understand why it is important to attend school regularly.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and every parent who expressed a view agreed. Bullying is rare and when it does happen the pupils have faith in their teachers' ability to sort it out. One of the best things about the school, in the view of a group of Year 7 and 8 pupils, was that, 'you feel like you can always go to someone.'
- Pupils have a good understanding of safety and are aware of different types of bullying, including cyber bullying.

The leadership and management are good

- The school is very well led by the headteacher and she is very well supported by a dedicated team of staff. Together they promote a real sense of community, of purpose and of high expectations.
 - Senior leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school's own evaluation of its performance is accurate. There are clear plans in place to improve the school further but these plans need to be more precise about how leaders will measure success.
 - The system for checking the quality of teaching is thorough and accurate and is used to identify good practice that can be shared as well as individual training needs of individual teachers. Arrangements for checking the performance of teachers encourages them to reflect on their own practice and to engage in professional discussion about teaching standards.
 - Leadership and management are not yet outstanding because, although pupil achievement is improving, there is further progress to be made. School leaders have the capacity to bring this about.
 - Staff morale is very high, with every member of staff who completed the survey being positive about every aspect of the school. More than one member of staff stated that they were proud to be part of the school and one simply said 'I love my job!'
 - The range of subjects studied by pupils is broad, varied and well organised. These subjects provide pupils with a range of learning opportunities that engage their interest and promote good behaviour.
 - Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good as a result of the high profile it is given in the school. Pupils are given many opportunities beyond the classroom to take part in a range of activities, including the Young Enterprise scheme, trips and residential visits, and sports
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fixtures. Extra opportunities are also offered in music and every pupil participates in the summer concert.

- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.
- The overwhelming majority of parents agree that the school is well led and managed.
- The school has a constructive relationship with the local authority, which continues to provide support and training to help the school to improve further.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have a keen interest in how the school works and are very well informed about what is happening. They are very supportive of the headteacher and appreciate the work that she and all the staff do on behalf of the pupils. Governors actively check the school's performance through test results, reports from the headteacher and other school leaders, and visits to subjects with which they are linked. They have a good awareness of how the pupil premium funding is used and what difference it has made. Governors know how the system for managing the performance of teachers operates and how links are made to pay progression. Individual governors have undertaken training or attended conferences in order to help them fulfil their role more effectively.
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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	137657
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	413046
Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	162
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Brynjolffssen
Headteacher	Zoe Linington
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01763 241555
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