

Rodmell Church of England Primary School

Rodmell, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 3HF

Inspection dates

6–7 November 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Leaders have not historically monitored school systems robustly enough. Therefore, it has sometimes taken longer than it should for weaknesses in the quality of teaching or the pace of learning to be noticed and addressed.
- Training for staff on how to use data to support pupils' learning, historically has been too infrequent and plans to improve teaching were therefore not clear enough. This has recently changed.
- Some pupils make less progress in their learning than pupils of the same age nationally because the quality of teaching has not been consistently good enough to make up for pupils' past underachievement.
- The support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs requires improvement because although pastoral care is a strength of the school, sometimes these pupils wait for too long for their learning needs to be assessed and actions put in place.
- Teachers do not use assessment consistently well enough in their day-to-day delivery of lessons. As a result, they do not always have a sufficiently clear view of children's learning, and therefore do not set activities that are suitably well matched to next learning steps.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear vision for improvement and governors provide good support.
- Good quality provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development promotes pupils' high self-esteem and confidence.
- Pupil progress has improved significantly for targeted groups of pupils, especially in reading and writing.
- Pupils, parents and carers say they are happy with what the school has to offer.
- The encouragement of respectful and supportive relationships throughout the school helps pupils to develop their self-esteem and confidence. Pupils behave well and enjoy learning.
- Pupils are safe at school because adults ensure that day-to-day checks on safety are very well organised.
- Attendance has significantly improved this academic year.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons, of which six were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, three governors, with the school's middle and senior leaders and with a representative of the local authority.
- There were no responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, prior to the inspection, so this did not contribute to the planning of the inspection. However, some were added during the course of the inspection and the inspector took account of these. The inspector also sought the views of parents and carers wherever possible during the inspection.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documentation including records of the checks made on teaching, the school's plan for improving, records relating to behaviour, attendance and health and safety checks, and extracts from the school's checks on pupils' progress. The inspector looked at pupils' written work, met with the school council and listened to groups of pupils read.

Inspection team

Lindsey Diamond, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Rodmell is a much smaller-than-average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is lower than the national average, although the proportion of pupils at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is lower than normally found. This is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children, and those from service families.
- The school does not meet 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?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that it is consistently good or better in order to enhance the pace of learning by:
 - using the good practice shown by some teachers to support less confident staff in developing their skills so that lessons have good pace and are better pitched at the needs of learners
 - ensuring teachers' marking consistently shows what pupils should do next to improve their learning and that they are given the opportunity to respond to it
 - ensuring that planning builds on pupils' past knowledge, while making sure any gaps in their learning are identified and reduced
 - making sure that all lessons are targeted to meet the varying needs of each individual learner in each class.
- Enhance leadership at all levels, including teachers as leaders of learning, in order to ensure that there is a clear focus on improving achievement by:
 - checking the quality of teaching more frequently and rigorously so that teachers take more responsibility for the progress pupils are making in their classes
 - ensuring that there is a clear structure in place for teachers to use the data that the school already has to support teaching for learning
 - developing systems to ensure that opportunities to develop core reading, writing and mathematics skills are planned into the broader curriculum
 - putting in place a clear set of priorities for improving teaching and staff training so that teaching improves at a faster pace.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Across the school, there is a mixed picture of achievement because of the small numbers of pupils in each year group and inconsistency in the quality of teaching.
- Pupils enter Reception with skills and abilities that vary, but are generally just below their peers nationally.
- The very small numbers of pupils in each year group, combined with a high number of pupils with special educational needs, mean that it is not possible to track trends over time. For example, end of Key Stage 2 data for July 2013 indicate a decline in pupil attainment, and that pupils had not progressed as well as their peers nationally. However, careful tracking of individual pupil work and data during the inspection showed that this is not currently the case and that the majority of pupils are making at least expected progress.
- Checks on current pupils' progress, supported by evidence in pupils' books, show that most of the pupils in Years 2 and 6 are progressing well in their reading and writing. Information from other year groups shows this is the case across the school.
- Pupils of all ages are supported to learn different ways to help them to read. Pupils are taught to use the sounds letters make (phonics) to read unfamiliar text and are given the opportunity to read a variety of books. Most pupils are confident in reading and in discussing their books.
- Attainment and progress of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding are broadly in line with their peers nationally. There are no gaps in their attainment.
- Much of the focus for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has been on ensuring that they are in school and ready to learn. The school is now beginning to become more focused on addressing the specific learning needs of these pupils, although this requires improvement.
- There is evidence that those pupils who have now been targeted for accelerated learning are making expected or better progress. This is because the teaching very specifically focuses on the needs of the pupils that are being targeted.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement over time. Sometimes, when teaching is less focused, teachers do not ask the necessary questions of learners that help them to assess pupils' understanding. Opportunities are then missed to move learning on at speed.
- In some lessons pupils are given the same work to do, irrespective of their different ages and abilities. This means that some find the work too difficult and some too easy. Pupils with the highest ability often are not challenged well enough in these lessons.
- Teachers generally have a clear understanding of the standards that individual pupils are working at. However, these accurate assessments are not used sufficiently well, either to re-shape tasks in lessons, or to plan for next learning steps. As a result, tasks are sometimes set that do not meet individual pupils' needs.
- When teaching is good, teachers are clear about what pupils can and cannot do and give them work to build on current knowledge and skills. This supports good progress. For example, in a Year 1 and 2 phonics lesson, the teacher was careful to remind pupils of previous learning, and regularly re-visited it during the course of the lesson, while still introducing new learning.
- In some classes marking is used very effectively as a tool to move learning on, although this practice still remains variable throughout the school. While teachers clearly spend time marking, their comments do not consistently make it clear to the pupil what they need to do to improve further. This is particularly evident in writing, where the more-able pupils are not pushed to use more advanced vocabulary, and more complex sentence structures.
- Pupils rarely have the opportunity to respond to marking.

- The school has invested in a high number of classroom support staff who generally play a key role within the classroom and support learning well. On occasions teachers do not clearly direct them as to their specific role within a lesson, and therefore they are not able to ensure that they are fully supporting learning.
- Pupils are given the opportunity to use information and communication technology effectively within lessons to extend their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The strong pastoral care and nurturing family atmosphere helps pupils to develop good attitudes to school. Pupils are polite and respectful towards adults and each other, and supportive of their friends in learning.
- Pupils say that they enjoy school, particularly the increased amount of sports they take part in.
- Pupils report that Rodmell is a very 'fair' place. Several pupils, from the youngest to the oldest, mentioned this during the course of the inspection. Pupils reported that when they do make wrong choices they are given the opportunity to discuss this with an adult, with one adding, 'We can always talk to our teachers.'
- In lessons, pupils are keen to learn and respond with enthusiasm to teachers when the tasks meet their learning needs. However, where work is too easy or too hard, their attention wanders and they do not always follow teachers' instructions.
- The vast majority of parents and carers and nearly all pupils say that behaviour is good. This is supported by the views of staff.
- Pupils have the opportunity to help one another, for example, in a mixed Year 3 and Year 4 class where some pupils were paired specifically to develop their ability to listen, make eye contact and share their views.
- Parents and carers have confidence in the school to keep their children safe. They are also confident that the school will teach their children the skills necessary to keep themselves safe beyond the school.
- Pupils say that bullying is not an issue at the school. They are clear about different types of bullying and how to stay safe, including when using the internet. School council pupils were able to clearly explain why some internet sites were blocked in school.
- The school deals appropriately with pupils who have challenging behaviour, and is active in seeking the advice and support of external specialist agencies when needed. During the course of the inspection appropriate strategies were seen from teachers and other adults to ensure that these pupils were able to take part in learning.
- Teachers regularly and positively remind pupils of class and school routines and behaviour expectations. As a result, pupils behave appropriately and have good access to the curriculum.
- The school has worked hard to raise attendance levels. As a result these have improved significantly from well below national to above national levels for this academic year.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Historically, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement has not been checked well or often enough. This means that pupils' progress has been erratic and has varied widely from year to year. School leaders are now aware of this and robust new systems have been put in place, for example half termly data analysis and regular pupil progress meetings. As a result, school leaders are able to work with teachers to identify pupils who are not making as much progress as they should, and put appropriate interventions in place. Several examples of the success of these were seen during the inspection.
- Teacher skills are appraised within school. The school has recently developed this system so that judgements on teachers' performance are now more closely linked to pupil progress and have a

clearer link to the national Teachers' Standards. As a result, links between pupil learning and teacher salary progression are developing. The well-established senior leadership team has recently become significantly more focused on ensuring that learning is a priority within the school. The members have now started to track pupils' progress more rigorously.

- School leaders have worked with teachers and support staff to develop their skills in analysing assessment information and deciding on how pupils can make the best possible progress. This is beginning to have impact on day-to-day learning.
- Current systems for measuring pupil achievement, whilst accurately measuring pupil attainment, are not used effectively enough in moving learning on. New systems have been put in place so that teaching is cross-referenced to learning more effectively. These are beginning to have some impact for targeted groups. However, they are not yet being used on a day-to-day basis in all classrooms.
- Training for staff to make sure their skills improve has not been rigorous. School development plans now outline a clearer set of priorities to improve teaching and train staff.
- As Rodmell is a small school, with only three classes, there is not a middle leadership structure within the school.
- The curriculum is getting better, but pupils' skills are not yet sufficiently good in reading, writing and mathematics when pupils leave the school.
- Pupils' spiritual and moral development is supported through collective worship and the religious education programme as well as very close links with the local church. Cultural awareness is promoted through charitable work and links with the local community. The school has also developed positive links with a school in Africa.
- Pupils are socially and emotionally very well prepared for life. The school provided good evidence to show that the focus is now moving towards ensuring that academic achievement is also a key feature of what is offered to every pupil.
- The school provides equality of opportunity for all learners and tackles discrimination well. Pupils are able to discuss different aspects of discrimination and are very conscious of the need to support all of their school community, irrespective of their differences.
- The primary school sport funding is being used well to hire sports specialists to work with pupils, and fund sports clubs. The result is that pupils are now more aware of the need to lead healthy lifestyles and enjoy the increased variety of sports on offer in this small school.
- The school has fostered very good relationships with parents and carers. The church plays a significant role in this. Parents are invited into school on a regular basis. During the inspection a celebration assembly was very well attended by parents.
- The local authority is active in helping the school to move forward for the benefit of learners.
- All day-to-day health and safety measures are in place and the school ensures that all pupils are fully aware of all aspects of e-safety. Safeguarding procedures are robust.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors offer both support and challenge to school leaders. They receive training that ensures that they remain aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. As a result, they are able to support school leaders in whole school development. They are able to do this effectively through their good understanding of school data and how this matches with the quality of teaching and the pace of learning. They are aware of their role in rewarding good teachers and tackling underperformance. The governing body meets the statutory requirement to monitor performance management of teaching staff. Individual governors have good complementary skills and ensure that the school has a valuable place in the village community. Governors ensure that the church and school are closely linked together within village life.

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	114561
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	428849

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	62
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geoff Daw
Headteacher	Leanne Winterton
Date of previous school inspection	10 March 2009
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