

Rowlands Castle St John's Church of England Primary School

Whichers Gate Road, Rowlands Castle, Hampshire PO9 6BB

Inspection dates 15–16 October 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils do not make sufficiently rapid progress in Key Stage 1. Standards by the end of Year 2 are only just keeping pace with rising entry levels when pupils enter Year 1.
- Despite recent improvements in achievement, there is still too much teaching which fails to challenge pupils sufficiently, particularly the more able, and requires improvement.
- Guidance for pupils on improving the quality of their work often lacks clarity. Pupils do not routinely respond to teachers' comments.
- Expectations of the quality of pupils' handwriting and their written work are not always high enough.
- The analysis of data is not rigorous or timely enough so that adverse trends in pupils' achievement, by groups or subjects, are not always identified quickly enough.
- The monitoring of teaching is not always sufficiently focused to enable weaknesses in practice to be addressed promptly.
- School self-evaluation is not sufficiently critical, particularly the evaluation of achievement over time.
- Although governance is, in many respects, effective, governors' ability to evaluate important trends in achievement is limited because the governors do not focus sufficiently on the performance of groups rather than individual pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Provision for pupils in the early years in Reception is good and outcomes continue to rise.
- Actions of senior leaders significantly improved standards in writing in 2014. The teaching of reading has improved.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 made at least sound progress in the last school year.
- The school provides well for pupils' personal and social development.
- The gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and the other pupils has been reduced.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and feel very safe in school.
- Relationships with parents are positive.
- Subject leaders are knowledgeable and effective
- The school is well prepared for the implementation of the new curriculum. Outdoor learning is an emerging strength.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 12 lessons, four of which were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked closely at pupils' written work for both the current and the last school year, and they listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, and with the school's senior leaders. A telephone discussion was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 23 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 96 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documents, including local authority reviews and action plans, and records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching. They also considered minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and the tracking of pupils' progress.

Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Stephanie Matthews

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Rowlands Castle School is smaller than the average-sized primary school, where all pupils attend full time.
- The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action in 2013–14 was below the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs was well below average.
- The school met government floor standards in 2013, the last year for which validated data are available. These set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics. On the available provisional data, the school is also likely to meet floor targets in 2014.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be entitled to free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is well below average.
- The school offers extended school provision. This includes both care for pupils who arrive at school early and for those who need to stay late. A range of chargeable clubs and activities can be accessed as part of this provision.
- There is a private pre-school on site. This is managed and inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve teaching, especially in Key Stage 1, by ensuring that:
 - teachers have high expectations of what pupils might achieve and set work that is consistently challenging, particularly for the most-able pupils
 - the marking of pupils' work offers very specific guidance as to how pupils can improve their performance
 - ensuring that pupils have the opportunity to respond to marking.
- Build upon pupils' achievement across the school, so that standards are raised further, particularly by the end of Year 2, by ensuring that:
 - teaching provides a consistently high level of challenge
 - expectations of the quality and presentation of pupils' handwriting and their written work are consistently high.
- Improve leadership, management and governance by ensuring that:
 - the analysis of school data is rigorous, so that there is a clear and timely evaluation of the impact of teaching by subject, pupil group and cohort
 - resulting information is used effectively to focus school improvement
 - the monitoring of teaching is sharply focused, so that weaknesses in practice are identified and addressed promptly
 - school self-evaluation is critical and evaluative, particularly in relation to achievement over time.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The school's analysis of data is not yet rigorous or timely enough to identify important trends in achievement. The focus on individual achievement, while valid, does not provide a sufficiently clear view of the overall impact of teaching within year groups and subjects. Consequently, school leaders do not always see the 'big picture' sufficiently quickly.
- The monitoring of teaching is not incisive enough in securing better practice. Lesson observations are sometimes descriptive rather than evaluative. Not enough focus is placed on the quality of pupils' written work. As a result, teaching has not improved rapidly enough since the last inspection. The school's performance management systems, while fit for purpose, have the potential to be even more effective. Overall, however, there is a close link between teachers' past performance and their pay progression.
- School self-evaluation is over positive in some areas. It is not sufficiently evaluative and does not consistently link actions to their impact. Improvement plans are not, for example, sufficiently focused on the need to improve key aspects of teaching.
- School leaders are very effective in promoting pupils' personal and social development. They ensure that pupils are kept safe. There is a strong culture of teamwork. Early years provision has continued to improve. There has been a positive response to the weaknesses in writing identified in 2013, backed by good professional development opportunities. This has supported better outcomes than previously in literacy in 2014.
- Subject and other leaders have a secure grasp of their areas of responsibility and a clear view of how to raise standards. They are a strength within the leadership.
- The curriculum prioritises literacy and numeracy. The recent focus on writing and the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) have contributed to improved standards. Little evidence was available to indicate the effectiveness of the teaching of science. The school is implementing the new National Curriculum and is introducing a modified assessment system to replace National Curriculum levels as these are phased out.
- Many enrichment activities are only accessible through the extended school provision. Other lunchtime activities are more freely available. Activities funded through the primary sport funding have increased pupils' participation in swimming and a variety of sports competitions. Appropriately targeted staff training is ensuring that these initiatives are sustainable.
- The school has received effective support from the local authority to raise standards in writing.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and pupils are prepared well for the diversity of life in modern Britain.
- The school has good links with parents and carers. They strongly support the many activities provided. Effective partnerships have been established with other agencies and schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body plays an increasingly strong role in the leadership of the school. Governors are highly supportive of their school. They undertake training and are increasingly confident in holding school leaders to account. They ask questions about the achievement of individual pupils and correctly identify recent improvements. However, they are less aware of cohorts and whole-school trends in relation to other schools nationally, so that their perspective is potentially restricted. They are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity, tackling discrimination and promoting good relationships. They have some understanding of the strengths of teaching, but less of the areas where improvement is needed. Overall, however, they ensure that pay and promotion are fully aligned to teachers' effectiveness. Governors are involved in evaluating the appropriateness of decisions about the deployment of the additional funding to close gaps in attainment for disadvantaged pupils. In other respects, they ensure, along with senior leaders, that statutory duties are met, including those for pupils' safeguarding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are courteous and polite.
- Overall, pupils display positive attitudes to learning. This was evident, for example, in 'outdoor learning'. However, when the teaching does not provide sufficient challenge, pupils' attention wanders and progress slows. This was particularly evident for lower-achieving boys.

- Pupils undertake responsibilities around the school, including play leader roles, and contribute well to the smooth running of the school community.
- Inappropriate behaviour and exclusions are rare. Effective behaviour management systems ensure an appropriate response to poor behaviour.
- Pupils' attendance is above the national average. Pupils understand the importance of frequent attendance.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Safeguarding arrangements fully meet national requirements. The well-managed extended school provision ensures that pupils are well cared for, both before and after the school day.
- Pupils feel safe and are confident that adults will manage any difficulties they might encounter.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about a range of risks. Year 5 pupils, for example, recognise the potential dangers of social media and cyber bullying.
- Almost one third of parents and carers indicated some concerns about the school's response to bullying. However, there was no evidence to support this view. Pupils are aware that bullying may take various forms, but feel that these would be promptly dealt with by the school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teachers' expectations, and the level of challenge, vary across the school. As a result, achievement requires improvement. Off-task behaviour sometimes adversely affects learning. Valuable learning time is occasionally wasted while pupils stick items into books or change for outdoor learning activities.
- Systems for checking and improving pupils' progress were underdeveloped at the last inspection. Some progress has been made. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. However, identified points for improvement are not always specific enough, nor are they followed up subsequently. There are few opportunities for pupils to respond to marking. Overall, marking is still not driving improvement sufficiently. Pupils' self-assessment activities do not appear to link to the planning of future work. Teachers' questioning is not always used well to reshape tasks and explore understanding.
- Pupils' written work, although better for some pupils, is often poorly presented. This is rarely addressed by teachers. There is insufficient focus on raising pupils' expectations.
- Pupils' achievement in literacy has improved significantly in the last year. Consequently, teachers are now building more effectively upon children's very positive attitudes when they leave Reception.
- Established learning support staff are mostly effective in supporting small groups and individuals.
- Some teachers provide good levels of challenge. In a challenging Year 1 mathematics lesson, pupils were developing subtraction skills. All groups were planned for appropriately, although a few pupils said the work was 'too easy'. There was effective questioning to establish pupils' understanding and accelerate their learning. Adults ably addressed any misunderstandings. Year 6 pupils, in an extended writing activity, showed enthusiasm and commitment, writing confidently and at length.
- The teaching of reading has improved. Increasingly effective teaching of phonics is contributing to more rapid progress and confidence in reading.
- The school has a consistent approach to the setting of homework and both parents and pupils feel that this is well organised and provides some challenge.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The school cannot exactly demonstrate the extent of pupils' gains in learning in Years 1 and 2. However, those pupils who left Year 2 in 2014, with broadly average attainment in reading and writing and below average attainment in mathematics, had entered Year 1 with a broadly average profile of skills and attainment. This suggests that they had made expected progress at best. Given that a significant proportion of teaching in Years 1 and 2 requires improvement, there is further work to do if progress is to be accelerated significantly. Current Year 2 pupils entered Year 1 with above average skills as a result of intensive support in Reception. Current Year 1 pupils were working at well above average levels when they left Reception.
- Improvements in the teaching of phonics have had a positive impact upon pupils' attainment, so that more pupils reached the expected level in the Year 1 screening test in 2014. Provisional data for 2014 also indicate that the recent focus on improving achievement has successfully addressed the below average standards in writing at Year 2 and Year 6 in 2013. Provisional results in 2014 indicate that standards in

writing are likely to be broadly average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6.

- The school has not yet analysed the progress in different year groups or subjects. It is not possible to judge where the teaching was most effective. Overall, however, Year 6 pupils made progress over time, which was slightly ahead of what is expected.
- On the provisional data, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils is similar to that of the others in Years 2 and 6. There appear to be deficits in the progress of these pupils in Years 4 and 5. In 2013, on average, the gap between the attainment in English and mathematics of disadvantaged pupils and others, as well as all pupils nationally, was around one term.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are currently supported well. In general, they too make progress similar to the others.
- Children start in Reception with levels of knowledge and skill which were, in 2013, broadly as expected for their age. Good teaching in the early years ensures that children make increasingly good progress. Most children, in 2014, left Reception attaining a good level of development.
- The more-able pupils are keen to succeed. While these pupils are identified across the school, they are supported best in Year 6, where they are set the most challenging work and have opportunities to attempt Level 6 work.

The early years provision

is good

- Early years provision and outcomes have improved since the last inspection. There is a greater focus on the development of writing skills and children's positive attitudes to learning are a strength. The indoor and outdoor environments have been improved further. Early years leadership is good.
- The school's effective engagement with the on-site pre-school ensures that more children now enter with well-developed skills. Almost all children entered Reception in 2013 close to the levels expected for their age. Good teaching has ensured that children's attainment on leaving Reception has risen steadily over the last three years. The proportion of children achieving the good level of development in 2014 was well above the national average.
- The school constantly reviews the curriculum to ensure that children achieve their full potential, including those who are more able or who have special educational needs. Current developments in outdoor learning are providing richer learning opportunities. Children are self-sufficient in selecting resources and settling down to activities. Consequently, children are well prepared for entry to Year 1.
- The school ensures that the youngest children are safe and well looked after. Close links are maintained with parents and carers, who have a good involvement with the school. Many attend workshops in, for example, the teaching of phonics and reading.
- Assessment procedures are constantly reviewed. Early years staff know individual children well. Current assessment data provide an accurate insight into their developmental needs.

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	116310
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	444222

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Trevor Filtness
Headteacher	Kay Pennicotte-Henrie
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2011
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