

Rowsley CofE (Controlled) Primary School

Woodhouse Road, Matlock, DE4 2ED

Inspection dates

25–26 February 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Not enough pupils are making good progress over time, particularly in writing, through the school.
- Pupils do not write enough or practise specific writing skills in other lessons. This is more so for boys in Reception and Key Stage 1.
- Too few pupils reach higher levels by the end of Year 2.
- Teaching does not enable all groups of pupils to achieve well. This is because, over time, teaching has been variable and while improving, some inconsistencies remain that are barriers to good progress.
- The most able pupils, including those in the early years, are not consistently stretched to enable them to reach their potential.
- In mathematics, there are too few chances for pupils to practise mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Many pupils do not spell, punctuate and use grammar accurately in their work. The presentation and layout of their work and their handwriting is often untidy.
- Teachers in the early years do not record accurately what children have learnt. Children are not learning quickly because teachers do not encourage them to be curious and develop good skills in all of the areas of learning.
- Children in the early years do not practise their skills in phonics (the sounds that letters make) sufficiently.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has begun to tackle the school's weaknesses with determination. Assisted increasingly well by senior and subject leaders, teaching and achievement are improving.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is good.
- The governing body questions and challenges the quality of teaching and achievement rigorously and oversees all of the school's work effectively.
- Parents are delighted with the improvements made by the school's leaders and the good communication between home and school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils' learning in six lessons, of which three were observed with the headteacher. She watched pupils being supported in small groups.
- The inspector spoke with pupils while they were in lessons and playing. She held a formal meeting with a group of pupils in order to find out their views about their school. She observed an assembly and listened to pupils reading.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, senior and subject leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- She spoke with several parents at the start of the school day.
- The inspector looked at documents about the school's work, including information about how well pupils achieve, governing body minutes, the school's improvement plan and policies and practices to help keep the pupils safe. She checked samples of pupils' work with the headteacher.
- The inspector considered the 18 parental responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire (Parent View) in carrying out the inspection. She also checked the 11 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Lynne Blakelock, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than most primary schools.
- The pupils are taught in mixed-age groups in three classes. All pupils attend full-time in the early years Reception class.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and all of them speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be disadvantaged and therefore supported through the pupil premium is below average. The pupil-premium funding is additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, including those who are eligible for free school meals and those children that are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school works in partnership with a secondary school, Lady Manners, and with 12 primary schools to strengthen teaching and learning practices.
- The headteacher took-up his post in September 2014. One teacher joined the school in January 2015.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good and accelerates pupils' academic progress by making sure that:
 - all teachers set suitably demanding work for the most able pupils
 - pupils have regular opportunities to practise their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Improve pupils' progress in writing, including in the Reception class, by ensuring teachers:
 - insist that pupils spell, punctuate and use grammar accurately
 - provide more opportunities for pupils to write regularly and at length in literacy lessons and practise specific writing skills in other lessons
 - motivate boys to write
 - have consistently high expectations of handwriting, presentation and layout of work.
- Promote the consistently good level of development of all children in the early years, by making sure that teachers:
 - provide them with opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills in all areas of learning
 - take every opportunity to help children practise their phonics skills
 - challenge the most able children so that they reach their potential
 - record children's learning and development in all areas regularly and in detail, and use the information to plan activities which build on what children have learned previously.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has made a good start in driving the school forward. His ambition is being matched by his accurate understanding of where the school needs to improve and the effective changes he is making to achieve them. Together with the governors, he is improving the school quickly.
- The headteacher has lost no time in putting in place effective measures which are accelerating pupils' achievement and improving teaching. Good systems are now in place to monitor the quality of teaching and the overall progress of pupils. Information about pupils' progress is collated regularly and support is put in place to address any under-achievement. Pupils know how well they are learning and like having targets which they and their parents are involved in setting and which pupils say makes them all work harder.
- The headteacher has set very high standards for teaching in all classes. Through effective coaching, mentoring and the provision of training and support, leaders, including governors, have ensured that these standards are being met and that inadequate teaching has been removed.
- The headteacher knows where improvement is most needed and consequently teachers have had recent training in teaching phonics and spelling and in assessing the quality of pupils' writing. They have been given support to improve teaching in mathematics in Key Stage 1. This is the main reason why teaching has improved and why pupils' progress is now accelerating.
- Self-evaluation is now accurate and this, together with better teaching and improved progress, shows that the leaders have shown a secure capacity to improve further.
- The leadership of teaching is good. The headteacher observes teaching regularly and shows an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas that need improvement. These are reflected in teachers' performance targets which are now linked to clear goals in order to strengthen teaching and leadership as quickly as possible.
- Senior and subject leaders have an accurate knowledge of where and how achievement needs to improve. In this small school, most staff have responsibilities for subjects or other aspects of the school's work. All leaders have action plans which are checked termly and ensure leaders' accountability for progress, teaching and leadership.
- The early years leader is making changes to improve the provision and has already utilised space more effectively. In her role as special needs coordinator, she is identifying, for example, pupils' writing issues more quickly.
- Leaders are using additional funding more effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. Pupils supported by pupil premium are getting focused help which is making a difference in reading and writing in narrowing the gap with other pupils but not yet enough in writing.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of learning, in lessons and through after-school clubs. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well, throughout the school day and also in lessons, such as through texts and role-play.
- British values are promoted well. This is evident in pupils' respect for the law and each other and their understanding of democratic rights. They know that we are all equal, whatever our beliefs and lifestyle.
- The school has used the new primary sports funding effectively to improve the quality and breadth of physical education and sports provision. Planning demonstrates the good promotion of pupils' fitness, including at playtimes and the lunch break and equality of opportunity. There has been an increase in participation in sporting activities and after-school clubs and in opportunities for pupils to excel in a range

of skills.

- The school is inclusive and works hard to ensure pupils have equal access to teaching and wider opportunities. Staff make sure that no pupils are discriminated against due to their circumstances.
- The school has appropriate measures in place to help make sure that safeguarding procedures meet requirements.
- The school's partnership with a cluster of local schools has resulted in staff working together. For example, to moderate pupils' work and to help strengthen teaching. The local authority representative is helpful to the school because he knows the school accurately and provides effective support to the headteacher and training to the governing body.
- Parents are delighted with the improvements being made to the school, including in their children's learning and in their involvement in their children's achievement. Most support all aspects of the school's work. The school's vastly improved website ensures parents are well-informed.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors are overseeing the school's work well and challenging and supporting the school effectively.
 - They base their checking of the school's work on the priorities set out in the school improvement plan. They have specific roles to carry out in order to ensure that they have a good overview of its performance. For example, one governor works with a group of children in mathematics and undertakes regular scrutinies of pupils' work.
 - Governors use the detailed reports from the headteacher to question him rigorously, particularly about the quality of teaching, which they appreciate is improving quickly. They also know that not enough pupils reach higher levels in Year 2 and that, in recent years, not enough of the most able pupils have made the progress they should have.
 - The governors understand what data is saying about the school's performance. They know that the gap in standards between disadvantaged pupils and other groups is narrowing overall. Recent minutes of the governing body show governors' understanding that good progress has to be demonstrated term-on-term for pupils of all abilities.
 - The governing body is prepared to make tough decisions. The governors look ahead to ensure the budget, which is sound, stays on track. They demand value for money, such as the impact of the money spent on training.
 - Governors are also very well informed and control the systems for managing staff performance and the way that pay rises are decided.
 - The governors have a good range of expertise to support the school. They have regular training which means they have a good understanding of the school's statutory duties.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have been involved in writing the new behaviour policy and see the sense of it. They say that behaviour is good in lessons and teachers effectively manage any pupil who does not meet the staff's expectations of behaviour. This matches the inspector's findings.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are overall good because more learning is interesting and they have targets which they are keen to work towards.
- Pupils like the rewards system and see the justice in handing back rewards if they no longer deserve to have them. This is one example of the growing involvement and ownership that pupils have of what happens in their school and the respect that they have for the improvements that the headteacher is making, including in the quality of mathematics teaching. They see the importance of democracy in

ensuring an orderly and fair school.

- Pupils' behaviour around the school and throughout the day is sensible and considerate. Pupils like the mixed-age classes which ensure that pupils know well lots of other pupils from the Reception class onwards. They get on very well together.
- Pupils develop a range of skills from the responsibilities with which they are entrusted from the Reception class onwards. They are proud to support the younger pupils and to have class and school jobs, all of which promote sensible and conscientious participation.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- In lessons and assemblies, pupils learn how to be safe and keep safe, from the Reception class onwards, in ways appropriate for their age.
- Pupils know the potential dangers in and out of school and show an appropriate understanding for their age of how to manage and avoid them. It includes cyber-bullying.
- Staff emphasise to pupils the need to be kind and respectful. As a result, pupils say that there is hardly any falling-out or bullying. This is because pupils believe it is important to always behave with care towards others and to be tolerant of others' beliefs and views. Their actions strongly reflect the school's ethos.
- Pupils' attendance continues to be above average. The school checks rates daily to ensure that all pupils attend every day that they possibly can and rewards both good individual and class attendance. Pupils are punctual to school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although the quality of teaching is improving and more is now good, some inconsistencies remain, particularly in the teaching of writing in Years 1 and 2, which slows progress over time. The contexts that teachers use to motivate pupils to write are not successful in motivating all boys to write because they do not find them sufficiently interesting.
- Pupils of all abilities do not have sufficient chances to practise their writing skills throughout the school by writing at length across a wide range of topics. Although pupils are increasingly writing in other subjects, tasks do not always enable them to practise the skills that they have learned in order to fully secure them.
- In mathematics, the teaching of number skills is inconsistent. There are too few examples of pupils practising their mathematical skills in topics and other subjects to effectively develop fully pupils' abilities in problem-solving and reasoning.
- Pupils' quality of lay-out of their work presentation and handwriting are extremely variable across the school. In some classes, teachers do not pay enough attention to spelling, punctuation and grammar. In others, teachers do not routinely expect pupils to produce their best quality work. In Year 3 and 4 mathematics books, however, presentation is of a high standard, reflecting pupils' response to teachers' high expectations of them.
- Work does not always enable pupils to achieve at least well. The most able pupils in from Reception to Year 2 are not always challenged enough in order to develop the knowledge and skills to reach higher levels.
- More recently, marking has improved considerably. 'Fix-it' time is a purposeful and dedicated time at the start of the school day for pupils to make corrections to their work and for teachers to guide them in clearing up any misunderstandings. This works well in ensuring that pupils correct their errors and learn

from their mistakes.

- Teachers make clear what pupils are to learn in a lesson, and pupils understand what they are to do.
- Pupils and staff get on well together and this promotes both a good environment for learning and pupils' good attitudes to learning. Several pupils spoke highly of the improvements in teaching and how much they like learning.
- Pupils read regularly and develop not only more accuracy in sounding-out words but in understanding texts and working out characteristics of the people in a story.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Although achievement has improved since the headteacher joined the school, too few pupils make good progress over time, particularly in writing. Not enough pupils reach higher levels in Key Stage 1 because teaching does not stretch the most able pupils sufficiently.
- Standards by the end of Year 6 vary from year-to-year in the small cohorts. In 2014 they were above average in writing and mathematics and well above in reading. An above average proportion of pupils reached level 6 in both writing and mathematics in 2014. The pupils in Year 6 made the progress expected of them, rather than good progress.
- The school's data shows that pupils' progress started quickening at the end of the autumn term last year, including in Year 6. It also shows the much quicker rate of pupils' progress in mathematics in Years 3 and 4 where teaching is consistently strong. Gaps in previous learning are being addressed through extra catch-up activities.
- Progress in writing is inconsistent through year groups and for groups of pupils. Pupils do not all spell, punctuate and use grammar accurately, which pulls standards down. Some pupils are not using the grammatical skills expected for their age, including using capital letters.
- Boys' writing skills are less developed than those of the girls at Key Stages 1 and 2. They do less well than girls in phonics, with no boys reaching the required skills in the Year 1 screening check in 2014 and all of the girls achieving the required standard.
- The school's records show that phonics teaching over the last two years has not been good enough and the below average standards reflect this. Predictions for 2015 point to improvement but the children in the early years are not in the habit of practising their phonics skills through the day to secure and quicken the development of their writing skills.
- No pupils in last year's Year 6 were eligible for pupil-premium funding so no comparisons can be made with the standards reached by other groups of pupils. Through the school, pupils entitled to funding make similar rates of progress to other pupils. They receive support that matches their individual needs in improving their reading, writing and mathematical skills and in enabling them to have equal access to visits.
- Other groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar rates of progress to other groups of pupils. There is good support, both academic and pastoral for their individual needs.
- The most able pupils are being challenged more and have greater chances to practise their skills through problem-solving, especially in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, they do not always make the gains that they could because they are not sufficiently stretched.

The early years provision requires improvement

- Children start the Reception class with levels of knowledge and skills that differ each year in the small cohorts. This year they are below those typical for their age, including in language and fine motor skills.
- The children generally make the progress expected of them. Not enough, however, make good progress, including the most able children. Teachers do not plan activities that consistently promote children's imagination and desire to explore and to investigate. The activities are not varied enough to enable the children to learn and develop well across the 17 areas of learning, indoors and outdoors.
- Staff in the early years do not always record in detail children's achievements, so activities do not always build on what children have previously learnt.
- The children are making gains in their phonics skills, but teachers do not plan enough opportunities for children to practise them through the day. The boys find it harder to focus on phonics learning because opportunities are not interesting enough for them.
- By the end of the early years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development remains below average, although it rose from 2013. This means that they are not well-prepared for learning in Year 1. The school's predictions for this year suggest another improvement.
- The children understand the importance of keeping safe; for example, they make sure the gates are always shut properly. The children learn to get on well together and cooperate with each other. The staff manage their behaviour well and have clear expectations of their conduct.
- The staff know the children's needs because they meet with them and their parents before they start school. They offer good quality workshops to parents to help them to support their children's reading and writing skills.
- The leader of the early years knows the areas needed for improvement and is tackling them with the help of the local authority and the teaching assistant.

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	112820
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	453714

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	61
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Harrop
Headteacher	Iain Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	13 March 2013
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