

Rodmell Church of England Primary School

Rodmell, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 3HF

Inspection dates

4–5 November 2015

Overall effectiveness

Good

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Rodmell Primary is a welcoming, inclusive community. Pupils of different ages get on well, happily playing and learning together.
- Leaders and governors have successfully addressed the key areas identified for development in the previous inspection report.
- The quality of teaching and learning has improved. Teachers work effectively together to plan interesting work which engages and challenges pupils of all abilities.
- Pupils make faster progress in reading, writing and mathematics than they did at the time of the previous inspection.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has improved and was above average in 2015.
- The results of the Year 1 check in phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) were much better in 2015 than in previous years and above national averages.
- Effective teaching in the early years ensures children make good progress during Reception year.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are safe and secure. Relationships in the school are good.
- Leaders ensure that all staff have the same high expectations of pupils' behaviour across the school.
- Pupils behave well. Attendance rates have improved substantially over the past few years.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Sometimes pupils' progress is a little slower in writing than it is in reading and mathematics.
- Teachers do not always check that pupils learn from their spelling errors to improve the quality of their writing.
- Activities in the Reception outdoor area are not always of the same good quality as those inside the classroom.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that teachers check that pupils are applying newly learnt spellings in their written work so that they make the fastest progress possible in writing.
- Ensure that the activities in the early years outdoor area are the same good quality as those inside the Reception classroom.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher has worked with determination and commitment to ensure the school's work improves.
- Teamwork is strong in this small village school. The headteacher has very successfully involved all staff and governors in making sure that the quality of teaching and learning is better than it was at the time of the previous inspection.
- All staff share the headteacher's high expectations for all pupils and contribute fully to developments. They recognise the considerable improvements made since the previous inspection and staff morale is high. Several members of staff commented on their pride in being part of the school team.
- Parents are positive about the school's work. They particularly appreciate the school's nurturing and caring atmosphere. Most parents who completed the online questionnaire would recommend the school.
- Subject leadership is shared between senior leaders and teachers, ensuring that all play their part in the school's development. The mathematics leader and special needs coordinator provide enthusiastic leadership for their subjects. They are knowledgeable about pupils' needs and about recent changes to the curriculum. The mathematics leader regularly checks pupils' work and knows what is working well in mathematics teaching. The special needs coordinator liaises closely with parents and agencies to ensure pupils receive appropriate support.
- Leaders and teachers regularly review and amend the way subjects are taught. This ensures pupils in mixed-age classes cover all topics needed to achieve well. Staff manage this efficiently, using the opportunity to think creatively about how to teach subjects so that pupils are excited about learning. Leaders recognise the need to ensure that pupils always make the fastest progress possible in writing and have suitable plans in place to improve pupils' spelling skills.
- The promotion and celebration of British values is an everyday part of the school's work. Pupils learn that people have different beliefs and talk respectfully about a range of viewpoints. They are taught to reflect and to ask questions about topics and issues. For example, they regularly debate challenging issues, such as whether closed circuit television cameras should be used in classrooms. The school's religious ethos permeates school life, providing staff and pupils with a positive and inclusive framework.
- Better systems for checking the quality of teaching and learning mean that leaders are much clearer about the school's strengths and improvement needs. Plans for development are thorough and well organised. Resources and training are used well to help teachers to improve their practice.
- Primary sports funding is used appropriately to employ a specialist coach and to provide sports clubs, such as fencing and football. Clubs such as these make a valuable contribution to pupils' enjoyment of school and to their fitness. The sports coach also supports pupils' play during breaktimes, organising games and activities so that pupils are active and engaged. Teachers have attended sports training so that the quality of physical education has improved.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding well to support pupils' learning. They have strengthened checks on eligible pupils' progress to make sure that funds are helping them to achieve their best.
- The school works very well with other schools in the locality. For example, teachers have worked alongside colleagues to share good practice and to improve the quality of teaching.
- The local authority provides effective support which is responsive to the school's developing needs. For example, local authority training has supported improvements in the governing body's work. Advisers' support has recently been well focused on the early years setting. They are working with staff to enhance the provision so that learning in all areas of the setting is equally strong. Over the past year, the local authority has scaled down the overall level of support provided in recognition of improvements in the school.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body's work has improved since the previous inspection. Governors provide good support and effective challenge for school leaders. They have sharpened reporting arrangements so that their work is recorded fully and accurately. Governors are clear about how funds are used, including the pupil premium, to improve pupils' achievement. They have a good working knowledge of the school's work because they regularly visit lessons and attend events. Training has increased governors' understanding of the school's work and how this compares with other schools nationally.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Governors give safeguarding arrangements an appropriately high priority, regularly checking that procedures are complete and up to date. Staff are well qualified and alert to pupils' needs and well-being during the school day.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **is good**

- Teachers' expectations of pupils' learning are much higher than at the time of the previous inspection. They have high expectations of pupils of all abilities and backgrounds. They set consistently challenging work, including for the most able, so that all pupils make good progress. They use questioning effectively to gauge and deepen pupils' understanding.
- Teachers give pupils regular opportunities to write for different purposes and in a range of subjects. They provide interesting events and trips, such as pond dipping with a biologist, to stimulate pupils' interest. Teachers encourage pupils to read back through their writing as they work. This helps them to spot any mistakes and to make changes which improve their work.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly in line with the school policy, giving pupils feedback about their successes and points for improvement. In English, they show pupils where they have made spelling mistakes in their written work and give them time to correct errors. However, they do not always take this a step further by checking that pupils are learning from their mistakes and using the correct spelling in their later writing.
- Substantial improvements in the teaching of phonics ensure pupils have a secure grounding in reading and writing skills. Visits to other school have helped teachers to review and improve their own practice. This has been extremely effective in making sure phonics skills are taught confidently and consistently by teachers and teaching assistants. Learning builds progressively and strongly as pupils move up through the year groups.
- Teachers use challenging, high-quality books and texts in lessons which capture pupils' interest and motivate them to read the books themselves.
- Teachers make sure pupils have the basic number knowledge they need to tackle mathematical problems competently. They give them plenty of practice so that pupils become fluent in key facts, such as number bonds and times tables. This helps them to recall key facts quickly and use time more efficiently to tackle and solve mathematical problems. They teach pupils how to use practical equipment to help them to visualise processes and strengthen mathematical understanding. For example, pupils in Year 1 worked very well together to discuss different ways of sorting shapes according to their properties.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together. They share ideas and support each other well to plan pupils' learning effectively. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, including for those who find learning more difficult. They confidently teach subjects such as phonics and mathematics. They have established warm, positive relationships with pupils, combining good humour with clear expectations, and are well respected by the pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare **is good**

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is good. Pupils get on well together and want to do their best. They treat all adults in school with equal respect.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school. They say adults quickly reassure and help them if they are worried about anything.
- Pupils speak confidently about how to use the internet safely. They say that they learn lots about e-safety and that assemblies provide regular reminders.
- Pupils know what bullying is and its various types. They are confident that it very rarely happens in school. One said, 'Occasionally a few children are bit annoying but it's not bullying, because that's a different thing.' This view is supported by school records.
- Pupils new to the school say that they feel welcomed and included. They say that their teachers have helped them to settle in quickly, with one commenting, 'I have loads of friends!' One parent commented, 'My children already love their new school.'
- Pupils play an active part in school life. For example, the school councillors regularly meet with the headteacher to share ideas about how the school could be improved. They feel that their input is valued and can point to changes which they have instigated, such as rewards for good behaviour and manners in the lunch hall. One parent commented, 'All children have a voice in school. Their achievements are regularly recognised and celebrated.'
- Most parents who completed the online questionnaire feel pupils are happy, safe and well behaved.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and interested in learning. They have fun and behave sensibly during breaktimes, quickly settling back to work in classrooms afterwards. Most behave well in lessons. The older pupils say that behaviour is much better than at the time of the last inspection.
- Pupils feel that most of their peers behave well. However, very occasionally one or two can be unkind. Pupils say that they tell a teacher if this is the case and that any issues are sorted out quickly.
- Leaders and teachers record any incidents of misbehaviour consistently and in line with the school's policy. This ensures leaders are able to identify pupils who need additional support. Observations in the classroom and the school's records show the positive impact this is having on pupils' learning.
- Parents say they find leaders and teachers welcoming and approachable, so they are able to talk to them about any concerns or queries. Records show that leaders respond appropriately to any worries raised by pupils, teachers or parents.
- Pupils want to do well and attend school regularly. Attendance rates are in line with the national average. The proportions of pupils who are persistently absent are below average and much lower than at the time of the previous inspection.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' progress has improved substantially in reading, writing and mathematics since the previous inspection. Pupils' work demonstrates the good progress they make in a range of subjects.
- Pupils feel they are getting on well in their learning. Those in Year 6 say their teachers are helping them to get ready for the next step in their education and the move to secondary education.
- Very small and varying numbers of pupils in different year groups, combined with the movement of pupils in and out of the school during the school year, lead to fluctuating attainment at the end of both key stages each year. Published information about pupils' achievement does not always reflect the good progress pupils make from their starting points.
- Improvements in teaching have secured substantial improvements in pupils' progress in mathematics in all year groups. Pupils learn how to use an increasingly wide variety of calculations to solve mathematical problems as they move up through the school. This ensures that the oldest pupils confidently draw on a range of strategies to help them to tackle more complicated tasks in some depth.
- Pupils' attainment in mathematics is average at the end of Key Stage 1. Attainment in mathematics increased at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2015 to levels much closer to national averages. Results at the end of Year 6 were affected by pupils' additional needs within this small group of pupils. Their work indicates that they made good progress in mathematics, with a few missing expected levels by just one or two marks.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, learning a range of techniques to help them read confidently. For example, younger pupils use their knowledge of phonics and illustrations in their books to help them to read more difficult vocabulary. The oldest pupils talk articulately and enthusiastically about books. Attainment increased substantially in reading at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2015, although it is still slightly lower than the national average.
- All Year 1 pupils achieved expected levels in the Year 1 phonics check in 2015. Pupils in other year groups with gaps in their phonics knowledge are rapidly catching up with their classmates because they are given extra help which is focused carefully on their individual needs.
- Improvements in teaching have quickened pupils' progress in writing across the school. The work in pupils' books shows they make good progress from their differing starting points. Pupils say they like to write because their teachers give them interesting tasks. For example, one said he particularly enjoyed writing a letter from the First World War trenches.
- In 2015, pupils' attainment in writing was much higher than the previous year and above the national average. However, despite these improvements, some pupils make slightly slower progress in writing than in reading and mathematics. While pupils routinely correct any spelling errors, they do not always learn from their mistakes by using the correct spellings in their later written work.
- Daily handwriting practice for pupils in years 2 to 6 ensures that pupils take care with their work. They develop a consistent, legible style so that, by Year 6, pupils' handwriting is of good quality.
- In 2015, pupils' attainment in reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 1 was below average, as were the proportions of pupils achieving the higher levels. However, this reflects the particular characteristics of this group of pupils, including a number who found learning more difficult. Pupils' work indicates that they made good progress from their differing starting points. Good-quality, targeted support has ensured that these pupils are rapidly catching up with their classmates. They are hardworking and keen to do

well. Leaders' forecasts for attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2016 are higher than in previous years.

- Leaders have been particularly successful in accelerating the progress made by the most-able pupils in the school, ensuring all teachers have the highest expectations of these pupils. This ensures the most able make good progress, from the youngest children in the school through to those in Year 6.
- The proportions of pupils achieving the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 2 increased substantially in reading and mathematics in 2015 and were above average in reading and writing. Pupils' work indicates that the school's focus on improving pupils' outcomes in writing has quickened their progress.
- There are very few disadvantaged pupils in each year group, so their achievement is not reported in detail. However, evidence indicates that these pupils make the same good progress as their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special needs also make good progress. The school knows its pupils very well and ensures they are well supported.

Early years provision

is good

- Effective teaching and leadership ensure children make good progress during early years. The positive, nurturing environment contributes well to children's growing self-esteem and confidence. Caring relationships ensure children are happy and secure. Parents say that they are pleased with the way their children have settled into school. They feel that teachers keep them well informed about children's progress.
- Very small numbers of children join Reception Year each year. There are wide differences in children's knowledge and understanding when they start their schooling. Leaders and teachers check children's needs carefully and accurately when they join Reception and use this information effectively to build children's personal skills and learning.
- In 2015, the proportions of children achieving a good level of development were below average. However, information about children's progress and the work in their 'learning journals' shows that children made good progress from their starting points, including those who did not achieve expected levels by the end of Reception Year.
- Adults have worked successfully with the local authority to ensure that ongoing assessments of children's progress are used more sharply to plan the next steps in children's learning. The children's learning journals reflect the improvements already made.
- Children behave well and enjoy showing adults their work. Clear routines ensure they know what is expected. The Year 1 pupils provide good role models for the younger children. Adults ensure children are equipped with the personal skills needed for learning in Year 1, working well with specialist agencies to support children who need extra help.
- Teachers give children lots of opportunities to practise writing skills, giving gentle reminders about how to hold the pencil correctly to support their progress. This ensures children develop good habits and skills.
- Teachers plan interesting activities which contribute well to children's understanding of how to keep safe. For example, during the inspection children listened and contributed seriously to a discussion about firework safety.
- Teachers capitalise well on children's thirst for learning, planning interesting and engaging activities. However, leaders have rightly identified the need to develop use of the outdoor area to ensure activities here are always the same good quality as those in the classroom. They have already begun work with the local authority to improve this aspect of early years, with suitable plans for improvement in place.

School details

Unique reference number	114561
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10002389

This inspection 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	48
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geoff Daw
Headteacher	Leanne Winterton
Telephone number	01273 473916
Website	www.rod mell.e-sussex.sch.uk
Email address	office@rod mell.e-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–7 November 2013

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above that found in most schools. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- 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 set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school provides full-time early years provision in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class.
- The school teaches pupils in three classes: a mixed Reception and Year 1 class; a class of Year 2 and Year 3 pupils and a class of Year 4, 5 and 6 pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning with the headteacher in nine lessons or part lessons.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, members of staff, parents and pupils. She also held a meeting with the Chair of Governors and two other governors.
- The inspector took account of 15 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as five staff questionnaires. In addition, she considered the views expressed by parents who spoke with her informally at the end of the school day.
- The inspector observed the school's work and considered a range of documents, including the school's improvement plan, information about pupils' progress, attendance records and safeguarding policies.
- The inspector looked at a sample of pupils' work provided by the school, as well as looking at pupils' work in lessons. She listened to pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 reading.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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