

The Roebuck School

Inkerman Street, Ashton, Preston, Lancashire, PR2 2BN

Inspection dates

24–25 February 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Teaching is too variable to ensure that pupils, especially those in Key Stage 1 and the most-able pupils across the school, make the progress they are capable of.
- Teachers do not always plan work that challenges pupils and, at times, expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low.
- Pupils' gains in writing lag behind those in reading and mathematics. Not all pupils have the skills or stamina to write for sustained periods. Teachers' marking does not always help pupils understand what they need to do next to improve their work.
- Pupils' attention can wander when teaching lacks challenge and behaviour out of class can be boisterous at times. Adults do not always apply the behaviour policy consistently in class and around school.
- Senior leaders and governors' views of the school are too positive. Over time, checks on teaching and pupils' progress have been too generous. New systems to check how well pupils are doing do not yet provide an accurate picture of progress.
- Actions taken by leaders have not yet ensured that pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching are good.
- The teaching of early reading skills in Key Stage 1 is not always effective. Teachers' expectations of what can be achieved are not high enough.
- The provision in the Nursery class, including that in the outside area, does not ensure that children learn as well as they should.

The school has the following strengths

- Progress rates are improving and standards are rising, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils are happy and feel safe. Those whose circumstances might make them vulnerable are especially well cared for.
- Pupils new to the school, including those new to speaking English, settle quickly and make friends.
- A wide range of clubs enrich learning well.
- Leaders and staff are determined that the school should improve. Improvements in teaching are reflected in the good progress made by Year 6 pupils in 2015.
- Pupils with disability and those with special educational needs generally make good progress because their individual needs are identified quickly and are met well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to accelerate progress, and raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics particularly for the most-able across the school and all pupils in Key Stage 1 by:
 - ensuring teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and move learning on quickly so no learning time is lost
 - ensuring teachers' checks on pupils' achievement are accurate and are used to plan work that challenges all pupils, particularly those in Key Stage 1 and the most-able across the school
 - making sure the school's marking policy is applied consistently to provide regular and accurate next steps for pupils
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length
 - ensuring that in phonics sessions, teachers and teaching assistants show pupils how to sound out letters and that they check that pupils are doing so accurately
 - making sure that Nursery outdoor provision reflects the good practice seen in Reception.
- Improve leadership and management further by:
 - ensuring checks on assessment are accurate and used to provide an accurate picture of pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching
 - developing the skills of subject leaders so that they can lead improvements in the quality of teaching.
- Ensure the school's behaviour policy is applied consistently by all staff.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Although there is evidence of improvement since the previous inspection, particularly in Key Stage 2, leadership and management require improvement. This is because the quality of teaching is not yet consistently good. As a result, progress in reading, writing and mathematics is uneven across the school and standards are not as high as they should be. Over time, too few pupils, particularly in Key Stage 1 and the most-able across the school, make the progress expected of them and standards in writing are lower than those in reading and mathematics.
- Staff and governors share the headteacher's determination to continue to bring about improvements. However, senior leaders' and governors' views of the school's current performance are overgenerous because they thought they were further down the road with their improvement plans than they actually are. Many of the priorities in the school improvement plans are appropriate and a revised assessment system has been introduced in line with changes to the National Curriculum. However, checks on pupils' progress are not fully accurate and, as a result, leaders' judgements about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the outcomes achieved by pupil are too positive.
- Significant changes in staffing mean much has rested on the shoulders of the headteacher, who has been the only constant member of the senior leadership team since the previous inspection. The unavoidable changes to the school's leadership and management team have not halted the focus on improving the quality of teaching but they have affected the impact and pace of change.
- School leaders have implemented a programme of training for staff. Coaching and support are being provided to increase staff skills and improve the overall quality of teaching and learning.
- Many teachers and leaders, including most of the senior and middle leadership teams, are new to their posts. The headteacher and the newly appointed deputy headteacher have quickly defined their areas of responsibility and begun to work as a team. Working closely with the seconded assistant headteacher, they are developing the skills of subject leaders so that they can begin leading improvements in their areas of responsibility, but much of this is at an early stage of development. At the moment, key roles, including that of early years leader and leader of special education needs, are still being held by the headteacher until staff appointed to these roles take up their posts.
- The curriculum is broad and well organised. Through trips, visitors to school and the wide range of lunchtime and after-school clubs on offer, pupils have many opportunities to learn new skills and see the relevance of learning to their lives beyond the school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is underpinned by the school's ethos and values. The work of the school council demonstrates an understanding of how democracy operates. Messages given in lessons and assemblies prompt pupils to reflect on their own values and beliefs and those of others. Pupils are well prepared for life in Britain today.
- Pupil premium funds are spent appropriately to provide extra tuition and learning for disadvantaged pupils and to fund additional support, such as 'nurture' provision. Family liaison workers are helping pupils who sometimes find it difficult to attend school regularly and the families of children whose circumstances might make them vulnerable. The impact of this funding is checked carefully by school leaders and governors.
- The primary sports funding has been used to help fund the employment of specialist sports coaches. The range and amount of sport and physical education on offer have increased, and staff and pupil skill levels have risen. Pupils say they particularly enjoy trying out new sports like climbing.
- Safeguarding is effective. For example, during the inspection, levels of supervision were appropriate, ensuring that pupils moved safely between the main school and the sports hall for physical education lessons.
- The local authority has provided a range of support since the previous inspection. The school works with the local teaching school. This support has helped leaders to bring about improvements in the quality of teaching and leadership of subject leaders.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Following a review of governance, undertaken with the support of the local authority, governors have further developed their skills following the previous inspection. The governing body receives regular reports from the headteacher about pupil outcomes and the quality of teaching. However, at times governors have too readily accepted the positive views of senior leaders. They have not sufficiently challenged the school on the accuracy of the information, given the published outcomes at the end of each key stage.

- Minutes from governing body meetings show that governors visit the school to gain first-hand views of its work. They ask challenging questions about how additional funding has been spent, including the sports funding. They regularly review the impact of the pupil premium on disadvantaged pupils and they know that these pupils now make at least similar progress to other pupils in the school and elsewhere.
- Governors understand that the performance of pupils should inform any decisions they make about pay awards for leaders and teachers.
- Governors understand well their roles and responsibilities. They have provided effective support for the headteacher during the staffing turbulence experienced by the school. The governing body has worked with the local authority and the local teaching alliance school to identify and provide temporary additional leadership support while the process of appointing permanent leaders is undertaken.
- Governors ensure there are effective links with parents and local communities around the school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Governors ensure that the policies and procedures to keep pupils safe, including checks on adults working at and visiting the school, fully meet the statutory requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is uneven. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high across the school. At times, teachers miss the opportunity to ensure pupils make the progress they are capable of because the level of challenge is not high enough, especially for those pupils capable of working at levels above those expected for their age. This is because the work set is not sufficiently challenging for all groups of pupils.
- At times, too much time is spent on what pupils already know and can do and learning does not move on quickly enough once pupils have shown they understand what is being taught.
- When they are challenged appropriately by their work, pupils usually respond well and display good attitudes to learning. However, when work is too easy or learning does not move on quickly enough, pupils can sometimes become restless and their attention drifts. When adults use the school's 'traffic light system', which helps pupils manage their own behaviour and gets them swiftly back on track, little learning time is lost. However, on occasion, adults do not use the system quickly enough and pupils' behaviour can disrupt their own and others' learning.
- Actions taken by senior leaders, since the previous inspection, include the development of teachers' subject knowledge and questioning skills. This is leading to improvements in the quality of teaching, particularly in Key Stage 2, where pupils have begun to make faster progress from their starting points.
- Warm relationships between pupils and adults are evident throughout the school. A significant number of pupils join the school at other than the usual time. Teachers quickly identify their needs and help them settle in to class.
- Where teachers follow the school's agreed marking procedures, they provide helpful 'next steps' to show pupils how they can improve their work and they give them time in lessons to make corrections and improvements. In other classes this is not always the case and, as a result, pupils are not able to learn from their mistakes or build on their learning from previous lessons.
- An analysis of pupils' work shows that, increasingly, literacy skills are being developed across a range of other subjects. However, too few opportunities are provided to enable pupils to build up their stamina to be able to sustain their ideas when they write at length. At times, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and do in lessons are not high enough and, as a result, pupils produce less work than they should in the time available.
- Some phonics sessions are well presented and successfully help pupils understand and use letters and know the sounds they represent. However, in other sessions adults do not provide clear enough guidance when introducing new letters and sounds. This means that pupils have difficulty blending sounds together. Because staff do not always check carefully on how well pupils are doing sometimes the mistakes they make are not picked up.
- The high number of additional adults are well deployed. They provide a good standard of support to all pupils, including pupils with disability and those with emotional or special educational needs. As a result, pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress from their starting points, although gaps in attainment with their peers remain.
- Classrooms and learning spaces are well organised and many displays celebrate pupils' work and help support their learning and development. Work in pupils' books is usually neat and carefully set out.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- In some lessons, pupils are not expected to work as hard as they can. In these lessons, pupils sometimes stop working and chat when they should be applying themselves to their work and so do not complete the tasks set. This is because teachers do not always make it clear to pupils what is expected of them and check regularly that they are achieving as they should. Not all teachers encourage pupils to challenge themselves or to think about how they can improve their work and positive attitudes to learning, at times, can falter. Pupils take a pride their books and standards of presentation are generally neat.
- Pupils feel safe and well cared for in school. Lessons help them understand about road safety and how to use mobile technology and the internet safely. Older pupils understand about prejudice-based bullying including racism and homophobic bullying.
- The large majority of pupils who responded to the inspection pupil survey said that bullying happens but that they trust the adults to deal with issues promptly. Pupils say they know that using derogatory language is wrong. However, they say that the bullying that does occur often involves name-calling and using unkind words.
- The Rainbow room offers caring, nurturing provision for individuals and small groups of pupils. They are offered a little extra help to manage their behaviour or build their confidence and self-esteem. The care provided for pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable is a strength of the school.
- New pupils are made to feel very welcome in this inclusive school. Pupils are caring. They enjoy helping their new friends settle in and find their way about the school.
- Leaders, staff and governors ensure that the safety of pupils has a high profile. Robust arrangements are in place to ensure that pupils are able to move safely between the main school building and the sports hall which is located several minutes away.
- Leaders have taken robust action to improve attendance, with some success. The family liaison workers liaise closely with the families of pupils who struggle to attend school regularly and, as a result, the number of pupils who have poor attendance records is reducing. Regular information posted in school newsletters is very effective in highlighting the need for regular attendance and its link with good achievement.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Some boisterous behaviour was seen by inspectors and pupils confirm that it does occur. Not all adults used the school's behaviour policy to manage incidents of low-level disruptive behaviour in class and unacceptable behaviour around school. Most adults remind pupils who run in the corridors about their behaviour but sometimes this kind of behaviour goes unchecked.
- A small minority of parents and staff did not consider behaviour to be good. However, almost all said that pupils are well cared for and are safe.
- In lessons where activities provide the appropriate level of challenge, pupils show great enthusiasm for learning and concentrate well. In lessons where activities are too easy, or teachers do not move learning on at the right time, pupils become inattentive because work is not well matched to their needs. Pupils enjoy sharing their ideas with each other and staff.
- Teachers and support staff manage the behaviour of pupils who sometimes find it difficult to manage their behaviour well.
- Lunchtime supervisors have been trained in leading play for pupils during unstructured time on the playground. A lunchtime club has been provided recently for those children who might need a little extra help to manage their behaviour. School records show behaviour has improved as a result of these actions.
- Pupils are keen to make a contribution to the life of the school and the local community. The head boy and girl are great ambassadors for their school and members of the school council take their roles very seriously.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because progress is too variable across all subjects and year groups. This is because the quality of teaching has not been consistently good enough over time.
- As a result, standards at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics are well below average and, across the school, standards in writing are lower than those in reading and mathematics.

- The most-able pupils in all key stages, including early years, are not achieving as well as they should. This is because typically teaching does not provide enough challenge for all pupils, especially the most able.
- Pupils' progress at the end of Key Stage 2 has improved since the previous inspection. In 2015, pupils in Year 6 made good progress from their starting points. The standards pupils reached in reading and mathematics were similar to those expected for their age but they were low in writing and grammar, spelling and punctuation. Very few pupils reached the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Some gaps in earlier learning due to weaknesses in teaching remained.
- In 2015, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6, including those who joined the school at other than the usual time, generally made good progress, given their starting points and individual abilities. However, some gaps in attainment remain.
- Pupils who have been at the school since Nursery class make the strongest progress and reach at least broadly average standards. Pupils who join the school at other than the usual time sometimes arrive working at levels below those expected for their age and with poor attendance records. The school quickly identifies their needs and, in the current year, progress is improving.
- The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check has improved significantly on the exceptionally low standards at the time of the previous inspection but remained below average in 2015. Similarly, the proportion of pupils reaching the standard in Year 2 is low compared to the national average because the teaching of phonics requires improvement.
- Pupils with disability and those with special educational needs are making at least the progress expected of them from their starting points and a good proportion are doing better than this. This is because detailed plans are in place to match teaching to their individual personal and learning needs. Similar support is helping pupils at risk of falling behind to make faster progress.
- Some gaps remain between the outcomes of boys and girls but current performance information indicates that these are closing this year due to changes to the curriculum.
- The small numbers of pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in Key Stage 2 but progress is slower in Key Stage 1.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- Disruptions in leadership and inconsistencies in the quality of teaching mean that outcomes for children are variable.
- Children enter the early years with skills that are lower than those typically found for their age. The range of skills and abilities varies from year to year. In 2015 the proportion of children achieving a good level of development dipped from the previous year to just below the national average. However, most children made at least typical progress and some, particularly those who started their schooling in the Nursery class, did better than this. Boys generally do less well than girls although the gaps are usually similar to those seen nationally. However, in 2015, fewer than half of the boys reached the level expected for their age compared to the very large majority of the girls and the gap was significantly wider than the national average. The achievement of children who are disadvantaged is generally similar to other children in the setting. In 2015, the achievement of disadvantaged children was below that of other children elsewhere; a dip on the previous year.
- Progress in early years is improving but is not yet consistently rapid because children are not always challenged as much as they could be.
- Some adult-led activities do not extend learning sufficiently. For example, an activity led by a teacher in Reception sparked great curiosity and excitement. The children had enjoyed the story of the 'Rainbow Fish', and so the class teacher had decided to provide several fresh fish for children to examine. Working in small groups, the children were engrossed in their task. They took turns to hold the fish and listened carefully to each other as they talked excitedly about what they found. There was a real buzz in the room and an amazing amount of progress was made. However, a similar session in another classroom where the whole class sat around patiently as the fish was shown to them involved too much sitting and waiting and children did not make as much progress as they could have done, even though they were promised a closer look at the fish on another day.
- Adults' expectations of what the children can do and achieve in independent tasks are sometimes too low. There are not always enough opportunities for children to practise and develop their skills in activities they choose for themselves. When these activities are provided they are not always planned well enough to challenge the children and extend their learning. For example, too few stimulating activities are provided for them to write independently.

- Leadership and management in the early years have not ensured that the quality of learning in the outdoor areas is developed equally well in both the Nursery and Reception settings. The Reception outdoor area is located in the main school building where space is extremely tight. Nevertheless, staff make great use of the very narrow area available, creating an attractive and engaging environment for learning which captures children's imagination well. The Nursery class is located in a separate building a few minutes' walk from the main school. Space is more generous here. However, the outdoor area lacks the well-planned and stimulating resources that are a feature of the Reception space and this prevents children making faster progress. Access to the internet that is available in the main school building is not available in the Nursery building.
- Staff are caring and children are happy. They have trusting relationships with the adults and enjoy playing and learning together.
- Good links with parents exist and they are encouraged to share their children's achievements at home with staff in the school.
- Safeguarding arrangements are good. Adults know the children well and cater for their individual needs with care. They ensure that children are safe and behave well.

School details

Unique reference number	119237
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10002237

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	383
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Kelly
Headteacher	Jackie Burns
Telephone number	01772 729337
Website	www.roebuck.lancsngfl.ac.uk
Email address	bursar@roebuck.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 November 2013

Information about this school

- The school is larger than other primary schools. The Reception classes, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are located in the main school building. The Nursery class and sports hall are located a few minutes' walk away.
- The proportion of boys in the school is much higher than that found in most other schools.
- Children in the early years receive part-time education in the Nursery. They attend each morning. In Reception, they receive full-time education.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is just above average and is rising.
- The proportion of pupils with disability and those with special educational needs is high.
- The proportion of pupils with a special educational needs statement or an education, health and care plan is average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through pupil premium funding is high. The pupil premium is additional funding provided for those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at other than the usual times is above average.
- The school has experienced significant changes to staffing since the previous inspection. Many teachers and leaders have joined the school since that time. An assistant headteacher from a local outstanding school has been seconded to the school for two terms.
- The school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There is a before- and after-school club on site which is managed by a private provider. This provision is subject to a separate inspection.
- The school is supported by the Lostock Hall Teaching School Alliance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time. They observed learning in classes and when pupils learned in small groups, including some joint observations with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors looked at examples of pupils' work and talked to them about their work. They listened to pupils read and observed the teaching of reading skills. Inspectors talked to pupils about the books they have enjoyed and those that they are currently reading. Inspectors took note of displays around the school.
- Inspectors talked with pupils informally at breaktimes. They visited the dining hall at lunchtime and observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around school. They met formally with three groups of pupils.
- Inspectors met the vice-chair of governors. They spoke to a representative of the local authority and met with members of school staff.
- Inspectors spoke to a number of parents at the start of the school day and took account of 32 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the school's most recent surveys of pupils' and parents' views. They took account of 28 responses to the staff questionnaire and 181 responses to the pupils' survey.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including information about pupils' progress, school improvement and external views of the school. Inspectors also scrutinised records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding completed by school staff.

Inspection team

Lyn Pender, Lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Catherine Parker	Ofsted Inspector
David Blackburne	Ofsted Inspector

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