

Roperly Walk Primary School

Roperly Walk, Seaham, County Durham SR7 7JZ

Inspection dates 4–6 May 2016

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has ensured that all leaders work closely together as a team in order to support teachers and teaching assistants to improve their practice.
- Governors are very knowledgeable about the work of the school and hold leaders to account effectively for the quality of teaching and pupils' academic performance.
- The quality of teaching is improving as there are many opportunities for teachers to share good practice and reflect on their own teaching.
- Pupils make at least good progress from their starting points and their attainment is rising, particularly in key stages 1 and 2.
- Pupils are extremely well cared for and their personal development and welfare are outstanding. They have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe and say they feel very safe in school. Pupils' behaviour is good. They are polite and show great consideration for others.
- Children in the early years are now making good progress. There have been changes to leadership and the curriculum and these are having a positive impact on improving the outcomes for children.
- Pupils show respect, tolerance and understanding towards those from faiths and backgrounds different from their own.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils with special educational needs or disability usually make progress at broadly the same rate as their peers. Occasionally, some are not always challenged to achieve the highest standards they can.
- Rates of absence are high for some pupils with special educational needs or disability. On occasions, this information is not shared with the governing body, so governors cannot monitor this closely enough to hold leaders to account.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the attendance and reduce the persistent absence rates of some pupils with special educational needs or disability and ensure that this is monitored closely by the governing body.
- Ensure that there continues to be a relentless focus on meeting the needs of all pupils with special educational needs or disability to make sure they achieve the best they can.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher has shown great commitment and dedication to improving the school and is passionate about doing the best she can for the pupils in her care. She is well supported by a team of leaders who share her vision. They take responsibility for improving the quality of teaching and providing sharply focused support for pupils who are in danger of underachieving in each phase of the school. The impact of this work by all leaders can be seen in the improving outcomes for pupils.
- Since September 2015, leaders have worked effectively with staff by showing them what high-quality teaching looks like, working alongside them and giving them valuable feedback to help them improve. There are opportunities for staff to film their teaching, enabling them to be very reflective about their practice. There are also good opportunities for teachers to share good practice with staff in other schools and attend appropriate training to help them improve. Consequently, as teaching is improving, pupils' rates of progress are also accelerating.
- Rigorous systems to manage the performance of staff are also leading to improvements in teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders conduct lesson observations, learning walks and scrutinies of pupils' work, and talk to pupils to see how well they are learning. They also check carefully on pupils' progress and hold staff robustly to account for this.
- The special educational needs coordinator and other leaders are responsible for monitoring the progress of pupils in each phase. However, some pupils with special educational needs or disability are not always reaching the standards they should. There have been some gaps in achievement, in part due to staffing turbulence in the past. The attendance and rates of persistent absence of some of these pupils are a concern and are preventing them from achieving the levels they should.
- Leaders have reviewed the curriculum to make sure it is broad and balanced. They are not afraid to trial different ways of teaching the curriculum and revise things that do not work to ensure they are effective. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy. There are strengths in the use of computer technology to support pupils' learning. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their work in art and design and there is some high-quality work displayed around the school. Pupils enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including booster groups to help them improve their skills. They also enjoy visiting places of interest, such as to archaeological sites and places of worship such as Durham Cathedral.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well throughout the curriculum and in assemblies. Pupils understand that they must show respect and tolerance towards others and that all should be treated equally. They understand about democracy and the rule of law. They know their views and opinions are valued by adults. They are able to take on responsibilities for themselves, for instance as buddies or members of the school council. Pupils learn about those from faiths and backgrounds different from their own through personal, social, health and citizenship education and religious education. This promotes their understanding of life in modern Britain effectively.
- The pupil premium funding is being used more effectively than previously to target support and resources where they are most needed. There were wide gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers and other pupils nationally last year at key stages 1 and 2. Leaders are aware of this and are taking successful steps to close these gaps this year. These include employing five extra teachers and a dedicated teaching assistant in key stage 1, delivering one-to-one tuition and providing a counselling service for children in need. As a result, these gaps are now closing.
- The primary school sports funding is used well to enable pupils to participate in a wide range of sports and activities. The school is part of a sports partnership with local schools and this provides high-quality training for teachers and teaching assistants. There is a wide range of competitions, tournaments and festivals for pupils to participate in and opportunities to improve their health and well-being, for example, through a 'healthy living' club.
- The local authority appropriately provides a small amount of support to the school. The educational development partner continues to support and challenge the school to improve. Visits to look at the quality of teaching and feedback provided are helping staff to improve their teaching, and subsequently, outcomes for pupils.
- The school works closely with a number of other schools in the area, particularly with the local nursery school. This enables a smooth transition for pupils into school and provides opportunities for the sharing of good practice and to moderate pupils' work to check that assessments are accurate.

- There are good relationships with parents and carers. Parents have really valued the opportunities to come into school for class assemblies and open afternoons where they are able to see how well their children are learning. Leaders ensure that high-quality support is given to those children and their families who may be in need. The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View would recommend the school to other parents.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors, particularly those with a background in education, are highly skilled and use their expertise well to support and challenge the school. Governors hold leaders to account effectively, as shown in the minutes of governing body meetings.
 - Regular visits to classrooms to see for themselves how well pupils are learning, and analyses of school performance information, enable governors to have a good understanding of the strengths and areas to be improved in the school. However, they do not always receive specific enough information on the persistent absence and attendance of different groups of pupils. As a result, the high persistent absence of some pupils with special educational needs or disability has not been challenged or addressed quickly enough.
 - Governors have a clear, long-term view of the school and use funding very effectively to benefit pupils. For example, this year, the pupil premium funding is being used to release leaders from class-based teaching so they can work with staff to improve teaching. It is also being used to provide targeted support for disadvantaged pupils.
 - Governors take their statutory duties seriously. However, there have been technical problems with uploading information onto the school website and, as a result, some aspects were out of date at the time of the inspection. These included the information on the curriculum, the register of governors' financial and business interests and whether they were members of another governing body. The local authority has agreed to support the school in addressing this as a matter of urgency.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The safeguarding policy is detailed and thorough, providing all the required information. All staff have received up-to-date training, including that to prevent radicalisation and extremism. Staff know what to do should they have a concern. All staff, governors and volunteers are subject to rigorous checks before they are allowed to work with pupils. Leaders conduct regular risk assessments to ensure that pupils are kept safe, particularly in the early years, and in respect of the building work that is currently taking place. All parents who responded to Parent View expressed their views that their children feel safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers have good subject knowledge. Their use of resources, including computer technology and mathematical equipment, helps pupils to understand concepts more easily and stay focused on their learning.
- Teachers question pupils well and are skilled at adapting their questions to tease out what pupils understand and then deal with any misconceptions immediately. Pupils have many opportunities to share their ideas with their 'talk partners' and this helps them to consolidate their understanding.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to learning are a strength in every class and also in the many small-group activities that take place throughout the day. Relationships are strong between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves and this leads to an atmosphere conducive to learning.
- The quality of teaching has improved this year because leaders have focused on raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can do and sharing the expertise already in the school more widely. Senior leaders are now deployed to carry out immediate, focused activities with pupils identified as being at risk of falling behind in their learning. This means that most pupils are able to catch up with their peers quickly.
- Teachers check pupils' understanding regularly throughout lessons and address any misconceptions promptly. This assessment information is usually used well to identify what pupils of different abilities need to do to move them on quickly in their learning.
- Teaching assistants are well briefed and give good, targeted support to pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils. Previously, there have been wide gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils, but the additional support provided is now helping to close these gaps. However, the gaps in achievement between pupils with special educational needs or disability and their classmates vary and some of these pupils do not always reach the standards they should.

- The most-able pupils are usually challenged in their learning in order to reach their full potential. Very occasionally, they are expected to wait until other pupils complete their work, rather than receiving additional challenge or work in more depth. This then slows their progress.
- Evidence in pupils' books shows that they are making good progress over time. In part, this is because marking and feedback are effective in moving pupils on in their learning. Pupils respond well because of the helpful feedback they receive.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel extremely safe in school. They are able to articulate exactly why that is. They are very clear that the headteacher and staff teach them how to manage a wide range of risks to their personal safety, both within school and outside. For example, building work is currently taking place on the school premises and pupils are highly aware of how to keep themselves safe in these circumstances.
- Pupils say that they value highly the counselling service, which provides intensive support or just someone to talk to in times of need. Pupils are very sensitive to the needs of others and fully understand that all people need to be treated equally. They have developed this understanding through their work on equalities and are adamant that everyone should be treated with respect, regardless of their background.
- The school is extremely vigilant in ensuring that pupils are safe; those who are most vulnerable are supported pastorally and swift referrals are made to other agencies if concerns are identified. The school provides a great deal of support to pupils and their families, particularly those in need.
- Within school there is a keen focus on building pupils' self-esteem and resilience to face the challenges in their lives and prepare them well for the future.
- Pupils enjoy attending the breakfast and after-school clubs, where they can participate in a range of interesting activities and socialise with their friends.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of different types of bullying and are highly aware of how to keep themselves safe, for example when using computer technology, including social media. They are adamant that there is no bullying in school, but know that if they had a concern they could seek help from any adult.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and courteous and their conduct around the school and in lessons is often exemplary. Pupils report that lessons are rarely disrupted because of poor behaviour and any concerns are dealt with promptly. They have a very good understanding of the school's rewards and sanctions and value highly the many opportunities there are to celebrate their good behaviour.
- Pupils are keen to learn and their attitudes in lessons are invariably positive.
- Exclusions are very rare. A very few pupils have been supported, usually for only one day, by a local specialist provision that is located in a nearby primary school. The school monitors this carefully to make sure that pupils attend and are kept safe.
- Pupils' attendance is improving and is close to the national average. The school has a wide range of strategies to ensure that pupils come to school regularly, such as through sending letters to parents and working with the educational welfare officer. However, there are still some pupils who do not attend as regularly as they should, particularly those pupils supported by the school because of their special educational needs or disability.

Outcomes for pupils **are good**

- Outcomes for pupils have improved, particularly over the last year. Pupils make at least good progress from their starting points. Rates of progress are accelerating and by the time pupils leave the school, they reach standards that are broadly average in English and above average in mathematics. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- There has been a rising trend in the proportion of pupils achieving the required level in the Year 1 phonics screening check and results were well above average in 2015. The school has made the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) a priority and intensive work takes place each day. Pupils use their phonics skills well to help them in their writing and to read unfamiliar words.
- Results at the end of key stage 1 have risen to broadly average in 2015. The pupils currently in key stage 1 are making better progress, as shown in the school's own data and work in pupils' books.
- In 2015, there were wider gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their peers and other pupils nationally than in the previous year at both key stages 1 and 2. Leaders identified this and are now making sure that disadvantaged pupils receive targeted support to help them improve. As a result, the gaps are closing.
- In 2015, the few most-able pupils in key stage 2 made very good progress and attained above their classmates, with a high proportion reaching the higher Level 5 and Level 6, particularly in mathematics.
- Pupils in Year 6 in 2015 did not make as much progress in reading as they did in other subjects. Leaders have taken steps to address this and there are well-structured guided reading sessions that take place each day. Pupils from key stage 2 who read to inspectors indicated that they had a love of books and could talk knowledgeably about their favourite authors. They read with fluency, expression and comprehension.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to write at length in order to extend their skills. They have opportunities to practise their literacy skills in other subjects, for example, in their topic work. There is good attention to developing pupils' skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Staff have high expectations of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work and pupils respond well to these.
- Pupils are making rapid progress in mathematics, enabling them to reach standards that are above average. There is expertise on the staff and also in the governing body to support the teaching of mathematics and pupils are developing their understanding and mastery of mathematical concepts well.
- Some pupils with special educational needs or disability do not always reach the standards they should and their achievement is variable across the school. Leaders are taking steps to address this and, while gaps are narrowing well between these pupils and their peers in Year 6 in mathematics, they still remain for some in writing.

Early years provision **is good**

- Children enter the Reception class with skills and abilities that are below those typical for children of their age. In previous years, not enough children reached the expected levels of development in all areas of learning. However, there have been significant changes to the curriculum this year. As a result, current children in early years are making good progress and are on track to reach broadly expected levels that will prepare them well for Year 1.
- The headteacher has taken over the leadership of the early years provision this year. She has provided a much-needed sense of urgency and vigour to improve the quality of teaching and consequently the outcomes for children. Staff have relished the opportunity to improve the provision for children and they know their ideas for improvement are valued and appreciated by leaders. One member of staff keeps a close eye on children's achievements and ensures that any children underachieving are given the support they need to improve.
- Adults ensure that there are many opportunities for children to develop their speaking and listening skills, as some children struggle to explain their understanding. Adults provide good role models and expect children to respond to questions in full sentences.
- There are good opportunities for children to develop their writing skills. Teachers demonstrate effectively how to form letters and numbers and children respond well, repeating the phrases the teacher uses to help them remember how to write each letter. Children are developing a good pencil grip and this is preparing them well to develop a cursive style of writing further up the school.

- Children are developing their phonics skills well (letters and the sounds they represent). They are able to use these skills effectively to help them in their writing and also to read unfamiliar words.
- Children are developing their mathematical skills well and there are good opportunities to develop their understanding through practical activities. There is a clear focus on developing children's skills in number in order to lay firm foundations for future learning.
- Children's achievements are recorded very effectively in their learning journals. These are of high quality and provide a wealth of information for parents to understand how well their children are learning and what their next steps should be.
- Children with special educational needs or disability are identified early and specific, targeted and sensitive support is provided by skilled teaching assistants. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and are fully committed to working as part of the team. Additional funding is now being used well to help narrow gaps in attainment for disadvantaged children.
- Children are well supported in terms of their emotional needs and there are high levels of care by all adults. Adults carry out daily risk assessments to ensure the environment is safe for children. As a result, children settle quickly into classroom routines and behave well. They are kind to one another and cooperate well on tasks.
- Partnerships with parents are strong and there are good links with the nursery from which most children transfer. This ensures that children settle into the Reception class quickly.

School details

Unique reference number	113993
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10003024

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	244
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geraldine Bleasdale
Headteacher	Angela Bell
Telephone number	0191 581 3959
Website	www.roperywalk.durham.sch.uk
Email address	roperywalk@durhamlearning.net
Date of previous inspection	27–28 February 2012

Information about this school

- This school is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support is above the national average. Pupil premium funding is provided to support pupils 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 have special educational needs or disability who are receiving support is approximately twice the national average, and there are a few pupils who have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs.
- Children in the Reception Year attend full time.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school's website almost meets requirements but due to technical difficulties is not quite up to date.
- There has been some turbulence in staffing since the last inspection.
- There is a breakfast club and a range of after-school clubs, which are managed by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in all classes. The headteacher jointly observed the quality of teaching with two inspectors. Inspectors also made short visits to classrooms to evaluate the provision for different groups of pupils and to consider the quality of the curriculum.
- The inspectors spoke to pupils informally in lessons and at breaktimes and met three groups of pupils more formally. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors reviewed the work in pupils' books and heard a number of pupils read.
- The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, phase leaders, the leader of teaching and learning, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors evaluated a range of information including: the school's evaluation of its own performance; the school improvement plan; reports from the local authority; monitoring records of the quality of teaching; minutes of governing body meetings; and information on pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. They also looked at documents relating to safeguarding (protecting children and making sure they are safe). The lead inspector evaluated a wide range of information on the school's website.
- Inspectors considered the 24 responses made by parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and considered the views expressed by parents in the school's own survey. They took into account the views expressed by two members of staff in the online questionnaire and also 20 responses on written questionnaires. There were no responses from pupils in this inspection.
- The inspection was conducted on 4 May 2016, but the school was closed on 5 May 2016 as it was used as a polling station, so the inspection continued on 6 May 2016.

Inspection team

Christine Inkster, lead inspector

Margaret Farrow

Geoff Seagrove

Her Majesty's Inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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