

Rodmarton School

Rodmarton, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 6PE

Inspection dates

20–21 September 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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher provides strong leadership. She has played a key role in rapidly improving teaching and pupils' achievement, especially in literacy and numeracy.
- Governors hold the school to account robustly. They visit the school regularly and ensure that additional funding is spent effectively. Governors' challenge and support ensures that a good pace of improvement is sustained.
- Staff are highly motivated. They work closely in their teams and provide strong leadership support. Consequently, pupils are making faster progress than previously.
- Pupils learn well across most subjects. The most able pupils make good progress because teachers challenge them to give of their best from an early stage.
- Pupils have good opportunities to learn outdoors. They participate and achieve particularly well in sports.
- Teaching is good. Past differences in the achievement of boys compared to girls have been diminished effectively. Consequently, pupils progress well from their differing starting points.
- Effective teaching of phonics, reading, writing, communication and mathematics ensures that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Children in the early years receive effective teaching and caring adult support. They progress well and achieve the skills needed to learn successfully in Year 1.
- Disadvantaged pupils make rapid progress. Extra adult support makes a positive difference and is provided on the basis of an accurate assessment of pupils' knowledge and skills.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do well. They receive confidence-boosting additional adult support that helps improve their achievement.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff and governors are vigilant in maintaining pupils' safety and welfare. As a result, pupils feel very safe.
- Pupils enjoy school, behave well and share very supportive relationships. Pupils' positive attitudes to all aspects of their learning are reflected in above-average rates of attendance.
- Parents hold the school in high regard and welcome its very caring family atmosphere. Parents fully support staff in helping their children to achieve well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen pupils' learning and achievement by:
 - more consistently deepening pupils' mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills
 - improving pupils' ability to spell words accurately.
- Extend pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding of a modern foreign language.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The much-respected headteacher provides strong leadership and teaching. She motivates the staff and pupils to do their best. Despite a reduced number of pupils now attending the school, the headteacher has steadfastly created a small but highly motivated staff team who provide effective leadership at all levels. Consequently, the school now sustains a culture where good teaching, learning and behaviour thrive.
- Strategies to improve the school since the previous inspection have been successful, especially in developing the quality of teaching and in raising pupils' outcomes. New and existing staff have engaged fully in training to improve their skills. As a result, teachers provide learning activities that closely match pupils' needs and starting points. Staff use questioning well to challenge pupils at the appropriate level to secure rapid progress.
- Staff do not tolerate discrimination. Staff work diligently to treat pupils equally and, for example, in recent terms have ensured that the most able pupils have their needs identified and met as effectively as other pupils. The promotion of equality of opportunity is evident in the way that differences in the levels of skill of boys and girls when they first enter school are now successfully addressed and diminished.
- Leaders make sure that additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used to ensure that their progress is as rapid as that of other pupils. Staff assess pupils' needs at an early stage so that the very few pupils with additional needs are supported to make rapid progress.
- Governors and parents hold the school in high regard and fully support leaders in their efforts to further improve provision and pupils' outcomes. This is seen in the comment of one parent, who reflected the views expressed by most parents in their questionnaire responses when writing that 'Rodmarton is a hidden gem'.
- The curriculum is enriched by interesting topics and extra-curricular clubs. In particular, the much-increased range of learning experiences outdoors, including provision for children in Reception, is stimulating pupils' desire to participate and learn well.
- Teachers build on the school's caring atmosphere and provide a variety of learning experiences that promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Staff help pupils become considerate and helpful young people. Staff introduce themes such as generosity in assemblies, topics about the Victorians and studies of world faiths, for example Hinduism, which widen pupils' awareness of the beliefs and customs of other people.
- Teachers use recent events to raise pupils' awareness of what it means to live in modern Britain. During the previous summer term, pupils held their own mock elections and discussed 'Brexit' before taking part in their own elections of school councillors and house captains this term. These activities enriched their understanding of democracy, a key aspect of British values.
- During the inspection pupils discussed the way successful Olympic athletes from different ethnic backgrounds expressed their pride in being British citizens. Pupils also considered what it means to be a refugee and the need to show respect and tolerance to all. This deepened their understanding of life in multicultural Britain.

- The school uses the primary sports funding very effectively to provide a wide and stimulating range of sporting activities and specialist coaching to develop pupils' health and skills. This is evident in the very large proportion of pupils participating in sports clubs and competitions. Given the small size of the school, the pupils' success in inter-school competitive sports such as cricket, netball and tag rugby illustrates the boost given to their well-being and their enthusiastic engagement in sport. Sporting events are also providing important opportunities for pupils to learn and develop socially with a much wider number of pupils of their own age.
- Leaders have been particularly successful in recent years in raising standards in English and mathematics. However, they acknowledge that they have not yet developed pupils' spelling skills sufficiently. Pupils' problem-solving skills in mathematics also need further development, so teachers are now specifically targeting both these areas.
- The curriculum provides a strong and successful emphasis on the key skills of reading, literacy and numeracy. The curriculum is planned to include all the required subjects. Most subjects are taught well and promote pupils' rapid progress. However, currently pupils do not have enough opportunities to learn, practise and understand a modern foreign language.
- The local authority has provided good support to help move the school forward since the previous inspection. The specialist guidance and training has helped to develop staff skills and has aided school leaders in targeting the right priorities for improvement. The local authority has lessened its support over the last year, and now provides light-touch support because leadership capacity has improved. The local authority rightly identifies that the school has the leadership capacity to make further improvements and is no longer in need of close support.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. Governors have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and have been instrumental in supporting the headteacher in the successful drive for improvement.
- Governors have improved the way they check the performance of the school since the previous inspection to ensure that pupils achieve well. Governors question and hold the headteacher and other leaders rigorously to account for the quality of teaching and its influence on pupils' progress. They keep a close eye on the school's use of additional funding and make sure that the pupil premium is used well to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors are helping the headteacher to steer the school effectively through a period of change. They are clear about the potential constraints to learning, which the school faces because of occasional fluctuation in the number of pupils, and are working with determination to overcome them. For example, governors have recently introduced a breakfast club and have widened outdoor learning opportunities to raise standards further and attract more pupils to the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher and governors have updated safeguarding policies and procedures to fully comply with statutory requirements. They have also ensured that staff and governors have been trained and know what to do to keep pupils safe. Leaders ensure that agreed procedures are implemented effectively. Leaders are particularly effective in investigating the reasons

for pupils' absence and in checking that pupils who have left the school continue to be kept safe from risk and potential harm. Staff work well with outside agencies and are diligent in making and following up referrals to keep pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and experienced teaching assistants set consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour and ensure that well-established routines sustain a calm, positive learning atmosphere in the classrooms.
- Teachers encourage pupils' interest and engagement in learning by offering a stimulating range of learning experiences. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about sporting activities, outdoor learning and their much-improved story writing.
- Adults question pupils well to deepen their understanding and to build on pupils' previous learning. Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge, which enables them to adjust their questioning effectively so that pupils from differing starting points are fully involved in learning and can respond well.
- The sensible and thoughtful way that all pupils respond to teachers' challenging questioning illustrates their good learning. For example, pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 confidently posed their own questions to check their understanding of how to capture the reader's attention when writing openings to their stories.
- Pupils are eager to learn and are encouraged by supportive adults to persevere, for example when using computers to check and edit their writing.
- Staff know the pupils very well and are mindful and skilled in meeting the needs of different groups of pupils. Teachers identify and tackle differences in the performance of boys and girls from an early stage using a range of strategies to capture boys' interest in learning. This is enabling both boys and girls to make more rapid progress.
- The teachers in both classes make sure that the most able pupils are suitably challenged. They set demanding work that stretches pupils' knowledge and skills. For example, pupils in Year 2 responded well to the challenge of creating houses for 'the three little pigs' using combinations of base 10 number rods.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work alongside pupils to consolidate new and previous learning. Staff are particularly successful in enabling disadvantaged pupils to grasp new concepts. Staff provide engaging activities and tailored support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which help them to gain confidence as learners.
- Phonics and reading are taught well, resulting in good outcomes and progress. Staff develop productive links with parents, with the result that home-school reading records indicate that pupils benefit from frequent opportunities to read at home.
- Teachers are now focusing more specifically on developing pupils' ability to spell words accurately. This is a recent focus for development that has not yet had sufficient impact on the pupils' approach to spelling words that they do not know. Pupils were observed guessing spellings rather than using spelling strategies.
- Teachers adhere well to the school's new and updated marking policy. Consequently, pupils have a better understanding of how to improve their work, and this is helping them to make more rapid progress than previously.
- Stronger teaching has helped pupils to develop and improve their numeracy skills since

the previous inspection. This productive emphasis continues, but it is not yet accompanied by an equally effective focus on extending pupils' ability to use their knowledge of number to reason and solve mathematical problems.

- Parents value the way that teachers keep them well informed about their children's progress. Parents also appreciate the work that pupils take home and welcome the opportunity to contribute to their children's learning. One parent, reflecting the views of others, explained that, 'We are happy with the school and are pleased to be a part of it.'

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. Often pupils respond eagerly and productively to teachers' stimulating and challenging questioning and encouragement to accelerate their learning.
- Pupils share excellent relationships with each other and with the caring staff in the school. They appreciate the additional opportunities to work and play together provided in the breakfast and after-school clubs and especially welcome the wide range of sporting activities.
- Pupils develop a strong sense of respect for the views of others and learn particularly well when sharing their ideas with each other. Pupils also demonstrate their wider understanding and empathy for other people, for example in assembly when discussing the work of 'Mother Teresa' in India.
- Pupils develop their understanding of leadership and responsibility effectively through expressing their views as members of the school council or helping in class and during assemblies. Some pupils have also been trained as play leaders to help others at breaktimes, but they do not always exercise these responsibilities to best effect.
- Staff know the pupils very well. All adults who work in the school ensure that robust safeguarding and welfare policies and procedures are implemented diligently and supportively to keep pupils safe.
- Pupils know how to stay safe, for example when crossing roads and meeting strangers, and also know how to stay safe when using technology and the internet. Older pupils are particularly mindful of younger children when moving around the school. Pupils are proud of the school's supportive family atmosphere.
- Parents expressed their wholehearted agreement that children are very well looked after and kept safe at school. Parents' comments in the Ofsted questionnaire included, 'Every child seems to receive the individual support they need,' and 'The staff provide a safe, fun and excellent environment.' These comments accurately reflect the views of the very large proportion of parents who responded to the questionnaire and of those who talked with the inspector.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils who spoke to the inspector unanimously agreed that, 'Behaviour is better now than in the past.' This is borne out by the much-reduced entries of poor behaviour in the school's detailed records. Pupils behave well in class and as they move about the

school. They are respectful, listen and respond well to their teachers' guidance and questions.

- On occasion, a minority of pupils become overexcited at breaktimes and lack awareness of how their movements might affect others. Some pupils still need and receive extra adult reminders to play sensibly.
- Bullying is very rare and there have been no exclusions in recent years. Pupils know about the different types of bullying that could occur, for example, cyber bullying through the internet. They have no doubt that should it occur, staff would 'stop it immediately'.
- Pupils say that they greatly enjoy school, and this is clearly evident in their much better, and now above-average, attendance. In response to the headteacher's strong prompting, punctuality has improved. These developments, fully supported by parents, are contributing to pupils' good progress.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders and teachers have focused successfully on improving pupils' achievements since the previous inspection. As a result, the school's assessments of pupils' developing skills over the past year show good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from pupils' differing starting points.
- Observations of pupils' engagement in learning in class, particularly their thoughtful replies to teachers' stimulating questioning, reflect the rapidly improving skills evident in their work in books.
- Pupils' careful handwriting and their expressive writing skills have been prompted by raised teachers' expectations. Pupils across the school now present their work neatly. By the end of Year 6, pupils demonstrate good handwriting skills and use a rich vocabulary to create atmosphere and interest for the reader.
- Pupils' reading skills are developed well and continue to be boosted by the effective teaching of phonics. This is evident in the year-on-year increase in the proportion of pupils achieving and exceeding expected standards in the Year 1 and Year 2 phonics screening checks. Pupils' improving outcomes in reading and increasingly rapid progress are evident across the school. This is because pupils of all abilities benefit from frequent opportunities to read books, both at home and at school, to support their learning and enjoyment.
- At the present time, and in recent years, there have been too few disadvantaged pupils in Years 2 and 6 to compare their progress and achievements meaningfully with the performance of pupils nationally. The school's own assessments show that disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points and respond well to the extra adult help they receive. The work in the books of disadvantaged pupils clearly shows their deepening understanding and effective learning in response to teachers' additional guidance.
- From active engagement with training, staff have improved their ability to support pupils with differing needs since the previous inspection. Pupils benefit from having their particular needs identified and tackled at an early stage. Consequently, the most able pupils now make strong progress in their writing and mathematical skills. This has increasingly included the most able pupils, who make good progress in response to the increased challenges now presented to them. For example, this has raised the writing

and numeracy skills of the most able pupils over the past year so that they now match their well-developed speaking and listening skills.

- The very small proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their different starting points. This is because staff get to know them well and react swiftly and supportively to build and sustain their confidence and interest in learning. The parents of pupils with additional needs say that their children are 'coming on in leaps and bounds'.
- Leaders and teachers have focused on improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills since the previous inspection and much has been achieved by raising expectations and improving the quality of pupils' presentation of their work. Pupils now develop neat handwriting and form well-constructed sentences. This enables pupils to make better use of their rich vocabulary and write more expressively.
- Pupils' ability to spell words accurately is less developed and remains a relative weakness, but is now being targeted more specifically by teachers.
- Pupils have made good progress and improved their numeracy skills well over the past year. Teachers are placing a stronger emphasis on improving pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics, but these are not always fully developed across the school.
- Pupils make good progress across most other subjects and are well prepared for future learning by the time they leave the school. For example, pupils use computers confidently to research historical topics such as the Victorians. Pupils extend their science and sporting skills successfully through a stimulating range of outdoor learning experiences. Pupils also demonstrate their good speaking and singing skills in assemblies and in termly performances to parents and members of the local community. Currently, though, pupils' skills and understanding of a modern foreign language are not developed well enough.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership and management of the early years have been taken up by a different teacher recently. Nevertheless, good leadership continues, supported by effective liaison between early years staff and close support from the headteacher.
- The current early years leader and experienced teaching assistant make sure that children are kept safe at all times. Staff keep their training up to date and use their skills, for example in paediatric first aid, to ensure children's welfare. As a result, children feel safe and settle quickly.
- Children behave well and respond respectfully to the school's routines. They develop excellent relationships with each other and with adults and this promotes good learning.
- Staff assess children's skills carefully on entry to gather and share a thorough understanding of children's starting points and skills. Staff complete detailed records and evaluations of each child's developing skills in 'Learning Journeys' booklets. The children and their parents are invited to record their own observations as 'WOW' comments, and these contribute meaningfully to the regular and accurate checks of how well children are progressing. Parents value the opportunity to contribute to their children's learning.
- Parents are extremely supportive of the school. They value the high-quality care their

children receive and the close communication with staff. One parent wrote, 'The teacher has fired my son's imagination and ensured he has got off to a great start.' This parent's comment was typical of the views of other parents.

- Staff use assessments of children's progress effectively to plan relevant learning experiences that build well on children's previous learning. For example, in recent terms staff have become increasingly aware of differences in the levels of skill between girls and boys when they arrive in school. As a result, staff have strengthened the way they plan children's learning activities to enthuse and engage boys to better effect. Observations of new children being inducted into school on a part-time basis showed that some boys had yet to be fully enthused by the 'superheroes' and 'pirate' themes. These have been designed to increase boys' interest in mathematics.
- Children's skills on entry vary from year to year within the small year groups. Most children join the combined Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 class with knowledge and skills typical for their age. Children benefit from good teaching and, aided by much-improved outdoor learning opportunities, make good progress. The children's early reading skills, especially their understanding of phonics, are taught and developed well.
- Leaders make sure that disadvantaged children and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the right level of adult support and are taught well. Consequently, these children make good progress and become enthusiastic learners.
- Staff ensure that the skills and abilities of the most able children are identified and encouraged at an early stage. This is enabling this group of children to make more rapid progress, as well as motivating them to challenge themselves to achieve even more. Staff are increasingly providing effective support and assistance for other children, especially some boys, whose particular learning needs also benefit from more specific adult guidance.
- By the time children reach the end of their year in Reception, an above-average proportion of children achieve a good level of development. This shows that children are well prepared for their next stage of learning as they move into Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	115535
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10012360

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	36
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Lucas
Headteacher	Caroline Musty
Telephone number	01285 841284
Website	www.rodmartonschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@rodmarton.gloucs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 July 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average and varies significantly from year to year.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is well below average. The number of disadvantaged pupils varies from year to year within the very small year groups. Currently, there are no disadvantaged pupils in several year groups.
- On occasion, a well above average proportion of pupils leaves the school other than at the normal time. This occurred at the end of the previous academic year when a significant minority of pupils left at the end of key stage 1 and from lower key stage 2 to enter privately funded schools. Consequently, the number of pupils now attending the school is lower than at the time of the previous inspection.

- Currently the pupils are taught in two classes. Children experience early years provision in a combined Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 class. The other pupils in the school are taught in a mixed-age Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 class.
- There are on-site breakfast and after-school clubs managed by the governing body, which formed part of the inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The new headteacher commenced her duties at the school in January 2015.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons and saw the work of two teachers and three teaching assistants.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures and the school's self-evaluation.
- The inspector examined the school's systems for checking progress and records of checks on the quality of teaching.
- The inspector talked to individual pupils and a representative group of pupils about the school and their work and listened to individual pupils read. He also visited breakfast and after-school clubs and attended an assembly. The inspector looked at samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects and classes.
- The inspector held a meeting with members of the governing body and held meetings with school staff, mainly senior and middle leaders. He also met with a representative of the local authority.
- The views expressed in the 57 online responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and in nine pupil questionnaires were also considered. In addition, the inspector gathered the views of staff and several parents during informal meetings at the school.
- The inspector evaluated the school's use of the primary physical education and sport funding and the pupil premium.

Inspection team

Alexander Baxter, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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