

Rumboldswyke CofE Infants' School

Rumbolds Close, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 7UA

Inspection dates

4–5 April 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- This small school has been through a period of significant turbulence in recent years. Despite senior leaders' determined efforts to steady the ship, standards have declined.
- Efforts to improve the school have been limited because senior leaders and governors have an overly positive view of the school. They have not evaluated their work or the performance of the school thoroughly enough.
- Leaders' plans do not focus sharply on the impact they will have on raising standards.
- Tracking systems prevent leaders from checking on the progress of groups of pupils and stepping in quickly to address weaknesses.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not making enough progress from their starting points.
- For the past three years, too few pupils have reached the expected standard in phonics by the end of Year 1. Proportions of pupils who go on to reach this standard by the end of Year 2 have also been too low.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve in writing and mathematics, especially the most able pupils. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- Teaching does not always build on a secure assessment of what pupils already know and understand. Teachers miss opportunities to help pupils learn from their mistakes and deepen their understanding.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write independently at greater length. This restricts their ability to develop into strong, confident writers.

The school has the following strengths

- Parents are full of praise for the school, especially the headteacher. They appreciate that staff know their children well, value them as individuals and take good care of them.
- Pupils are starting to make better progress in phonics, including disadvantaged pupils.
- Staff are proud to be part of the school's team and enjoy their work.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. They are taught well and provided with interesting learning opportunities so that they make good progress.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are kind, thoughtful and polite. They know that there is always an adult whom they can go to if they have a problem.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and raise standards by ensuring that:
 - school improvement plans have clear, measurable success criteria so that leaders and governors can accurately evaluate the impact of their actions.
 - tracking systems enable leaders and governors to evaluate the progress of groups of pupils over time, including pupils with very low starting points.
- Accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make good progress, particularly in writing and mathematics, by ensuring that teachers:
 - have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially the most able and disadvantaged pupils
 - provide pupils with more opportunities to write at greater length and by using topics that will spark the interest of boys
 - provide pupils with opportunities to apply their skills in mathematics by giving them problems to solve that involve mathematical reasoning
 - continue to build on the current improvements in the teaching of phonics.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The headteacher has led the school with dedication and determination during a prolonged period of turbulence. There have been many changes of staff in recent years. Also, the cohort of the school has altered. A much larger proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities now attend the school. Furthermore, wider issues affecting the city's schools have had a direct impact on how the school is perceived. All of these have taken their toll on the school.
- Senior leaders and governors understand the reasons that have led to this unsettling period. They feel frustrated that these factors have thwarted their attempts to improve the school as quickly as they would have liked.
- Leaders and governors are ambitious for the school and its pupils. However, they do not have an accurate view of the school. Leaders' overly optimistic view has hampered their drive for improvement because they have not recognised some of the main areas of weakness quickly enough. For example, they have not fully appreciated that standards have declined in recent years. Instead, they refer to 'a blip' last year. Published figures show clearly that this is not the case.
- Senior leaders recognise that there is much work to be done and they have improvement plans in place. However, these plans are not focused sufficiently on the impact that they will have on improving outcomes for pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Plans lack precision and clear milestones that would allow leaders and governors to check that they are having the desired effect.
- Leaders make sure that each pupil's individual progress is carefully tracked. However, they do not check on the progress of groups of pupils from their starting points, because tracking systems do not enable them to do this. These systems are also not refined enough to be able to track the progress of pupils with very low starting points. As a result, leaders are not able to accurately monitor the progress of groups and intervene quickly when one group's progress starts to dip.
- The additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have not been used effectively. However, there is evidence, especially in Year 2, and in phonics, that things are starting to improve for disadvantaged pupils.
- Improving outcomes in phonics has rightly been at the forefront of leaders' drive for improvement this academic year. While it is still early days, there are some encouraging signs that leaders' actions are having a positive impact. This includes effective action by the recently appointed leader of English.
- When new initiatives are introduced, senior leaders make sure that staff are well prepared to implement them through the provision of suitable training. There has been a programme of professional development available for staff but ongoing staffing turbulence has meant that it has been difficult to embed improvements.
- Leaders of other subjects have only recently been appointed to their roles. For

example, the leader of mathematics has been in post for a few weeks. In that time she has identified areas of weakness and has introduced new ideas to address them. It is much too early to be able to gauge the success of these initiatives.

- The curriculum focuses clearly on providing pupils with the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. However, although more time is being given to these core subjects, pupils still enjoy learning across a wide curriculum. Pupils' work shows that they learn about historical events, undertake science experiments and develop skills in art.
- The religious education curriculum helps pupils not only understand about Christianity, but also other faiths, cultures and celebrations, including Hinduism and the Chinese New Year. Teachers take opportunities to celebrate the different cultures of pupils in their class.
- Pupils enjoy a variety of music performances. They visit galleries, the local church and the cathedral. Some are able to learn the piano and join the choir. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well catered for.
- Leaders make sure that the additional funding for physical education (PE) and sport is put to good effect. Pupils have the opportunity to try a number of different sports and take part in activities with other schools. This has a positive impact on their physical and emotional development. In addition, some teachers have received training to help develop their skills in teaching PE and sport.
- Despite the many challenges that the school has faced, the headteacher has ensured that staff morale has stayed high. All who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff said that they enjoy working at the school and feel proud to be a member of staff.
- Parents are almost unanimous in their support of the school. They speak highly of everything that it does to help their children get off to a positive start in their education. All, but a tiny handful, who expressed an opinion said that they would recommend the school. One parent wrote: 'All staff, from teaching to the office, are dedicated to making each day a pleasure for my daughter. She is motivated to come in, feels safe and secure, is engaged in her learning and looks forward to playing with her friends.' Many parents echo this view.
- The local authority has an accurate view of the school and has offered support to leaders recently, to help them address areas of weakness.

Governance

- Governors now have a broad understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are enthusiastic and eager to ensure that the school provides the best possible education for its pupils.
- Governors know the right questions to ask leaders, but are not sufficiently clear about how to check if the answers are accurate. This has limited their effectiveness because the information that senior leaders have provided them with has painted an overly rosy picture of the school. For example, in 2016, the headteacher's report only provided governors with information that compared results in phonics with the school's own predictions, rather than the much higher national figures.
- Governors have taken care to ensure that the governing body has the right mix of skills and experience to provide support and challenge for the school. There is considerable

expertise in a wide range of relevant areas. The governing body is well placed to help the school drive much-needed improvements.

- Together with leaders at all levels, governors understand and embrace their responsibility to keep pupils safe. They make sure that the right checks are carried out to ensure that only suitable people are allowed to work in the school, and the school is a safe place for pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders, governors and staff have together created a culture where the well-being of every pupil is at the heart of the school and is central to everything it does.
- Policies, procedures and recording systems are thorough, fit for purpose and followed carefully. All staff are trained and kept up to date with the latest guidance and advice on all aspects of keeping pupils safe.
- The vast majority of responses from parents were extremely positive about all aspects of pupils' safety and welfare.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- There has been much turbulence in staffing in recent years. This unsettled period has made it difficult for senior leaders to drive forward or embed improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, teachers have not been able to improve their practice so that it becomes consistently good. Where leaders have given advice to teachers, it has not always focused on the attainment of groups of pupils, nor the progress that they are making.
- Teachers do not always plan lessons based on a secure, comprehensive understanding of what pupils already know and understand. Lessons do not take sufficient account of pupils' prior learning, so that opportunities to strengthen pupils' understanding and knowledge of new concepts are missed. This leads to pupils having an insecure grasp of some concepts, especially in mathematics.
- There are few opportunities in mathematics for pupils to tackle tricky problems where they can deepen their understanding and use mathematical reasoning skills.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. Work in pupils' books is inconsistent and does not reflect the best that pupils are capable of. For example, mistakes in forming letters or numbers go uncorrected rather than being identified and addressed through pupils' carefully practising. The same is true in mathematics, where teachers do not always spot pupils' mistakes, nor expect them to be corrected.
- Teachers do not provide the most able pupils with opportunities to deepen their understanding or apply their skills in more challenging situations. In writing, there are too few activities requiring pupils to write at length independently or from starting points that ignite pupils' interest. Careful thought should be given to what will engage boys' interests, so that they can become eager, skilful writers.
- Questioning does not always probe pupils' understanding and support teachers in assessing and planning for learning. Questions, too often, do not challenge pupils to

think deeply.

- Adults are not always quick to spot the mistakes pupils make in lessons, intervene quickly and iron out any misunderstandings on the spot. This is especially true in mathematics.
- Teaching and learning are based on strong, mutually respectful relationships. Adults and pupils get on well and this is reflected in the way that pupils support and encourage each other. Even the youngest children in the school understand how to work together and cooperate in a friendly, helpful way.
- There is now a consistent, carefully monitored approach to the teaching of phonics. This is helping pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, to be able to read and write more accurately.
- The teaching of phonics is lively, accurate and well planned. Teachers capture pupils' interest and usually check on their understanding regularly throughout the lesson. Pupils are taught how to test each other's knowledge, which they do with patience and good humour. They know not to rush in with help too quickly if their partner needs time to think.
- Learning support assistants are used effectively in most classes. They teach phonics to quite large groups of lower-ability pupils, as well as running interventions for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Effective classroom routines ensure that little time is wasted in most lessons.
- Teachers help pupils to appreciate reading and place a high value on it. Pupils enjoy listening to stories each day while having a snack and some milk. Even pupils who struggle with reading are enthusiastic about books and can talk about the ones they have particularly liked. The most able pupils can talk about their favourite authors as well.
- Homework is used to help pupils practise the basic skills of reading and spelling at home, as well as offering them opportunities to develop their learning across the curriculum.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's Christian values underpin the caring culture that is a feature of this school. Parents, staff, governors and pupils all say that pupils are very well cared for because everybody in the school knows each pupil well. Staff see it as their personal responsibility to ensure the safety of every pupil.
- Staff make sure that pupils' physical development is well provided for. Leaders recognised that there was only a relatively small hard area for pupils to play on when it was wet. To overcome this, they provided an all-weather pathway around the perimeter of the school field. Pupils can now run and exercise, even when the field is out of action.
- Even young children show good social skills and know how to make newcomers to the school feel welcome.

- Pupils understand how to stay safe in a range of situations. Staff help them develop an understanding of road safety during trips out of school, for example to the church or the city centre.
- Leaders place a strong emphasis on ensuring that pupils are given an age-appropriate understanding of the hazards of being online. Pupils are able to explain clearly what they should do to stay away from danger.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the difference between bullying and occasional acts of thoughtlessness or unkindness. Bullying is rare in the school but when it does happen it is managed carefully and sensitively.
- Pupils have confidence in staff and say that there is always someone in school whom they can talk to if they have any worries.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite to adults and to each other, which results in a calm, happy school. Parents, staff, governors and pupils all agree on this.
- Pupils come to school ready to learn. Those who have struggled with social and emotional difficulties have their needs well met. One such pupil was asked by the headteacher if he was ready to learn today. He responded instantly, 'I'm always ready to learn!'
- Behaviour in most lessons is good. Pupils listen carefully, follow instructions promptly and have positive attitudes to learning. Occasionally, when teaching does not capture pupils' interest, spark their curiosity or challenge their thinking, standards of behaviour dip. When this happens, one or two pupils start calling out, others start to daydream and the pace of learning slows.
- The playground is a friendly place to be. Pupils all agree on this. There are a few instances of rough play at breaktimes, but adults quickly step in to calm games down so that pupils' play can continue safely and happily.
- Leaders have worked hard to stress to parents the importance of pupils being in school every day. As a result, levels of attendance are high, including for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In recent years standards have declined in the school, especially in writing and mathematics. Previously, typical attainment at the end of key stage 1 had been well above national figures, but in the last two years it has been broadly average. In 2016, standards in writing were well below the national average.
- Proportions of pupils achieving the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics have dipped in recent years. In 2016, no pupils were assessed at the higher level in any subject.
- Proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check have been well below the national average for the past three years. In 2016, fewer than half the pupils in Year 1 achieved the expected standard. Proportions of

pupils who went on to achieve the expected standard by the end of Year 2 have also been below national figures for the past two years. Achievement in phonics is starting to improve as a result of leaders' actions earlier this academic year.

- The number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has increased considerably in the last two years. The proportion of this group of pupils has risen from what is typical in primary schools to almost twice the national average. The school keeps detailed records and assessments, and sets targets for these pupils by which leaders measure pupils' progress. Most pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not making good progress from their starting points, although there are several examples of pupils who have been moved off the special educational needs register.
- Standards in writing are still too low, although there is evidence that they are starting to improve. This improvement is chiefly as a result of the new phonics scheme. However, pupils are provided with few opportunities to write at length and this limits their stamina and fluency when writing. Too few pupils are writing at the higher standard.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve less well than other pupils because leaders do not make effective use of the pupil premium. However, there is evidence that some disadvantaged pupils, especially in Year 2, are starting to make better progress.
- Pupils are starting to make better progress in reading and mathematics although standards are not high enough. However, more pupils are currently on track to achieve the higher standard in these subjects.
- Children make good progress in the early years. By the end of the year, most are ready to join Year 1.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership and teaching in the early years are good.
- Many children enter the school with skills below those typical for their age and stage of development. They make strong progress from their starting points as a result of effective teaching. Staff provide good role models for children by asking questions, playing alongside children and seizing opportunities to enrich their learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have a good understanding of the emotional needs of young children. Right from the moment children start school, well-trained adults help them to manage their feelings and develop positive relationships. This helps to prepare children to learn well in school so they can begin to develop the skills of reading, writing and mathematics.
- Staff know each child well and plan learning activities that draw on their interests. Teachers take special care in finding out what captures boys' interest and engages their curiosity. For example, staff recently planned learning activities around a popular film when they realised how much it excited children. Boys especially responded with great enthusiasm.
- Children benefit from a well-resourced learning environment both inside and outdoors. Provision is well organised so that children have access to all the areas of learning in order to play, develop and learn.

- Teachers have high expectations of what children can achieve, especially in phonics. Children learn new sounds daily and use these to sound out simple words. They help each other to practise reading and writing the sounds they have already learned, as well as using them to read and write new words. As a result, children move from simple mark making to writing whole sentences that they can read. While disadvantaged children do not achieve as well as others, differences are starting to diminish. Similarly, although boys make good progress, their attainment in writing is less than that of girls.
- Children are kind, polite and sociable. They know how to make sure that other children feel included and involved. There was clear evidence of this when a new boy visited the school for the first time. He quickly found his feet because the other children welcomed him cheerfully and were keen to find out about him by asking him lots of questions.
- Children's individual progress is tracked carefully. Even young children are helped to understand whether they have achieved their learning intention, because adults regularly help them to check.
- However, the same issues that prevent leaders from monitoring the progress of pupils' groups in key stage 1 also make tracking groups of children in the early years difficult. Leaders are limited in their ability to check on the progress of groups and to intervene quickly when the progress of a group slows.
- As in the rest of the school, parents are warmly welcomed and are encouraged to be actively involved in their children's learning. Parents who expressed an opinion were delighted with their children's start in school.
- Transition arrangements are effective in making sure that children's entry into school is smooth so that they get off to a swift, confident start.

School details

Unique reference number	125975
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10033029

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	Infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	111
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Suni Lowe
Headteacher	Fiona Sayce
Telephone number	01243 782 368
Website	www.rumboldswhyke.w-sussex.sch.uk
Email address	office@rumboldswhyke.w-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2–3 July 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Rumboldswyke CofE Infants' School is much smaller than the average primary school.
- There are five classes. Two are for children in the early years. Three are mixed-age Years 1 and 2 classes.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above that seen nationally. Numbers have increased sharply in the last two years.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below the national average.
- The proportion of boys in the school is much higher than the national average.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.

- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in all classes across the school. A learning walk was carried out jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspector scrutinised pupils' work with the headteacher and listened to some pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the following people: pupils, the vice-chair of the governing body and three other governors, a representative of the local authority, the headteacher and deputy headteacher, middle leaders and members of the school council. The inspector had a telephone interview with a representative from the local diocese.
- The inspector undertook a check of the school's policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils, including the statutory checks made during the recruitment of new staff.
- A range of information produced by the school was considered. This included information on pupils' progress and attainment, behaviour and attendance, and the school's own evaluation of its work. The inspector considered reports to the governing body, minutes of their meetings and the school's plans for further improvement. Reports of visits by the local authority were also taken into account.
- The inspector considered the 58 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, together with 28 text responses from parents. He also spoke to parents in the playground at the start of the day.
- The inspection also took into account 14 responses to the staff's questionnaire and four responses to the pupils' survey.

Inspection team

Bruce Waelend, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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