

# Romsey Abbey Church of England Primary School

Church Lane, Romsey, Hampshire SO51 8EP

## Inspection dates

21–22 March 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	Requires improvement
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

- Since the previous inspection, as a result of weakness in leadership and considerable staff turnover, there has been a notable decline in teaching quality and pupils' achievement.
- Leaders and governors have not maintained an accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness. Areas for attention have often not been identified or tackled well enough.
- Leaders and governors have not kept the sharp oversight of additional funding needed to ensure that it is spent effectively.
- Arrangements for holding leaders and staff to account for their performance have been too loose.
- Teaching does not build consistently well on pupils' previous learning. At times, lower-ability pupils are given tasks that are too hard. The most able typically have limited opportunities to deepen their knowledge and hone their skills.
- Teachers do not check pupils' progress consistently well. Often, pupils are not given the guidance needed for them to take their next step in learning.
- Pupils' achievement is too variable between year groups and subjects.
- Coverage of some subjects is not enough to enable good progress.
- Pupils do not routinely develop the learning habits needed to learn well.
- Routines and expectations for pupils' conduct are not firmly enough established to secure consistently good behaviour.
- Pupils know to be respectful and welcoming to people who are different from them. However, pupils have limited opportunities to learn about diversity and equality in modern Britain.

### The school has the following strengths

- The relatively new headteacher is taking suitable action to improve the school.
- Pupils value the rich range of educational visits on offer.
- Pupils who need it, receive valued support from the pastoral team.
- Children in the Reception class thrive and make good progress in all areas of development.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so it consistently promotes strong progress for all pupil groups across years and subjects, by:
  - making sure that teachers maintain an accurate understanding of pupils' previous achievement, setting work of suitable challenge for pupils with differing starting points and the most able and those with low starting points in particular
  - ensuring that teachers routinely check how well pupils are grasping lesson content and provide guidance which helps pupils overcome misconceptions and deepen their learning
  - making sure that all teachers set high expectations for how work is presented and teach pupils effective ways to record their learning
  - making sure that pupils who find reading difficult receive the support needed to gain the phonics and comprehension skills required to make good progress.
- Further develop leadership and management, by:
  - developing the way leaders check and evaluate the school's performance, so leaders have an accurate understanding of strengths and areas for attention
  - ensuring that all staff are held tightly to account for securing improvements in the areas they are responsible for
  - making sure that governors have the information needed to hold leaders tightly to account for improving teaching, pupils' achievement and behaviour
  - defining clearly the impact that additional funding should have on pupils' achievement and well-being, so the extent to which this funding is used successfully can be evaluated sharply and adjustments made when needed
  - making sure that there is a consistently sound approach in place for identifying pupils who have special educational needs and that provision for these pupils is effective
  - checking that each subject is covered well enough to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes good progress across the board
  - ensuring that the curriculum helps pupils develop a broad understanding of diversity in modern Britain and the nature of discrimination and how they might challenge it.
- Ensure that all adults share high expectations for pupils' behaviour so that:
  - pupils behave consistently well in lessons, paying attention and focusing on the task at hand
  - pupils consistently conduct themselves in a calm and orderly manner as they move around the school.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

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

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, weaknesses in leadership and governance, coupled with high staff turbulence, have led to a notable decline in teaching quality and pupils' achievement. Leaders have not maintained a rigorous enough approach to evaluating the school's effectiveness and tackling areas of underperformance.
- Since taking up post, the current headteacher has got to grips with the extent of the challenge she faces to turn the school around. Together with her senior team, and well supported by the local authority and the new chair of the governing body, she is laying the foundations for a successful school.
- The headteacher has improved arrangements for managing staff performance. All leaders and teachers now have clear targets. Leaders and teachers are collating suitable evidence to aid accurate evaluation. However, this approach has not been in place long enough to judge its effectiveness. Additionally, not all staff with leadership responsibilities are fully aware of their targets and the extent to which they are currently meeting them is yet to be reviewed.
- Leaders have introduced helpful regular checks on the quality of teaching. They share their findings weekly with the staff group and provide training that is helping teachers to improve their practice. So far, the focus of this work has been mainly on improving teaching in mathematics. Leaders recognise the need for a similarly high focus on other aspects of teaching.
- Until recently, leaders had not made sharp use of assessment information. Understanding of the achievement of each group of pupils from their differing starting points in each year and subject has been limited. Leaders are starting to make better use of assessment information to gain clearer insight. For example, leaders now look at the proportion of disadvantaged pupils on track to meet the standard for their age in English and mathematics. However, leaders have not analysed the progress of the most able or considered the extent to which pupils who are behind are catching up.
- Arrangements for ensuring that leaders use additional funding effectively are not tight enough. Leaders have not clarified the impact that each aspect of spending should have on disadvantaged pupil's achievement and well-being. Leaders and governors are not well-placed to evaluate the success of their approach.
- Leaders and governors have not kept effective oversight of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The extent to which leaders put additional funding for these pupils to good use is unclear. A seemingly suitable range of extra support is provided for these pupils. However, leaders have not maintained a clear understanding of what the impact of this support should be or is having on pupils' achievement. Additionally, there has been some confusion about what might constitute a special educational need. Leaders are starting to review and tighten their approach but it is too soon to see the impact of this.
- Leaders do not have a sharp understanding of the impact of their use of additional sports funding. Leaders use the funding to buy new equipment, provide swimming lessons, run bike safety training and pay for a company to run a triathlon day.

However, leaders have not clarified how this will lead to increased participation in competitive sport or develop teachers' skills in teaching physical education. No plan is in place to ensure that the increased level of sport paid for by the additional funding can be sustained when the funding ceases.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced in its overall design but teaching is not effective enough to ensure that it promotes good progress across the breadth of curriculum subjects. The limited amount of work typically seen in pupils' topic and science books indicates that subjects other than English and mathematics are not covered well enough. Additionally, although pupils learn about other religions, they have limited opportunities to learn about diversity in modern Britain.
- The curriculum provides valuable opportunities for pupils to learn beyond lessons. Pupils were clear that this is a strength of the school and gave many examples of memorable days out. These included visits to Winchester Cathedral, the Museum of Army Flying, the Houses of Parliament and an indoor climbing centre. The oldest pupils are eagerly awaiting the annual Year 6 visit to France. Younger pupils said they enjoyed visiting Romsey Abbey and experiencing worship there. Most pupils also benefit from musical instrument lessons. Some join the choir and sing at local events.
- Before April 2016, the local authority had limited involvement in the school. School leaders did not reach out for support. On taking up post, the headteacher recognised the need to re-engage with the local authority and the wider education community. The local authority has provided effective and well-valued support over the last year. Regular visits from a local authority officer have helped leaders prioritise areas for attention. Visits to other schools have helped leaders learn from effective practice.
- Teachers' attendance at assessment moderation meetings has helped to ensure that assessment is now more accurate than was previously the case. A local authority officer for the early years has provided helpful support, checking that assessment is accurate and equipping the teacher with suitable strategies to improve boys' literacy.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors have not held leaders effectively to account for the school's performance. Governors have accepted too much at face value and not challenged leaders well enough.
- The governing body has had a limited understanding of the effectiveness of the school. Governors have not gained a sharp understanding of published performance data and what it signals about the quality of teaching. They have also not kept suitable oversight of the use of additional funding.
- On taking up post, the new chair of the governing body found that governance arrangements were too vague. She has acted swiftly to instil more rigour and develop a tighter approach. She is making sure that governors receive suitable training and visit the school to see what is going on at first hand. A helpful list of questions gives governors a clear focus for their visit. Governors are starting to ask for and receive the information they need to gain an insight into pupils' achievement. However, they are not yet receiving the information needed to gain an incisive understanding of all aspects of the school's performance.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Since taking up post, the headteacher has rightly placed a high priority on securing sound arrangements for safeguarding as previous practice had not been secure enough. Suitable policies are now in place. Staff have received appropriate training, bringing them up to date with current requirements. Leaders have set up suitable procedures to make sure that staff carry out the safeguarding policy effectively and pupils are safe. Record-keeping has been tightened. Leaders now keep useful, confidential records of all referrals made to the local authority concerning pupils who may be at risk of harm, along with subsequent outcomes.
- The new policies meet government and local authority requirements. Staff know how to recognise and what to do when a pupil might be at risk. Leaders maintain and check records to ensure that no staff miss out on training. Checks on the suitability of staff are sound. The governor responsible for safeguarding has made sure that recruitment procedures are secure.
- Leaders have recognised that although these arrangements help to ensure that pupils are safe, some aspects of practice could be tighter still. Records correctly show when the local authority deem that a pupil's case is not of sufficient concern to trigger support from it or other agencies. However, the extent of support which the school provides such pupils or how well the pupil is faring as a result of school support are not recorded consistently well. As a result, leaders are not completely clear about the effectiveness of the provision they make for these vulnerable pupils.
- A clear plan is in place for tightening this aspect of safeguarding. A support plan is now being written for any vulnerable pupil. Weekly meetings between leaders and the safeguarding governor have been set up to review progress in live cases and check how other vulnerable pupils are faring. A local authority review is booked to ensure that all aspects of safeguarding practice are of the highest quality.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies notably between year groups and subjects. As a result, pupils' achievement is inconsistent as they progress from year to year.
- Teaching is not consistently precise enough to ensure that pupils of varying ability build well on their previous learning and make good progress. At times, pupils with low previous achievement are required to tackle a task that is too hard for them without developing more basic understanding first. The most able are not consistently getting the level of challenge needed to deepen their work.
- Some teachers' checks on how well pupils are grasping their learning are not effective enough. Pupils who are stuck or have developed a misconception do not get the guidance needed to move forward. When teachers do provide advice, it is not consistently effective enough to help pupils improve. As a result, pupils make the same mistakes again in their next piece of work or move on to another topic before making sense of the previous one.

- Teachers' expectations for pupils' behaviour and achievement are not consistently high. At times, in particular at key stage 1, pupils wander off task without check. Some teachers accept poor standards of presentation, poorly formed handwriting and inaccurately drawn symbols.
- Teaching in mathematics is improving. Encouragingly, teachers have responded well to the training and guidance which leaders have provided. Pupils now have more opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge and reasoning skills to solving problems. However, at times this is at the expense of ensuring that pupils have the fundamental mathematical understanding needed to tackle the problem they are presented with. Additionally, pupils working on mathematical calculations often do not show their working. They cannot look back and spot quickly where they have gone wrong.
- The extent to which teaching of reading promotes good progress is variable. Pupils have regular opportunities to read to an adult but this is not consistently ensuring that pupils develop a deep comprehension of the text.
- Leaders have made sure that reading books of different levels of difficulty are clearly labelled, so pupils can select a book that helps them move their reading on by just the right amount. However, some pupils with weak reading skills select a book that is too difficult for them, which hampers their progress. Additionally, teaching of phonics and reading have not proved effective enough for some of these pupils. They have not acquired the skills needed to tackle tricky words and make sense of what they are reading.
- Teaching in other subjects is often weak. Pupils' progress is hampered by variability in teaching quality combined with a lack of coverage in some subjects. For example, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop science skills. The content in art sketch books indicates that there are limited opportunities for pupils to use sketch books to record, review and revisit ideas as required. Work in pupils' other books indicates that opportunities for them to develop skills in recording learning in a way that is fitting for each subject is quite minimal.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils do not consistently gain the good learning habits needed to thrive in class. Quite often, pupils have not learned how to set out and present their work in a way that would help them learn well. Pupils' books are often untidy, with poorly presented and unfinished work.
- Pupils do not routinely develop the skills needed to take turns and listen to each other during discussion. Pupils are keen to share and explore ideas but this proves difficult when they all talk at once.
- Pupils learn the importance of respecting all, whatever their background and regardless of any differences they might have. However, opportunities for pupils to develop their

understanding of prejudice and how it might be tackled are also quite limited. Pupils in Year 5 talked about a memorable activity exploring gender stereotyping. This had clearly made a lasting impression on them. Conversely, pupils could not recall ever having discussions in lessons or assembly about racism or other forms of prejudice.

- Pupils feel safe and well cared for. There are clear that there is an adult they can turn to if something is troubling them. Pupils learn to stay safe on the road, when using a bicycle. Swimming lessons help pupils learn to stay safe in the water. Pupils also know about the risks of talking to strangers.
- Pupils develop a sound understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet and social media. Pupils know the importance of not revealing contact details. They also know to check the identity of anyone they communicate with to be sure it is someone they can trust.
- Pupils who experience emotional and behavioural difficulties benefit from support from suitably trained staff. Parents commented on the strength of this work.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Although pupils often behave well, their behaviour varies depending on the quality of teaching. Where teaching engages pupils' interest and teachers' expectations are high, standards of behaviour are also high. Where teaching is less effective and expectations not so clear, pupils are allowed to drift off task and not pay attention when they should.
- Pupils, in the main, behave well at break and lunchtime. Usually, they enjoy playing happily together and exploring the rich environment of the school grounds. This includes an interesting allotment area and wooded enclosure. However, pupils' views about behaviour around the school are mixed. About half felt it is usually good. Others had a less positive experience. Parents also had differing views about behaviour and some reported that it was poor. This poorer behaviour was evident when pupils ran across the dining hall in their hurry to get lunch.
- The school's children and families worker is keeping a close eye on pupils' attendance and making sure that pupils and their families are provided with helpful support when needed. This helps to ensure good attendance.
- Pupils' attendance is high. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, who previously had low attendance, are now attending well.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- As a result of variability in the quality of teaching, pupils make inconsistent progress across year groups and subjects.
- Over the last three years, pupils' achievement at the end of each key stage has been variable in English and typically low in mathematics.



- At the end of key stage 2, pupils' achievement has been low in mathematics and average in reading. Achievement in writing has also been average. However, although not directly comparable, in 2016 pupils' progress in writing from middle starting points was low.
- Pupils' achievement at the end of key stage 1 has declined in recent times. In 2015, one in every three pupils reached a high standard for their age in reading. This was a notable reduction from 2013 when one in every two pupils reached that standard. The proportion reaching the expected standard also declined over the same period. There was a similar decline in mathematics. Although not directly comparable, in 2016 at the end of key stage 1, achievement of pupils who had reached the expected level of development in the early years was low in both reading and mathematics.
- Pupils typically enjoy reading and value time spent in the school library. By the end of Year 6, typically they have the reading skills needed to cope with secondary school. Most pupils develop sound phonics skills. A slightly higher than average proportion of Year 1 pupils reached the expected standard in 2016. However, pupils who find reading difficult are not routinely equipped with the strategies they need to read well.
- Disadvantaged pupils make the same varied progress in English and mathematics as their peers. In some year groups, they make strong progress and achieve well, in others this is not the case. Historically, achievement has also been variable. In 2015 at the end of key stage 2, the proportions of pupils attaining the expected and high standards in reading and mathematics were in line with the national figures. Although not directly comparable, in 2016, although disadvantaged pupils' progress was broadly average, very few reached the standard expected for their age in mathematics. Additionally, those with low achievement at key stage 1 typically did not catch up during key stage 2 in reading or mathematics.
- It is difficult to be precise about the extent of achievement of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders do not analyse the progress of this group. However, inspection evidence indicates that these pupils make the same varied progress as others.
- The most able pupils do not routinely receive work at the level of challenge needed to help them consistently deepen their knowledge and extend their skills. As a result, most-able pupils' achievement is variable.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Children make a good start to school in the Reception class. Staff have high expectations and have created a welcoming, nurturing environment where children thrive.
- Teaching is effective. Children have suitable freedom to make choices and decisions about their learning. Children benefit from an array of interesting activities. These help children develop their inquisitiveness as they learn through exploration. The teacher and support assistant make good use of questioning to help children deepen their understanding. For example, during the inspection children were asked, 'which items are magnetic?' as they selected shapes and letters to place on the board.

- The teacher has a sharp understanding of each child's abilities and high expectations for their achievement. She plans activities carefully to meet children's varying development needs. Once a day, each child is expected to try an activity specifically relevant to them. A 'mini me', a photo of the child, is placed in the area where the resources for the activity are. Pupils know to find their photo and give the activity a go. This helps to ensure good progress.
- Boys' development of writing has proved to be an issue in the past. Thoughtful ways of encouraging boys to write are helping to ensure better progress this year. A good example of this is an activity where boys develop their writing skills by playing at being parking wardens, riding a scooter and writing out parking tickets as they go along.
- All groups of children make good progress. Disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as others. Leaders make sure that any pupil who has special educational needs and/or disabilities receives the support they need, such as speech and language therapy. Children achieve well from different starting points. Nevertheless, leaders recognise that the most able children could be challenged even further.
- Children behave well. They learn to collaborate, share with and respect one another. They have well-developed learning habits. Children are calm and focused as they engage intently in their chosen activity. They also behave well in formal sessions. For example, pupils paid great attention as the teacher helped them develop phonics skills.
- Staff are clear that safeguarding is paramount. Safeguarding arrangements are sound and staff suitably trained, including in first aid. The early years area is secure and well maintained. Staff carefully supervise the gates when they are open for children's arrival and departure. Parents know their children are safe and well cared for.
- Parents are very positive about the provision. They are clear that communication between them and school is good. Children's progress is suitably shared with parents through an online system. Parents are able to contribute, recording their child's achievement on 'WOW' stickers that are added to the evidence the staff collect about children's achievements.
- Leaders make sure that children get a good start to the school year. The class teacher and assistant visit pre-schools so they can assess and plan for children's needs prior to their arrival.

## School details

Unique reference number	116368
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10024731

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	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Wagner
Headteacher	Julie-Anne Palfrey
Telephone number	01794 512047
Website	<a href="http://www.romseyabbeyschool.co.uk">www.romseyabbeyschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:adminoffice@romseyabbey.hants.sch.uk">adminoffice@romseyabbey.hants.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	4–5 June 2013

## Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the physical education and sports premium, the school day, governance, special educational needs and the curriculum on its website.
- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. There is one class for each year group.
- Most pupils are White British. Almost all pupils speak English as a first language.
- The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and /or disabilities is above average. An average proportion of pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is average.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher took up post in April 2016.
- The current chair of the governing body was appointed in October 2016.
- There has been a high amount of staff turnover since the previous inspection.
- Two teachers have recently left the school. One has been replaced and a second teacher has been recruited to take up the other vacancy from the start of the summer term.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 11 lessons, five jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work from a range of subjects, including English and mathematics, and listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors held discussions with senior leaders, members of the governing body, teachers, pupils and parents and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors reviewed documents including safeguarding policies, behaviour and attendance records, self-evaluation and planning documents and the school's records on performance management and teaching and learning.
- Account was taken of 16 staff survey responses, 139 responses to the pupil survey and 69 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, inspectors considered 51 parent responses by free text.

## Inspection team

Diana Choulerton, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Deirdre Crutchley	Ofsted Inspector
Doug Brawley	Ofsted Inspector

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