

# Roxton VA (CofE) School

School Lane, Roxton, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK44 3DR

## Inspection dates

4–5 October 2017

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Safeguarding is not effective. Leaders and governors depend too much on the school's culture of being a 'small family'. They have not acted promptly enough when concerns are raised.
- Leaders do not have rigorous or systematic processes to make sure that pupils' well-being is prioritised.
- Leaders have not focused well on raising pupils' achievement. Their evaluation of the school's performance is overgenerous.
- The headteacher performs many management roles and this limits her ability to assure the effectiveness of the school.
- Pupils do not achieve well in key stage 1. This has been the case since the previous inspection.
- The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check remains below national. Younger pupils do not apply their knowledge of sounds as well as they should when reading.
- Children do not make sufficient progress in the Reception Year, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. Children are not as well prepared for Year 1 as they should be.
- Teachers do not consistently provide learning activities that support and challenge the mixed age range and different abilities of pupils in most classes.
- The most able pupils are not challenged well and they do not work as hard as they could in order to excel.
- Groups of pupils, particularly boys, do not achieve as well as they should from their starting points. Pupils do not receive precise feedback so they can make better progress.
- The teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling is not precise enough in key stage 1. As a result, pupils do not achieve well in writing.
- The school's website is not up to date and does not include the required information.

### The school has the following strengths

- There is a strong sense of community. Most parents are supportive and appreciate how happy their children are at school.
- Pupils are polite and articulate. They conduct themselves well and enjoy good friendships.
- Pupils make steady progress in mathematics in key stage 2. Pupils in the school's first Year 5 class relish the challenges they receive.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well.
- Children settle quickly and well at pre-school. Adults make sure learning activities are appropriately planned to meet individual children's needs.
- Pupils attend school regularly. In 2017, their attendance was above the national average.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

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

- As a matter of urgency, improve child protection procedures and policies so that they are fit for purpose by ensuring that:
  - children are at the centre of all actions taken to safeguard pupils
  - leaders act promptly in response to all concerns raised about pupils' well-being, and follow these through to conclusion
  - when there are multiple concerns about children, they are considered as a whole
  - governors hold leaders rigorously to account for the welfare of all pupils, especially those who are most vulnerable and in need of protection
  - all child protection records are kept in good order with sufficient detail and a clear chronology to show how concerns were followed up rigorously.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - implementing systems and procedures to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the school so self-evaluation is thorough and accurate
  - having school improvement plans that focus sharply on raising pupils' progress and achievement across the school, especially boys
  - keeping the website up to date and in line with government expectations.
- Improve pupils' achievement by:
  - ensuring that pupils make good progress from their individual starting points and reach higher standards at the end of key stage 1
  - accelerating the progress made by children in early years, so that more children, especially boys, achieve a good level of development.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - providing learning activities that help the most able pupils reach their capabilities
  - giving constructive feedback to individuals on how to improve their work, alongside good opportunities to do so from a younger age
  - ensuring that grammar, punctuation, spelling and handwriting are consistently and precisely taught so more pupils can achieve the expected standard in writing.

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

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- Leadership and management are inadequate because the monitoring and recording of concerns, and actions that leaders and governors take to keep pupils safe, are weak.
- Record-keeping and current systems for safeguarding pupils are not fit for purpose. Leaders are not able to demonstrate that timely and effective support has been provided to pupils who are vulnerable, or for whom staff have raised child protection concerns.
- The headteacher and governors have an overgenerous view of the school's performance. This is because leaders do not critically reflect upon, or analyse, the school's performance well enough. Self-evaluation is not thorough enough, nor based on the achievement of pupils. As a result, strengths and weaknesses are not correctly identified.
- School improvement plans do not focus well enough on raising pupils' achievement in the early years, phonics and key stage 1. Over the previous three years, the proportions of pupils who have reached the expected standards at key stage 1 have been low and often below national averages. This does not represent good progress for these pupils from their typical starting points.
- Leaders do not carry out systematic checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that pupils make good progress. The headteacher does not fully hold teachers to account for the progress groups of pupils make. Consequently, boys are still underperforming in key stage 1 and raising their achievement does not feature in the school's plans.
- The headteacher holds many management roles, including safeguarding and leadership of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and this limits the pace of improvement. Consequently, the leadership of the school is not demonstrating the capacity to improve as quickly as it should.
- The local authority shares concerns about the school's performance. Additional support is provided to the early years teacher who has produced an action plan to raise children's achievement over this year. It is too soon to assess the impact of these actions.
- The school's work on the curriculum requires further improvement. Leaders have ensured that pupils receive a broad curriculum. For example, this term, pupils in key stage 2 are studying a topic called 'May the force be with you'. Subjects such as science and history are taught through termly themes. Pupils particularly enjoy the 'wow' days that start their learning. However, work in topic books demonstrates that pupils frequently complete the same worksheets, with little or no amendments, irrespective of their age or ability. Pupils confirm that activities in subjects other than English and mathematics are the same for everyone.
- Since the previous inspection, Roxton Lower School has become a primary school. This academic year, pupils have entered into Year 5. Parents commented that 'Roxton is keeping parents fully informed about the changes'. Pupils stated that they are proud to

be the first pupils in upper key stage 2 and have started well.

- Most parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, are supportive of the school's work. They state their children are happy and enjoy going to school. One parent commented, 'It's very much a family atmosphere, with all year groups encouraged to look after each other.'
- Staff are proud to work at the school. Currently, some are starting to work with teachers from neighbouring schools to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Staff appreciate the continuous professional development they receive as part of their performance management targets. The impact of recent training is too soon to assess.
- Pupils are provided with a wide range of experiences to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Pupils willingly follow the values that the school promotes as part of its Christian ethos. Pupils visit the church regularly for services, such as their harvest celebration. During the inspection, pupils were respectful in an assembly when listening to a Bible story about generosity. They contributed their ideas well and reflected on how they could demonstrate the same value at school.
- Leaders have chosen to use additional funds for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities to provide extra adult support in classes. Leaders provide school uniform and financial support for trips.
- The progress that disadvantaged pupils make varies across the school. Governors have not ensured that the website is up to date and includes information about the use and impact of pupil premium funding.
- The leadership of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities requires improvement. This is because the identification of pupils who have additional needs varies significantly from the published information about the school and is unclear. Pupils who have specific and complex needs are well cared for. They make good personal progress.
- The physical education (PE) and sports premium is used well to support the additional physical development of pupils. Pupils receive teaching from external professionals and develop their skills and abilities well.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governance is not yet as effective as it could be. Some governors are new to their role and still require relevant training to be able to hold the school effectively to account for pupils' achievement and safeguarding. They recognise that they need to improve educational standards, especially in the early years and key stage 1.
- Minutes of meetings demonstrate that governors ask questions of school staff but they accept the information they are provided with too readily. As a result, they share the headteacher's overgenerous view of the performance of the school.
- Governors recognise that they do not visit the school as often as they should to check the information they get from the headteacher. They have plans to increase their visits over this academic year.
- Governors are dedicated and committed to the school and want it to succeed. They ensure that finances are secure and budgets are produced in a timely way.

- Governors ensure that the headteacher's performance management is carried out in line with current expectations.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils, in particular those who are most vulnerable, are protected. Leaders do not maintain a detailed overview of the circumstances, subsequent actions and monitoring for pupils for whom there have been multiple concerns. This has limited leaders' ability to identify when they need to take further action to support or protect pupils.
- The school's approach of keeping records and following through on child protection concerns is not fit for purpose. Leaders do not maintain well-organised and robust records for children for whom multiple concerns have been identified.
- Analysis of leaders' approaches to dealing with safeguarding concerns show that the quality of their responses is uncoordinated and, at times, haphazard. This is not effective in ensuring that pupils are kept safe and free from harm.
- Governors have not rigorously checked that the safeguarding practice in school matches the policy. They were unaware of the lack of rigour and compliance with statutory guidance. Governors have not assured themselves that leaders are vigilant enough about pupils' welfare or that essential training for the designated safeguarding leadership is up to date.
- Pupils are taught to stay safe online when using computers. They receive additional instruction through the annual internet safety day. Posters around the school help them understand how to keep safe. As a result, pupils can explain how to stay safe online in an age-appropriate way.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

## **Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies too much. Staff do not use assessment information as well as they should to plan for learning that meets the needs of pupils in their mixed-age classes. For example, teachers do not provide the most able pupils with sufficient opportunities or time to extend and practise their skills at a deeper level. Consequently, the most able pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers do not provide pupils with precise enough feedback so pupils can make even better progress. Pupils do not have enough opportunity to edit, redraft and improve their work from a young age. At times, mistakes and errors go unchecked.
- The teaching of reading is of mixed quality. In phonics, adults are not consistently precise and systematic when they teach letter sounds. Consequently, younger pupils do not use and apply a secure understanding of sounds when reading unfamiliar words.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils are sometimes not as high across the curriculum as they are in English and mathematics. In particular, there are occasions when the most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently to think more deeply or respond more creatively, for example in history and, at times, in science.

- In some classes, teachers ensure that teaching assistants are well deployed and have a positive impact on helping pupils make progress during lessons. However, this is not consistent and in some lessons, teaching assistants are not used well.
- Teachers often provide clear explanations and demonstrate strong subject knowledge, particularly in mathematics. This is particularly the case in upper key stage 2. Pupils in the new Year 5 class are starting to make better progress as a result. The most able pupils in this class relish the challenges they receive so they can excel.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Requires improvement

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Despite the shortcomings in leaders' arrangements for safeguarding pupils, staff understand their responsibilities and carefully follow school guidance to report any concerns they may have about pupils' welfare.
- School leaders state that bullying does not occur at the school and they have had no incidents recorded. However, pupils spoken with showed an understanding of what bullying is and commented that it does happen on occasion at school. They were less certain about how well adults at the school dealt with situations or who they could speak with if they were worried.
- Most parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, stated that they consider their children are safe and happy at school. One parent commented, 'The school provides children with a great nurturing and safe environment.' However, a few parents expressed less confidence regarding how effectively leaders deal with concerns they raise.
- Pupils know and often refer to the school's values and Christian ethos. The school has the family feel of a village school, where everybody knows and helps each other. Pupils are gaining a good understanding of fundamental British values and demonstrate a tolerance to those who may have protected characteristics.
- Pupils in Year 5 are very proud of being the first cohort in upper key stage 2. They take on their additional roles and responsibilities seriously and responsibly. Pupils wear their uniform with pride.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite, articulate and enjoy speaking about their school. They conduct themselves well in lessons and listen well when others are giving their views and opinions.
- Pupils respond swiftly to teachers' instructions and listen respectfully to explanations. They settle to work quickly, especially in key stage 2, completing their activities eagerly. Pupils have good attitudes to their learning and want to do well.
- Pupils attend school well. In 2017, school attendance was above the national average. Parents confirmed that pupils enjoy going to school. Where pupils do not attend school

as well as expected, the local family worker supports and challenges parents so that pupils' attendance improves.

- At breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils are equally courteous and respectful. During the inspection, they played games well together. Older pupils have good relationships with younger pupils and include them in their games. Lunchtimes are calm and pupils use this social time well to develop their friendships.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Pupils start with skills and abilities that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Since the previous inspection, by the end of key stage 1, pupils' achievement has varied too much. Pupils have not achieved as well as they should, particularly in writing, which remains below the national average. In 2017, no pupil reached greater depth in writing.
- Pupils' achievement in the Year 1 phonics screening check was below the national average in 2017. This has been the case for the previous three years. Young pupils do not use their knowledge of sounds well when they read unfamiliar words.
- Due to small numbers of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities in each year group, it is not possible to write about their end of key stage progress without identifying individuals. However, boys have not achieved as well as they should in reading and writing from their individual starting points. This continues to be an issue for the school.
- Pupils' handwriting, spelling and punctuation skills vary. While, in pupils' books, there are examples of fluent handwriting and neat presentation, this is not consistent, especially in key stage 1. Pupils' spelling skills are underdeveloped. They do not regularly apply their knowledge of sounds to assist with spelling unfamiliar words.
- Information in workbooks about the progress of pupils currently on roll is insufficient to demonstrate that they are achieving well. In the books seen, the most able pupils have not been provided with enough activities that challenge their thinking and make them work hard enough.
- By the time, pupils leave Year 4, the proportion of pupils who have reached the standard that is typical for their age is higher than when they were at key stage 1, particularly in mathematics. This represents better progress for some pupils. However, the most able pupils are not yet making the progress of which they are capable in lower key stage 2.
- Leaders do not yet track the progress that pupils make across the curriculum with sufficient precision. Evidence seen in pupils' books demonstrates that pupils make inconsistent progress across a range of subjects.

## Early years provision

## Requires improvement

- Over the previous three years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been lower than that found nationally. This has been because children's achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is low. From their typical starting points, this does not represent good progress. Children are not prepared as

well as they should be for the demands of the Year 1 curriculum.

- Leadership of the early years is improving but is not yet good. Currently, the early years teacher is supported well by the local authority and has accurately identified the areas for improvement. There is insufficient evidence to show how well children, particularly the most able, are currently progressing from their individual starting points.
- The teaching of phonics has not been good enough. This academic year, there are firm plans to improve this aspect so children can make good progress in acquiring their early reading skills.
- The outdoor area is used effectively. Children have the opportunity to develop their physical skills through their play using the many resources available, including bicycles, sand and water trays. There are many opportunities for children to practise their writing and number skills when outside.
- Children behave very well in Reception. They enjoy their learning and make good friendships. Children enjoy talking about their learning and their school. One child confidently spoke about 'how well the children sang at the Harvest festival', while another could explain the events of the day, using words such as 'before' and 'after' proficiently, as she ordered the timetable pictures.
- Children in Reception have good relationships with the older pupils who help them during lunchtimes. Children are gaining the confidence and social skills that are expected for their age.
- Children settle quickly, are happy and follow the established routines and expectations well in pre-school. Parents spoke well of the start their children receive to their early school life. Parents say that staff are approachable and caring. One parent commented, 'My daughter has just started pre-school and absolutely loves going, asking to go every day.'
- During whole-school assemblies, Reception children sit and listen well, joining in when they can. Parents particularly appreciate the opportunities they have to visit special events and watch their children participate in whole-school activities.



## School details

Unique reference number	109625
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10036121

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	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sally Bailey
Headteacher	Jane Trott
Telephone number	01234 870230
Website	<a href="http://www.roxtonlower.org.uk">www.roxtonlower.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@roxton.school">office@roxton.school</a>
Date of previous inspection	26–27 June 2013

## Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on its website regarding the curriculum for each subject and each year group, the phonics programme used and the rationale, use, impact and review of pupil premium spending.
- This is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for pupil premium is below the national average.
- Few pupils speak English as an additional language and the proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic groups is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is lower than that found nationally. The proportion who have an education, health and care plan is similar to the national average.

- Since the previous inspection, the school has become a primary school. The first Year 6 cohort starts in September 2018. This academic year, the school caters for pupils from Reception to Year 5.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This included observing all pupils learning in a number of lessons, some of which were jointly seen with the headteacher.
- The inspector spoke with pupils, evaluated their books to take account of the work that has been done and the progress that pupils make over time. Each pupil's work was considered over a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- The teaching of phonics was observed. The inspector listened to pupils read to check pupils' application of sounds.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the curriculum leader, members of the governing body and two representatives of the local authority.
- The inspector examined a range of documentation around safeguarding pupils and scrutinised the single central register of employment checks. The inspector considered the arrangements for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Parents' views were taken from the 30 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, together with 20 comments from parents' free-text responses. A telephone conversation from a parent was also evaluated.
- Staff views were considered from the 11 responses to their on line questionnaire.
- There were no responses to the pupils' online questionnaire. The inspector gathered their views through informal conversations and a meeting with a group of pupils.

## Inspection team

Kim Hall, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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