

The Roebuck School

Inkerman Street, Ashton, Preston, Lancashire PR2 2BN

Inspection dates

27–28 February 2018

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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' attainments in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 are lower than in other schools nationally.
- Teachers do not consistently have high enough expectations of pupils. This means that progress is not as rapid as it could be, especially for the most able pupils.
- There is a lack of consistency among staff about how agreed standards of behaviour are maintained.
- Teachers do not consistently use assessment information to plan the next steps in pupils' learning well enough. Pupils' participation wanes when tasks are not well matched to pupils' capabilities.
- Leaders do not have a clear enough overview of the progress that disadvantaged pupils make. As a result, leaders are not able to evaluate how effective the support is that is in place for these pupils.
- Leaders have not consistently ensured that support is put in place in a timely manner to help pupils to catch up quickly.
- The rate of progress made by children in the early years requires improvement. This is because not enough children achieve a good level of development.
- Insufficient communication with parents following reported incidents of bullying means that some parents are unclear about the actions taken by staff.

The school has the following strengths

- Governors are now setting higher expectations for leaders to bring about necessary improvements to the standard of education received by all pupils.
- The new interim headteacher has united leaders and other staff in the common goal of improving outcomes for pupils.
- Relationships are positive throughout the school. Pupils are kept safe and are well cared for by staff.
- Children in the Nursery experience a good start to the foundation stage. They are supported well by staff who understand their needs and interests.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have access to a wide and interesting curriculum. This provides high-quality opportunities to enable pupils to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. Pupils respond well to these opportunities.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - teachers having consistently high expectations for all pupils, especially the most able, so they can achieve the standards they are capable of in reading, writing and mathematics
 - improving the consistency in the use of assessment information to plan appropriate activities so that pupils make the progress that they are capable of, especially disadvantaged pupils
 - increasing pupils' participation in lessons so that they remain engaged in their learning and make more rapid progress.
- Improve leadership and management by monitoring and evaluating more closely the effectiveness of the pupil premium funding to promote the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve outcomes by ensuring that groups of pupils who are not progressing as well as they should are identified quickly and supported to catch up.
- Improve pupil behaviour and welfare by:
 - ensuring that staff are supported to maintain the highest standards of behaviour throughout the school
 - improving communication with parents so that they know how incidents of bullying have been resolved.
- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning in the Reception class by ensuring that a greater proportion of children increase their rate of progress to enable them to achieve a good level of development.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order how 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, governors have worked closely with the local authority to improve standards of leadership throughout the school. They have set higher expectations of leaders because pupils' performance has not improved as much as it should have done. Governors have made some difficult decisions and demonstrated clear resolve and integrity. They have ensured consistency and continued small steps of improvement, despite the school going through a time of turbulent staffing changes.
- A new interim headteacher has been in post since January. He has quickly strengthened the staff team by developing a positive culture and a shared sense of purpose. The impact of governors' actions can already be seen in improving progress evident in pupils' work, in the positive attitude towards school improvement demonstrated by staff and by the strengthening of leadership roles across the school.
- Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are clear that the teaching that pupils receive, and the subsequent outcomes they achieve, still require improvement to be good. This is because teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of are not consistently high enough.
- Evidence collected during the inspection showed that learning activities are not consistently well matched to pupils' abilities. Leaders recognise that teachers do not make effective use of assessment information to plan pupils' next steps in learning. They have put support in place for staff to address this. Leaders agree with inspection findings that more carefully targeted interventions are needed, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- During this academic year, teachers have worked together more frequently to develop how well they use assessments of pupils' work to plan tasks that will help pupils progress. However, leaders agree there is more work to do in this area. Staff are beginning to respond to opportunities to be open and honest with leaders about aspects of teaching and learning that need to improve. They are keen to support each other to improve the standards achieved by pupils.
- Previous monitoring records of staff performance looked at during the inspection show a lack of measurable outcomes. Leaders are now setting higher expectations of all staff. They see the management of staff performance as a high priority and are closely monitoring this.
- Similarly, leaders agree that their plans lack clarity about the effectiveness of their actions to improve outcomes. Leaders are not able, for example, to describe how effectively pupil premium funding is used. This is because they do not have an overview of the progress that disadvantaged pupils make.
- Middle leaders are beginning to be empowered to lead their respective areas and have the full support of senior leaders and teaching staff. An example of this is the leadership of special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has ensured that pupils' needs have been clearly identified. Effective support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities can be seen

across the school. This is particularly evident in how leaders have pursued appropriate placements or support for pupils who have significant SEN and/or disabilities to meet their specific needs. This has freed up support in the school for other pupils. It also has enabled leaders to focus on ensuring that the quality of teaching and learning for pupils across the school is consistent.

- Leaders are trialling different groupings of pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 in English and mathematics to improve outcomes for pupils. Recently, the most able pupils have been better challenged and supported. Leaders are aware that this is in the very early days and the impact is not yet clear.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. During the inspection, pupils were keen to tell inspectors about the topics they have enjoyed. Pupils feel that they are developing a wide range of important skills and understanding such as learning about the First World War and scientific developments in medicine.
- Pupils are prepared well to live in modern Britain. Work in pupils' books demonstrates understanding of other faiths. This is developed well by studying a wide range of religions including Sikhism, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism and Christianity.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have access to quality experiences to develop social, moral, spiritual and cultural skills including regular opportunities to reflect and celebrate with others. Pupils respond well to these and are keen to participate

Governance of the school

- Governance is strong.
- Governors have risen to the challenge presented by the school's continued low performance and now demonstrate strengthened leadership roles.
- They provide clear support and direction for leaders at this pivotal point in the life of The Roebuck School. Leaders are now able to articulate a strong vision for the school, where better outcomes for all pupils are the sole focus.
- Governors manage the performance of the headteacher and work with senior leaders to monitor the actions taken to improve standards. They acknowledge that it is imperative that the performance of all staff is rigorous to ensure that standards rise.
- Governors are aware of their statutory duties, including ensuring that the website contains statutory information. Amendments were made to the information on the website during the inspection to ensure that the content was fully compliant.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is a high priority for staff and governors. Staff are vigilant and ensure that pupils are kept safe while at school. This can be seen in the careful risk assessments in place for activities within school. It is also evident in assessments for the various trips and activities that pupils take part in during school time.
- Records are fit for purpose and are kept meticulously. They demonstrate that pupils

and families who need extra support receive timely intervention. Tenacity is shown in re-referring pupils to external agencies until they get the support they need.

- Staff liaise regularly with other agencies to ensure that the right support is in place.
- Staff and governors are well trained. They are confident about what to do if they have concerns about pupils' welfare.
- Pupils feel safe at school because they are well cared for by staff. Staff show great care throughout the school in making sure that children are safe as they move about the various buildings that make up the school. This includes walking to the sports hall, which is sited a couple of streets away from the main school building.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe, including when online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Standards of teaching and learning are not yet good because teachers' expectations are not consistently high enough. Some teachers give pupils work that is too easy. Teachers do not insist on participation from all pupils during lessons. This slows the pace of learning.
- The standard of work in pupils' books is too variable in some classes and across some age groups. Teachers' feedback does not regularly challenge low standards.
- Although leaders describe a whole-school focus on giving pupils helpful feedback in how to improve their writing, this is not evident in pupils' books.
- There is also inconsistency in how some aspects of the curriculum are taught across classes and age groups. For example, in key stage 2, some pupils have frequent opportunities to practise reasoning skills in mathematics by applying what they have learned earlier. In other classes, these opportunities are infrequent and, as a consequence, pupils find problem-solving activities too difficult. In key stage 1, the sequence of learning in mathematics does not enable pupils to build effectively on what they have already learned.
- Some teachers are still developing their ability to make effective use of assessment information to plan pupils' next steps of learning. Pupils 'switch off' in lessons because they are not sufficiently engaged by work that is either too easy or too hard. This is most often the case for the most able pupils. Work set by teachers does not challenge pupils frequently enough to enable them to achieve at the higher levels.
- Similarly, intervention work planned for identified pupils who need to catch up with their peers is not sharply focused. It does not match the needs of the pupils sufficiently. This results in pupils not making the rapid progress needed and is particularly true for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders and teachers are trying out different approaches to improve pupils' writing. They are working alongside other schools and local authority officers to develop pupils' writing skills. Pupils are beginning to respond, but this work is at an embryonic stage.
- Teachers are also working with leaders to improve pupils' reading skills. The teaching of phonics enables pupils throughout the school to 'sound out' words well. Pupils talked with enthusiasm to inspectors about the books they have read together in

class. However, leaders are aware that there is still a lot of work to do. Not enough pupils read regularly to enable them to meet the expected and higher standards by the end of key stage 2.

- Work in pupils' books shows that they are developing knowledge, skills and understanding across a wide range of subjects. Tasks enable pupils to reflect on 'big questions' such as why water should be conserved. Work in pupils' books also shows that learning is planned to develop positive attitudes towards other cultures and developing an understanding of personal well-being.
- However, opportunities to build on previous learning are not consistent across subjects. For example, although clear progress of skills is evident in the pupils' science and art work, this is not true for geography.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Not all pupils demonstrate self-confidence as learners. For some pupils, this is because they do not have all the skills they need in reading, writing and mathematics to perform as well as other pupils nationally.
- Pupils respond well when asked to demonstrate positive attitudes. Pupils talked to inspectors about how they enjoy carrying out roles of responsibilities in school, such as being a school councillor, managing 'time out' record books or being a play leader for other pupils at breaktimes.
- Pupils are polite and friendly, especially when staff give verbal feedback to encourage good manners. Relationships are positive between staff and pupils as staff provide helpful role models.
- Pupils are supported to develop a sense of well-being. In an assembly observed during the inspection, pupils were skilfully supported to reflect on a place that made them feel calm. They were also invited to pray and sing joyfully. They responded well, clearly comfortable with this, and participated with enthusiasm.
- Staff also ensure that pupils are happy and have friends to play with at breaktime and that they play safely. Staff made expectations clear for safe play during the inspection while there was snow and ice on the playground.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors demonstrated a sound understanding of what being a good citizen means. These pupils describe the need to 'earn' citizenship by proving they can behave well, follow rules and contribute to the society they live in.
- Some pupils are also able to describe the need to work hard at school so that they can get a good job. Some pupils demonstrate aspiration in the careers they would like to pursue.
- Most pupils spoken to during the inspection understood different forms of bullying and what to do if it happens. School records show that staff take bullying seriously. Records demonstrate that appropriate action is taken to follow up any incidents.

- Most pupils who spoke to inspectors, although not all, are confident that staff would deal with incidents if they reported them. However, some parents feel that bullying is not dealt with effectively because communication on this issue is poor. There are some repeated incidents of homophobic name-calling.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- There are times when behaviour of a small number of pupils limits their learning. In most lessons, some pupils were off-task.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour are not high enough. Consequently, pupils do not always display positive attitudes to learning to ensure that they achieve as well as they can.
- Leaders, parents and pupils say that behaviour in the school has improved since the previous inspection. Leaders say that there is now an increased air of calm across the school that they feel has not been evident previously. This calmness enables leaders to focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Leaders are swift to address incidents of poor behaviour. There is documented evidence to show that instances are followed up and appropriate action taken. Not all staff, however, feel that behaviour is consistently dealt with and some need further support from leaders to ensure that they are confident in maintaining high standards of behaviour.
- Rates of exclusion are high because leaders are setting clearer boundaries for expected behaviour. The high proportion of pupils with significant difficulties in managing their own behaviour has had an impact on this rate. The work of the SENCo and other leaders in sourcing more suitable support or provision for these pupils is helping to alleviate this situation.
- Inspectors saw no incidents of disruptive behaviour during the inspection. Pupils move safely and sensibly around the school. They are well supervised at breaktimes and during lunchtime to ensure that they are kept safe. They demonstrate respect towards adults and each other.
- Rightly, leaders have identified improving attendance as a priority. Rates of attendance are low compared to the national average. The percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from school is very high, affecting pupils' progress. Leaders work tirelessly to encourage pupils to attend regularly. They also provide a great deal of support to parents (and challenge where needed) to ensure that their children come to school every day. Pupils value the incentives that leaders offer to pupils to reward regular attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- There has been a clear focus, driven by governors since the previous inspection, to improve outcomes for pupils. Attainment since then has improved in both key stage 1 and key stage 2. This increase is more clearly seen in key stage 1, where outcomes are much closer to the national average.

- The percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard on the Year 1 phonics screening check has also risen. Pupils make effective use of the phonic strategies they have learned. Older pupils continue to use these strategies effectively when reading unfamiliar words.
- Rates of progress that pupils make from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics have also improved over time. Progress for key stage 2 pupils is now similar to that found in other schools nationally. However, there are still not enough pupils who achieve the standards expected at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 or in the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- Progress is not consistent across age groups. Leaders and teachers have not ensured that there is a structured plan that enables pupils to build on prior learning. An example of this is in mathematics in key stage 1, where pupils' learning jumps from more complex division to simpler addition and subtraction work.
- Rates of progress are also not consistent across subjects. In some subjects, progress can clearly be seen. An example of this is in science, where a range of skills including prediction and devising questions are developed well. In other subjects, such as geography, progress is not as clear as learning is not planned well.
- The high proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school do not make enough progress from their starting points. This is because they do not receive well-matched support to overcome any barriers to learning they face.
- The most able pupils are not challenged frequently enough, especially in key stage 2, to enable them to make the progress that they should. As a result, not enough of these pupils achieve the higher levels.
- Pupils' work shows that there is inconsistency in the standard of presentation and in progress made, reflecting a legacy of previously low expectations.
- Governors now expect more of leaders, who in turn expect pupils to make better progress. Inspectors saw early signs of impact in pupils' books. Pupils' writing demonstrates greater stamina and improved standards of presentation. Pupils are increasingly able to apply what they have learned in mathematics in problem-solving.
- Expectations from all leaders are now high. Leaders have their sights firmly set on challenging targets for this year for all pupils, including the most able and disadvantaged pupils. Current school data suggests that these are realistic, with additional support in place for pupils who need it.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The Nursery Year provides a strong starting point for children in the foundation stage. Staff know children's needs and interests well and give effective support. Staff have consistently high expectations in the Nursery Year. Children respond well to this and are very focused on their learning. They demonstrate high levels of independence. During the inspection, children were observed enjoying exploring the recent snowfall. Staff made effective use of this opportunity to develop children's language.
- In the Reception Year, teaching and learning is not as strong as it is in Nursery. This

is because some staff miss opportunities to challenge children to make the progress that they are capable of.

- Many children come into the early years with levels of skill and development below those typical of their age. By the end of the Reception Year they do not make the progress they need to be ready for key stage 1, particularly in their language skills. Not enough children achieve a good level of development.
- However, the leader of the early years has an accurate picture of the current priorities. They are clear about what further developments are needed to improve the provision to ensure that it is consistently good. There are suitable plans in place to ensure that this happens. Staff demonstrate enthusiasm to improve outcomes for children across both the Nursery and Reception bases. This is evident despite the challenge of the Nursery being based a few streets away from the main part of the school. The recent move to joint planning across both the Nursery and Reception Year is beginning to enable staff to share the best practice with each other.
- Vulnerable children are supported well. Children who speak languages other than English are provided with strong models of spoken language to enable them to develop their fluency. Children who have SEN and/or disabilities are quickly identified and appropriate support is put in place for them. Based on the current school's data and on other evidence gathered during the inspection, there is no discernible difference between disadvantaged children's progress compared to others.
- Teachers give children interesting activities which motivate them to learn. Activities are planned to ensure that children can develop across all the areas of learning, including the outdoors. Staff manage this well, despite the challenges of the very small outdoor space available to them in the Reception class. Children observed during the inspection were intrigued by the mystery of 'who pushed Humpty Dumpty off the wall'. They were keen to talk to inspectors about who might have done it using clues they had discovered together. Children were observed ordering the numbered clues, discussing who could have left the clues using precise language and working collaboratively to develop reasoning skills.
- Children behave well because they are provided with learning activities that are well matched to their level of development. Most children engage well with the well-planned activities with which adults capture their interest. This is most effective when adults skilfully challenge and support them while they are playing and learning. An example of this was seen when the teacher asked children probing questions about the 'car' they were making out of blocks and crates to further their learning.
- All welfare requirements are met and children are safe. Safeguarding has the same high focus as in the rest of the school. Staff are trained well and are familiar with procedures for keeping children safe.

School details

Unique reference number	119237
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10042442

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	308
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs E Kelly
Executive Headteacher	Mr D Fann
Telephone number	01772 729337
Website	www.roebuck.lancsngfl.ac.uk
Email address	bursar@roebuck.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 February 2016

Information about this school

- The school meets the current government floor targets and is above the coasting threshold.
- The school has a higher than average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is similar to other schools nationally.
- Most pupils are from White British heritage.
- There are a high proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Mobility of pupils is high.
- There has been a change of leadership since the previous inspection.
- There have been a significant number of other staffing changes since the previous inspection.
- The school has received support from the local authority since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher (who is also the coordinator for special educational needs). Inspectors talked with leaders of: English; mathematics; the curriculum; spiritual, moral, social and cultural education; early years; behaviour and attendance. The lead inspector also held meetings with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and two other governors.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and held discussions with groups of pupils. They also talked informally with pupils around the school, in the dining room and in the playground.
- Inspectors took account of the view of parents by reviewing 47 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and free-text comments. Inspectors also held discussions with parents as they dropped their children off at school.
- Inspectors considered 26 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation, including the school website, information about pupils' attainment and progress, leaders' review of current school performance, records of meetings and reports from governors. Inspectors examined safeguarding documentation and records behaviour, bullying and attendance.

Inspection team

Claire Cropper, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Bentham	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kathleen McArthur	Ofsted Inspector

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