



Rodmarton School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number	115535
LEA	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	279619
Inspection dates	8 June 2006 to 8 June 2006
Reporting inspector	Alison Grainger AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Rodmarton
School category	Community		Cirencester
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Gloucestershire GL7 6PE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01285 841284
Number on roll	56	Fax number	01285 841284
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Roger Randall
Date of previous inspection	6 December 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Susan Pillinger

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 8 June 2006 - 8 June 2006	Inspection number 279619
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Situated in the heart of the village of Rodmarton, this small school draws its pupils from a wide area. Some travel from further away than Cirencester and Tetbury to attend the school. Almost all pupils are of white British heritage. About 10 % of pupils are from the travelling community although their families no longer travel. A quarter of pupils have learning difficulties, which is more than in most primary schools. When children start in the Reception Year there is a wide spread of individual attainment and there is also variation from year to year. Taken collectively, children's attainment on entry is broadly average for their age.

The school has recently gone through an unsettled period and has had four headteachers during the last four years. The present headteacher has been in post for a year, having been acting headteacher prior to this. There have also been several changes in the teaching staff.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' progress and the quality of teaching.

The overall effectiveness of the school is inadequate as is the value for money provided. Poor progress has been made since the last inspection and the school is no longer meeting pupils' needs well enough. Many pupils are underachieving and standards are too low. In particular, the most capable pupils and those with learning difficulties do not do well enough. The main cause of underachievement is teaching that is too inconsistent and is inadequate overall. The unsettled period in staffing, including at senior leadership level, has taken its toll. It has led to an unsatisfactory quality of education, including in the Reception Year.

Although things are not good enough, the school is demonstrating that it has the necessary capacity to improve and its self-evaluation is satisfactory. This capacity is there even though the school judged the improvements already made to result in the school's overall effectiveness being satisfactory. Action has already started to rectify some of the main weaknesses.

Parents continue to be pleased with the school and have confidence in the new headteacher, as do the governors. There is some good expertise on the staff, particularly with regard to special educational needs. However, teachers' involvement in leadership and management and in accountability for pupils' standards and progress is underdeveloped.

The school does some things well. There are significant strengths in pupils' personal development and in the care for their welfare. Pupils like the adults in school who look after them well. They have good attitudes to learning and behaviour is good. Pupils of all ages and from all backgrounds mix well.

Although there is good care for pupils personally, pupils are not given clear enough guidance about how to improve their school work. Pupils' targets for English and mathematics are not sufficiently matched to their individual needs and not all marking is good enough.

What the school should do to improve further

- Match teaching to pupils' differing needs so that they all do as well as they should.
- Improve the guidance to pupils so that they are clear about what they need to do to make progress with their school work.
- Increase the involvement of teachers in leading and managing the school and make sure that they are accountable for pupils' standards and progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils' progress through the school is inadequate. In particular, pupils with learning difficulties and the most capable ones do not do as well as they should. This is of particular concern as, in several year groups, there is a mix of very capable pupils and those with significant learning difficulties, with few who are in the middle.

Underachievement begins in the Reception Year and is continued in Years 1 and 2. This underachievement is to some extent evident in pupils' test results at the end of Year 2, which have often been below the national average in recent years in reading, writing and mathematics.

In Years 3 and 4 standards are exceptionally low. These pupils were low attaining when they reached Year 3, and their current overall progress is too slow, especially in writing. Some more capable pupils in Year 4 have not moved on sufficiently since the end of Year 2.

Although standards in pupils' school work are below average in the current Year 6 overall, this year group began Year 3 with below average standards and a significant proportion has learning difficulties. Pupils with learning difficulties in Years 5 and 6 are making good gains this year. Overall, the pupils now in Year 6, including the more capable ones, are doing as well as they should be in mathematics. However, there are examples of more capable pupils in Year 5 underachieving in writing. The inspection evidence on the standard of pupils' school work shows that older pupils are currently on course to reach appropriately challenging targets in relation to their starting points in mathematics but not all are on course to do so in writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good overall. Pupils enjoy school, and say how much they enjoy activities such as sports and brass lessons. They really like their teachers and the other adults who help them.

Attitudes to work are good although there is some restlessness when pupils are required to sit gathered together on the carpet for too long. Pupils with learning difficulties try hard. Relationships are good and pupils from different backgrounds mix well.

Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils show a good awareness of others as, for example, they follow safe practices in moving sensibly about the school.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy. They make a good contribution to the school community through the school council. They also contribute to the wider community by raising funds for charities and by taking part in local events. Although skills important for their future lives, such as working together, develop well, too many pupils do not develop adequate basic skills, particularly in writing.

Moral and social development is the strongest feature of personal development. Pupils' understanding of the diversity of modern multicultural Britain is a relatively less well developed aspect. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Inadequate teaching is the main cause of pupils' underachievement. There are some positive features, particularly in the quality of relationships between teachers and pupils, which result in pupils having good attitudes to learning. Learning support workers are often used well to work intensively with individuals or groups. At such times there is effective learning, for example in the Reception Year or for pupils with learning difficulties. However, the needs of these pupils are not met well enough at other times.

The main weakness in teaching is that it is not well enough matched to pupils' differing needs. In the Reception Year to Year 2, for instance, teaching is often matched to the age of the pupils rather than to their capabilities and what they already know, understand and can do. In Years 3 and 4, the adult input in whole-class sessions and the activities that follow are too similar for all pupils. Often, pupils with learning difficulties have little understanding of the lesson's content and the more capable pupils coast along with work that is too easy.

In Years 5 and 6, teaching is better matched to pupils' needs than in other years. Expectations of the standards all pupils are capable of attaining are appropriately high in mathematics but there is not enough challenge for the more capable pupils in writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum satisfactorily covers the recommended areas of learning for children in the Reception Year and the National Curriculum in Years 1 to 6. Good attention is given to pupils' personal development and well-being. This begins in the Reception Year with a strong focus on personal, social and emotional development. The comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education helps older pupils to make informed choices about how to keep safe.

Enrichment of the curriculum is good with a wider range of extra-curricular activities than is found in most small schools. Visits and visitors broaden pupils' experiences, as do French lessons and a variety of sporting activities.

Provision for mathematics has improved this year through a whole-school focus on developing skills in written calculations and numeracy. Some good practice is now taking place in this area in Years 5 and 6. The school recognises that further work is needed to ensure that mathematics provision is good enough in all years. There is

insufficient focus on developing skills in writing. The more capable pupils, for example, are not given enough opportunities to write at length for different purposes.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. The warm family atmosphere does much to nurture pupils' personal development. Pupils feel safe and secure at school and are confident that they have an adult to whom they can turn should the need arise. Good relationships are successfully promoted and older pupils are encouraged to care for younger ones. Pupils have a good voice in the school through the school council. Health and safety arrangements are satisfactory, as are those for child protection. The school works closely with parents of pupils from all backgrounds.

Guidance to pupils about how to improve their school work is a weakness. Pupils have targets with which they are familiar, but these targets are not closely enough matched to their individual needs. There is some good marking to support pupils in Years 5 and 6, but marking is not used well enough in other years.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall because capacity for improvement is being demonstrated. Self-evaluation is satisfactory and the headteacher has a generally accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She has gained the confidence of parents and ensures that pupils have a good voice in the school.

The headteacher and staff have worked closely with the local authority to improve mathematics provision this year. As a result, the older pupils are now making secure progress in this area although the school recognises that more work is needed. Action has also started, for example, to ensure that the needs of all those taught together in Reception to Year 2 are met.

There is some valuable expertise within the staff although this is not yet used fully. The special educational needs co-ordinator has considerable understanding of the needs of all pupils with learning difficulties. She ensures that they get good support through intensive one-to-one or small group teaching. However, few checks are made on the quality of provision for these pupils within lessons. Involvement of teachers as leaders and managers with accountability for pupils' standards and progress is underdeveloped. A start has been made with the appointment of a new mathematics co-ordinator.

Governors have demonstrated commitment to the school and have supported it through its recent unsettled period. They have a reasonable awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses and recognise that the many changes in leadership and staffing have taken their toll on the quality of education. They know that changes are necessary.

The school's progress since its last inspection has been poor. With settled staffing now, including at senior leadership level, indications are that it can rectify its weaknesses.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	4	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	No
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you.

We found that by the time you reach Years 5 and 6 you are very mature and sensible. We saw that pupils of all ages like school and behave well. You get on well together and those of you who are older look after the younger ones. You were very courteous and polite to us.

You told us that the adults look after you well and we agree. We also agree that you have many interesting activities in addition to your usual lessons, such as sports and brass lessons in Years 3 to 6.

We know that there have been lots of changes of teachers lately and that the older pupils have had several different headteachers. Things are more settled now. We have asked your headteacher and all the other adults to do some things to make sure that you all do as well as you should.

We have asked the adults to make sure that the teaching is always at just the right level for you. We have also asked them to make sure that you are told clearly how to make good progress.

All the adults will be working hard together to make sure that the school does its best for you. Other inspectors will visit the school to see how they are getting on.

Thank you once again for your help.