



Rodmersham School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118346
LEA Kent
Inspection number 280297
Inspection dates 16 May 2006 to 16 May 2006
Reporting inspector Sheila Browning AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Rodmersham Green
School category	Community		Sittingbourne
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Kent ME9 0PS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01795 423776
Number on roll	83	Fax number	01795 423776
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	12 June 2000	Headteacher	Mrs J Crowhurst

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 16 May 2006 - 16 May 2006	Inspection number 280297
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Rodmersham School is smaller than most other primary schools. Most pupils are from White British families and a few are from Traveller families. Pupils come from the village of Rodmersham itself and from some distance. The school has a lower-than-average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. In recognition of its work, the school has gained Healthy Schools status and has received the Investor in People Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Rodmersham is a good and effective school. The school also judges its effectiveness as good. The quality of teaching and learning and standards are good. Children enter the school with broadly average skills and experiences and make good progress throughout the school. In the Reception class, children have a good start to their education. Standards are above average and pupils' achievement is good, particularly in mathematics, because of good teaching. Pupils' personal development is good, with some outstanding features.

Behaviour is outstanding and pupils really enjoy the strong family atmosphere. As a result of the good quality care and support, pupils show initiative and contribute effectively to the school and the wider community. The interesting curriculum and enriching and popular extra-curricular activities meet individual needs well. Nevertheless, assessment information is not used consistently to help pupils understand what it is they need to do to improve further. The cramped accommodation has improved significantly since the last inspection and better supports learning and the effectiveness of the school. This is particularly so in the Reception class. The issues raised in the last inspection report have been tackled successfully. Good leadership by the headteacher, with the effective support of other staff, is moving the school forward and the school gives good value for money. The headteacher, staff and governors are all committed to raising standards. Although the school improvement plan identifies suitable priorities, it is not yet sharply focused on raising pupils' achievement and setting clear indicators so that success can be measured. Given the improvements in standards and achievement already made, the school has good capacity to make further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the school improvement plan is more sharply focused on raising pupils' achievement and provides clear indicators so that senior managers and governors can measure its success.
- Make more consistent use of assessment information to set pupils targets for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and pupils' achievement is good. Children join the Reception Year with skills broadly at the level expected for their age. By the end of the year, most are on course to meet the expected goals for learning because of the secure start they are given. Pupils are gaining knowledge, skills and understanding at a good rate as a result of good teaching throughout the school. The tracking of pupils' progress confirms that individual pupils have made good progress from their starting point.

Standards in the present Year 6 are above average. Pupils achieve particularly well in mathematics, because of enthusiastic teaching. Raising standards in writing is a priority and the school is successfully tackling the relatively smaller number of pupils achieving the higher levels in English. The test results in 2005 and the school's accurate data show an improving picture and, since the last inspection, standards have risen. Challenging targets are set for pupils' performance in the national tests at the end of Year 6. The more capable pupils are usually challenged. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well because of the good support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, with some outstanding features. Pupils enjoy school and show positive attitudes to learning. Behaviour in class and in the play areas is outstanding. Pupils' relationships with others are very good. As one pupil said, 'We all get on well together here'. Attendance is satisfactory overall. While most pupils' attendance is good, the school is working hard to improve the attendance of a small minority. Pupils say they can share concerns with adults in the school and know that their views matter.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They show appreciation of art and nature and are able to reflect on the lives of others and on their aspirations for the future. Pupils take initiative, show responsibility and contribute much to the school and the wider community. They raise funds for national charities and participate in local events such as harvest festival. School council members take their role seriously and their suggestions have led to improvements to outdoor equipment. Pupils understand the importance of a safe and healthy lifestyle. They show a good knowledge of healthy diets and participate enthusiastically in a wide range of physical activities. Pupils use literacy, numeracy and computer skills effectively in their studies and they work well with others. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education and their future working lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and contribute significantly to pupils' good achievement. Lessons are planned thoroughly and identify clear learning intentions, which are effectively shared with the pupils so that they know what they are to learn. Teachers, who are enthusiastic, have established very good relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils are motivated, participate well in activities and enjoy their learning.

Teachers' explanations and instructions are clear and informative. Pupils are attentive and make good gains in their knowledge and understanding. Good opportunities to discuss work in pairs extend pupils' speaking and listening skills effectively. Problem-solving skills are promoted effectively, particularly in mathematics and science.

Pupils say, 'We do lots of experiments in science'. Tasks are generally matched to pupils' ability and needs so they are suitably challenged and productive. In less effective lessons, this is not the case and pupils make less progress. Teaching assistants give effective support particularly to pupils with learning difficulties. This enables pupils to have full access to the activities and to progress well.

The marking of pupils' work is good as it identifies why a piece of work is good and provides clear guidance on how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and supports pupils' achievement well. Children in the Reception class enjoy a well-planned range of activities that focuses on their individual needs. Pupils are in mixed-age classes and teachers usually ensure that the curriculum is matched to their needs; however, this is not consistent. The curriculum focuses well on the development of basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Pupils are beginning to use computer skills to support their learning more effectively. The curriculum is interesting and lessons are generally challenging. A curriculum review has resulted in whole-school developments, resulting in a partnership with local consultants to focus on raising standards in writing. This has led to improved attainment. The personal, social and health programme contributes much to pupils' personal and emotional development and raises awareness of healthy, safe lifestyles. A wide range of highly popular out-of-class activities, together with visits and visitors, significantly enriches pupils' learning. Pupils say, 'We enjoy loads of clubs here'. Close partnerships with local schools have extended gifted and talented programmes and enriched the curriculum in information and communication technology and French. They have also ensured good opportunities for teamwork and extended pupils' well-being in sporting events and arts activities. Pupils have many opportunities to contribute to the community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils receive good care, guidance and support, with the strong family atmosphere a central feature of this. Secure systems are in place for pupils' safety and welfare, and child protection arrangements are effective. In the Reception class, children new to the school are carefully introduced to the routines and settle quickly. Pupils' attainment is effectively assessed. However, assessment information is not used consistently to set pupils targets for improvement. Pupils with learning difficulties are given good support, and in this supportive environment all pupils achieve well. Strong links with outside agencies, such as behaviour support and the school nurse, help pupils and their families overcome problems and support pupils' moral and social development. Communications with parents are very good and parents are very supportive of the school. Parents comment on the substantial changes for the better since the appointment of the headteacher.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Effective leadership and management contribute significantly to pupils' good personal development and to their achievement. The good leadership of the headteacher has resulted in a positive school atmosphere where pupils are well cared for and provided with good teaching and an interesting curriculum. The headteacher provides clear educational direction and has good support from staff in raising pupils' achievement and improving the quality of provision. The school is well regarded by parents. The school seeks their views and responds to their needs and concerns effectively.

The monitoring and evaluation of the school's work is good overall. It knows its strengths and weaknesses well. The school's improvement planning is satisfactory and includes relevant priorities. However, it is not always sufficiently clear how actions will raise achievement or how progress can be measured. Teaching and learning are effectively monitored and developed. This has not only improved teaching but has extended the role of subject leaders. There are effective systems for tracking pupils' progress so the school knows how well they are doing.

The governors are committed, supportive and well informed about the school's strengths and areas for development. They ensure that statutory requirements are fulfilled. However, sharper success criteria would enable the governors to check the progress of school improvement more effectively. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and there is good capacity for further growth.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	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	1	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	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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	Yes
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 helping us when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and seeing your lessons.

These are the things we found Rodmersham School does especially well:

- Standards have improved and you work hard.
- You behave well and look after one another, which ensures your school is a safe and happy one.
- Your teachers give you interesting work to do and help you to do well in lessons.
- The adults in the school take good care of you.
- There are lots of exciting clubs and activities, which you really enjoy.
- You contribute well to school life and the community.

We know everyone wants to do better and we have suggested some things to help:

- Teachers need to tell you more about how you can improve your work, reach your targets and do even better.
- Make sure that school planning is used to help raise standards and make it clear to everyone how well you are doing.