



Romanby Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121312
LEA North Yorkshire
Inspection number 280981
Inspection dates 5 December 2005 to 6 December 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs Rosemary Rodger CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	The Close
School category	Community		Romanby
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Northallerton, North Yorkshire DL7 8BL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	1609 7811708
Number on roll	284	Fax number	1609 7839206
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr J Pelter
Date of previous inspection	3 July 2000	Headteacher	Mr J Featonby

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated on the outskirts of Northallerton. There are 284 pupils on roll. A very small number of pupils are eligible for a free school meal, which reflects the economic and social advantages of the area. Pupils attend from the immediate locality. An average number of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are a very small number of pupils in the early stages of learning English.

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: the achievement and progress of pupils in Years 3 to 6; the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6; and the rigour of the arrangements for checking and improving teaching by the headteacher.

The inspection team disagree that this is an effective school and judge it to be inadequate because pupils do not make the progress they are capable of by the time they leave the school in Year 6. Staffing instability and the misbehaviour of a minority of Year 6 pupils last year could partially explain the decline in 2005 national test results in Year 6. However, inadequate teaching in some of the Year 5 and 6 classes has not been tackled and improved and so pupils make insufficient progress in these classes. The leadership and management and governance of the school have not moved swiftly enough to stop the decline. The good efforts of the deputy headteacher, since her return to school following a secondment, have identified what to do but there is still some way to go. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 but progress slows in Years 3 to 6, leading to underachievement in writing and mathematics. The school does not check the quality of teaching and learning with sufficient rigour. Overall teaching is inadequate; expectations are too low and there is too little account taken of the wide range of abilities in each class. The personal development and well-being of pupils are satisfactory. Pupils generally behave satisfactorily and have good attitudes when there are positive relationships between teachers and pupils. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum. The arrangements for grouping pupils for English and mathematics lessons are leading to wasted time. Arrangements for the care, guidance and support of pupils are satisfactory. Provision and standards for the Foundation Stage children are effective; they make good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and, as a result, make satisfactory progress. The school provides inadequate value for money but does have the capacity to build on previous achievements, due to the improvements to planning and assessment procedures. Progress since the last inspection has been inadequate.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the achievement of pupils throughout Years 3 to 6 in English and mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in classes of older pupils where it is inadequate.
- Implement a rigorous programme to check and improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

The achievement of pupils is inadequate. Standards on entry to the reception class are, at least, average and frequently above average. The children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and standards in all areas of learning are above average by the time they start in Year 1, as a result of consistently good teaching. Standards in the 2005 national tests at the end of Year 2 were exceptionally and consistently high in reading, writing and mathematics for all groups of pupils. Progress is good throughout Years 1 and 2.

The results attained in the 2005 national tests in Year 6 were broadly average in English, mathematics and science. However, compared to their prior attainment, achievement was inadequate by Year 6, especially in mathematics and writing. The school's efforts to tackle this are hampered by weaknesses in teaching in some of the mixed-age Year 5 and 6 classes, which result in the pupils making insufficient progress. This has gone unchecked by leadership and management. Progress in those lessons is inadequate due to low expectations and lack of challenge for pupils. Progress in lessons for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory when supported by skilled teaching assistants, but when unsupported their progress is inadequate. The mixed age, lower attaining Year 5 and 6 pupils are inadequately supported and do not make enough progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

While the school judges pupils' personal development to be good, inspectors found it to be only satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy school, which they like attending. This is reflected in the above average attendance. The majority of pupils show positive attitudes towards the school and their learning. They start their work quickly, listen and concentrate well, and show real determination to complete set tasks. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. The behaviour of pupils is good outside of lessons and most behave well in lessons. However, there is some unsatisfactory behaviour in a minority of lessons, due largely to weaknesses in relationships and teaching. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to school life through the school council and a range of monitor duties, such as librarians and helping with younger pupils during wet lunchtimes. The active school council is effective in bringing about positive change and improvements to the physical environment.

Pupils feel safe and well cared for. Most know an adult they can approach with personal problems and they are well aware of the hazards associated with traffic and strangers. While there is some bullying, mostly verbal, incidents are taken seriously by staff and resolved effectively. Access to fruit and water makes a positive contribution towards developing healthy lifestyles but the canteen food does not.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

The school judges teaching and learning to be good. Inspectors disagree and judge them to be inadequate. There is too little good teaching in Years 3 to 6 and some inadequate teaching in two classes of Year 5 and 6 pupils. Teaching in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 is consistently good. The support and training provided by the local authority to manage behaviour and plan lessons to meet the needs of all pupils are not having sufficient impact in some classes. As a result, work is not well matched to the wide range of abilities in the classes, especially the mixed age classes of lower attaining pupils. The main weaknesses in the teaching of Year 5 and 6 pupils are low expectations and lack of challenge for all groups of pupils, especially the more able pupils whose work is too easy. One pupil was overheard saying, 'this is easy'. Some uninteresting activities lead to misbehaviour, for example a dull lesson colouring squares to learn about percentages. In some of the satisfactory lessons, there is too little explanation or demonstration to guide pupils. Consequently, they are unclear of what to do. Resources are sometimes unimaginative, resulting in pupils not enjoying their learning and becoming disinterested. Well organised and resourced classrooms with high quality displays are some of the features of the good teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and work independently. Teaching assistants provide good support, especially for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The procedures for assessment are satisfactory, although there is inconsistency in the use of day-to-day assessment to identify next steps in learning. The useful weekly assessment of what pupils have achieved, have not achieved or have achieved well in Year 3 is good, but this is not applied consistently throughout the key stage. Marking is variable with too much that does not help pupils know what to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum satisfactorily meets statutory requirements. The basic skills are satisfactorily promoted. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good; there is a smooth transition from the reception class to Year 1 and the different aged pupils work well in a safe and secure environment, with a much improved area for outdoor learning. The arrangements to teach pupils in the same age groups for English and mathematics and science in Years 5 and 6 lead to some wasted time, as pupils move from class to class. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory. Due regard is given to health and safety. The curriculum is effectively enriched through a wide range of after-school clubs. There is an appropriate emphasis on healthy competition in sport and opportunities enable all pupils to learn to swim. Satisfactory community links include a Christmas carol concert in the local church and visits to a Victorian museum. Visitors, including the school nurse, support the curriculum well.

The annual residential visits promote the importance of teamwork and develop independence well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

While the school judges pupils' care, guidance and support to be good, inspectors found it to be satisfactory, largely due to weaknesses in relationships in some of the classes of older pupils. Pupils show positive attitudes, politeness and good behaviour when relationships are secure. Pupils like and trust their teachers and try their best for them. They feel safe from bullying and other forms of harassment and confident in approaching staff if they feel troubled. They are aware of risks, for example from strangers, road traffic, drugs and alcohol. The physical environment is safe and secure and pupils adopt safe practices in physical education and other practical lessons. Child protection arrangements are in place and all staff are aware of the procedures.

The use of targets is inconsistent, as this is an aspect of assessment that the deputy headteacher has only recently put into place in Years 3 to 6. The use of targets is better in infant classes but there is inconsistency in their use in some junior classes. As a result, pupils do not know what to do to improve their work. The school has taken recent steps to inform parents about learning mathematics, that they found helpful. The support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory, leading to satisfactory achievement by this group.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The school judges leadership and management to be good. This is an over-generous evaluation of this aspect of the school's work; it is inadequate. The leadership team have rightly identified the downward trend in writing and mathematics standards in the past two years, but steps to improve this are not yet having enough impact. The headteacher is supported by a very able deputy headteacher, who has introduced a comprehensive system to track the progress of individual pupils throughout the school. She has revised weekly planning for literacy and numeracy, as well as leading by the example of her good teaching. Regular checking of teaching and learning, and analysis of assessment results and pupils' work by the deputy headteacher, has identified weaknesses in teaching and learning. Actions to tackle identified weaknesses have not been taken with sufficient urgency in those classes where teaching is inadequate. The impact has been satisfactory in Years 3 and 4 because the recommendations for improvement have taken place. The school's self-evaluation is inaccurate in its judgements on the school's overall effectiveness, given the outcomes for pupils' learning by the time they leave the school. It is accurate in some priorities identified, which are satisfactorily linked to the targets in the school improvement plan.

Governors are satisfactorily informed and provide the school with a well planned programme of meetings. The chairman has a clear view of the budget for the next three years to avoid a potential deficit. However, members of the governing body do

not hold the headteacher to account over the recent fall in standards. Most parents are happy with the school and the opportunities to find out about mathematics teaching. The school provides inadequate value for money but has the capacity to improve because the deputy headteacher and some of the subject leaders have already identified weaknesses that they are planning to improve.

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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?	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	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	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	3	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	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	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?	4	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	4	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	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 letting us come and visit your school. We enjoyed watching you learn. We liked talking to you about your work and what you like about your school. We are writing to tell you what we found out when we inspected your school. We have given your school a Notice to Improve because there are some things that need to be improved so that you learn better.

What we liked about your school

- The children in the Reception classes and in Years 1 and 2 learn well and love school.
- Most of your teachers work hard.
- You said you enjoy the visits and visitors that come to school.
- You are very safe in school.

What needs to be improved

- Some of you do not learn as much as you could in lessons, especially in some of the Year 5 and 6 classes.
- You do not do enough writing in lessons and do not know what to do to improve your work.
- You are not given enough help to know how to improve your work.
- In some lessons you were bored and the work you did was dull because it was too easy.
- You know about healthy eating but you do not like your school meals much.
- The school checks how good teaching is, but it does not always get it right.

We hope that your school soon becomes a much better place to learn so that you all leave school having achieved as well as you can. The things that need to be improved can be sorted out.