

Robertswood School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110360
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	288646
Inspection dates	21–22 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Christopher Parker

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	470
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Martin Callaghan
Headteacher	Mr Keith Gower
Date of previous school inspection	4 March 2002
School address	Denham Lane Chalfont St Peter Gerrards Cross SL9 0EW
Telephone number	01753 888327
Fax number	01753 880581

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is much larger than average. Pupils come from supportive backgrounds. The proportion entitled to free school meals is very low. There are also fewer pupils with special educational needs than in most schools. A small proportion of pupils speak a language other than English at home.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school is providing a satisfactory education for the pupils. The headteacher is giving the school clear direction which is bringing important improvements to the teaching, the curriculum and the pupils' achievements.

Many children start school with better developed skills than usual. They do well in the nursery and consolidate their progress in the Reception Year. Most reach, and many exceed, the goals set for the end of the Foundation Stage. From 2002 to 2005 standards, at the end of Year 2, fell sharply. At the lowest point they were below average. An upturn in results began in mathematics in 2005, and in reading and writing in 2006. The current, good teaching in Year 2 has successfully built on this recovery so that standards are now, well above average. At the end of Year 6 standards have, with some fluctuations, remained well above average. Overall achievement is now satisfactory although there remains scope for more pupils to reach the higher levels.

Standards in writing have risen and underachievement at the end of Year 2 has now been tackled. However, there are still some inconsistencies in the progress the pupils make as they move through the school because some variation in the quality of teaching remains. In some classes it is lively and moves learning along at a good pace. In others the teaching although satisfactory does not provide consistent challenge, particularly for the most able pupils.

The restructured leadership team is now playing an important role in shaping the future of the school. Subject leaders support their colleagues but some have yet to make their mark by ensuring improvements are consistently implemented and their impact evaluated. Assessments of the standards pupils are attaining are now being recorded termly but are not being used to analyse incisively the progress the pupils are making.

The pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Behaviour is good. Many pupils make thoughtful and articulate contributions to lessons; they are cooperative and concentrate on their work. They enjoy the many opportunities the school offers them through clubs, visitors to the school, trips to places of interests and the very productive links with other schools.

Most parents are very pleased with the school and provide strong support. Many see the care and support for pupils as being strong features of its provision. Whilst many appreciate the ease with which they can talk to teachers and welcome the information they receive, a few feel they are not kept well-enough informed.

The headteacher and governors have dealt with the difficulties of a deficit budget, declining standards and many changes of staff. The school has emerged from a period of considerable change with good capacity to improve further and faster than has been possible until recently.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teaching in all classes is consistently good, challenges the most able and results in all pupils making good progress.
- Extend the role of subject leaders so that they all play an effective role in raising standards further.
- Improve the monitoring and analysis of progress so that the school has a clear picture of the performance of all groups of pupils.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

From starting points that are much higher than in most schools the pupils are making satisfactory progress and currently reaching well above average standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported and make progress at the same rate as their peers.

Children are now making a smooth transition between Nursery and Reception, and Reception and Year 1. Children's achievements are now being built on when they move to the next class helping to accelerate their progress and place the children in a much stronger position to reach the standards they should by the end of Year 2.

Improvements in writing results at the end of Year 2 and English results at the end of Year 6 reflect the school's efforts to generate greater consistency and raise standards. However, lesson observations and scrutiny of the pupils' work shows some inconsistency remains. Pupils are making good progress in some years and satisfactory progress in others. This is evident in science. Although standards improved at the end of Year 6, last year, the pupils' work is much weaker in some years than others. The absence of greater consistency means pupils do not make the rapid progress and reach the very high standards of which many are capable.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They say they enjoy school, feel safe and are well cared for. Their attendance is good and they behave well in lessons. A small number of parents expressed concerns about the impact of the behaviour of a few pupils. Pupils say bullying is rare and feel they can turn to an adult, who will respond, should it occur.

In the Foundation Stage the children's personal development is good and they are becoming increasingly independent.

Spiritual, moral, social and culture development are good. The pupils feel they have developed a responsibility to care for others. Their cultural development is extended by good links, for example, with a school in Ethiopia. Pupils have adopted a healthier lifestyle and know the importance of a balanced diet and exercise. They make a good contribution to their own and the wider community, not least in their considerable fund raising for charity. The school council has been instrumental in bringing improvements, such as, tables and benches for pupils to eat their lunch outside. The pupils co-operate and work effectively together preparing them well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The teaching and learning are satisfactory. In some year groups, for example, Years 2, 3 and 6 teaching is good and ensures pupils reach well above average standards by the end of Years 2

and 6. Elsewhere lessons are often satisfactory resulting in slower progress. The uneven progress the pupils make results in satisfactory rather than good achievement.

Where the teaching is good tasks challenge the pupils of all abilities and engage them in interesting activities. Where it is satisfactory not enough consideration is given to what pupils already know so their learning builds at a slower pace. Occasionally, weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge prevent the pupils from making as much progress as they should in science lessons.

Teaching assistants provide well targeted support, particularly for those pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Teaching in the Nursery, where there is a good balance of activities led by the teacher and those chosen by the children, is stronger than reception. However, better links are paying dividends and have enhanced the teaching in the Reception classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is broad, covers all the subjects of the National Curriculum and is enhanced by a wide range of opportunities for trips and visits that extend learning. There is a good range of school clubs and activities that are appreciated by both parents and pupils.

The Foundation Stage curriculum provides a good range of indoor and outdoor activities for children in the Nursery. In reception the outdoor activities are not as purposeful.

The pupils have good opportunities to write for a range of purposes in different contexts across the curriculum. This has helped to raise standards in writing. French is taught from Year 3 and culminates in a visit to Brittany in Year 6.

Many pupils participate in the good opportunities the school provides to learn to play a musical instrument. Good links with local independent schools provide workshops for gifted and talented pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support for the pupils are good. The pupils speak warmly of the staff who look after and help them. The school carefully assesses the risk to pupils, particularly before they are taken on trips or visits. It carries out checks, in line with current requirements, on all those who work in the school to make sure they are qualified and fit to do so.

The school has extensive plans to develop and extend the playground which, at the present time, is very crowded.

Support for those pupils with learning difficulties is well managed and deployed. Developments in academic guidance have contributed to improvements in standards of writing. Pupils now know what they need to do to improve their next piece of work. The targets they are set are now helping them to progress to the next level of skills in their writing. These positive developments are spreading into other subjects although not in all year groups.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has reorganised the senior leadership of the school to provide a structure to drive forward his clear vision to provide a high standard of education. The changes made by the headteacher are beginning to come to fruition, not least in improving standards in writing and greater cohesion in the transition from Nursery through to Year 1.

A tracking system is now used to record the termly assessments carried out by the teachers in the core subjects of the curriculum. The information being collected is not yet being analysed to give a comprehensive picture of how well pupils are progressing. Until recently the monitoring of the quality of teaching has fallen largely to the headteacher. This responsibility is now being shared with the leadership team. Whilst these evaluations provide an accurate assessment of the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching they do not place sufficient emphasis on the impact of the teaching on pupils' progress.

Subject leaders, although supporting developments and initiatives, are not sufficiently involved in evaluating the impact of these activities on the quality of teaching or the standards the pupils' attain.

The school has an accurate view of its performance. The governors are very clear about where further improvements are needed and are working in partnership with the headteacher to build on recent successes.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

4 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Robertswood School, Gerrards Cross, SL9 0EW

This letter is to tell you about the findings of the recent inspection and to thank you for taking the time to talk to the inspectors about your school and your work. The headteacher and teachers have created a caring school community where you enjoy learning and feel safe. You behave well in lessons and concentrate on your work. You often make thoughtful and interesting contributions to them.

By the end of Year 6 standards are well above average but they could be even higher. We have asked the headteacher and teachers to do all they can to challenge you and make sure you all make good progress in every lesson so that more of you will reach the highest levels.

The curriculum is good. You enjoy and benefit from the wide range of opportunities the school provides in clubs and visits to places of interest. You find the targets the teachers set you are useful and they have helped to improve your writing.

The School Council represents your views well and has been able to change a number of things that were important to you, such as the benches in the playground. There are some very interesting plans to improve the playground which is very crowded.

The headteacher is keen to keep improving the school. We have asked the teachers who take the lead in each subject to look very carefully at how much the changes they make improve your achievements. We have also asked the headteacher to analyse all the information the school collects about the standards you have reached to make sure you are making good progress all the time.

We hope that your school gets better and better so that you all achieve as well as you possibly can.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Parker

Additional Inspector