



Roundwood Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117211
Local Authority HERTFORDSHIRE
Inspection number 290754
Inspection date 16 October 2006
Reporting inspector Joyce Cox

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Roundwood Park
School category	Community		Harpenden
Age range of pupils	3-11		Hertfordshire AL5 3AD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01582 460756
Number on roll (school)	323	Fax number	01582 768014
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Albert Pawle
		Headteacher	Miss Anne Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	22 April 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average size primary school. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is much lower than average. The proportions of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities, or a statement of special educational need are below average. Most pupils are White British and one in ten is from a minority ethnic background. A very small number of pupils are at an early stage of learning English. When children start in the Nursery the abilities of many are typical of children nationally and some have abilities above those expected for children of this age.

As part of the school's continuous commitment to improvement it has secured many awards for its work, including a Healthy Schools Award. The school is the lead school in a local learning network community for mathematics and has recently completed the Primary Leadership Programme 3. The Foundation Stage Unit has received the Investors in Children award and is also an Effective Early Learning Centre.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Roundwood is an outstanding school which gives its pupils an excellent all round education. It enjoys a very good reputation locally and is over subscribed. Virtually all parents support the school and appreciate greatly all that it provides. One parent writes, 'We feel privileged to have this school in our area.' Parents feel this way because the headteacher is an inspirational leader who has the highest possible aspirations for the school and the pupils. She has skilfully built a staff team that is strongly committed to school improvement and that strives for excellence in all that it does.

Standards have risen year on year since 2001 and are exceptionally high in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. All pupils make outstanding progress and their achievement is excellent. Exceptional achievement is due to high calibre teaching from staff who expect the best from all pupils. Although teaching is excellent overall a small number of teachers do not make it clear enough to pupils what they expect pupils to learn in lessons, which slows their rate of progress. The children in Nursery and Reception get off to an excellent start as they learn through an exciting and enticing variety of practical and interesting activities. Parents of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are extremely pleased with their children's achievement. The school's success also lies in its outstanding assessment procedures and skill in meeting the needs of pupils with different capabilities.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They love school, behave extremely well and have very positive attitudes. They are confident and always keen to do their best. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and lies at the heart of the school's work. Pupils understand how to live healthy and safe lives and junior pupils make a huge contribution to school life as house captains and peer mediators. The excellent curriculum is enriched with many clubs, special weeks, visits and visitors, which enhance teaching and pupils' enjoyment of school. The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. There are excellent arrangements for guiding pupils' academic performance and the school's procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust and fully meet current requirements.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher has an extremely clear view of the school's strengths and wastes no time in identifying issues and taking action where improvements are required. For example, highly successful initiatives to raise boys' achievement in writing resulted in considerably improved Year 6 test results in 2006. This outstanding capacity to evaluate the school's work, coupled with excellent improvement since the last inspection, shows that the school has an excellent capacity for continued improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all teachers clearly explain to pupils what they are to learn in lessons, in language that is easily understandable.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievement is excellent. The children in Nursery and Reception make rapid progress and most exceed the expected standards for children of this age on entry to Year 1. Pupils' fast progress continues in the infant classes and standards are well above average at the end of Year 2. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities perform exceptionally well. The considerable time and care taken to plan work to meet the needs of individual pupils in both the infant and junior classes means that all pupils are challenged and make excellent progress in their learning. Year 6 pupils reach the challenging targets they are set and attain consistently high standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave. Standards in music are also extremely high due to excellent teaching and enthusiasm from a specialist music teacher.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils have excellent relationships with staff and one another. The school is a very happy and caring place where all pupils acquire the numeracy, literacy, social and information and communication technology (ICT) skills to help them in later life. Pupils learn how to stay safe and know how to recognise and respond to bullying and racism. They say that there are many people they can turn to in school if they are worried. They love school and this is reflected in the high attendance figures. Behaviour is excellent and pupils have good manners and learn to respect themselves and others. Older pupils such as the Year 5 'Red Caps' sensitively support younger children in the playground so that newcomers settle quickly. Pupils use school councils to express their views on a range of issues including play equipment and road safety very clearly. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They flourish in this warm, supportive yet challenging environment where their achievements in many areas are valued, recognised and celebrated.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The outstanding teaching and learning enable all pupils to achieve exceptionally well. All staff have an excellent understanding of how pupils learn and skilfully adapt their teaching to meet pupils' various capabilities and talents. Pupils are unanimous in praising their teachers and say, 'Teachers challenge us and make us really think.' Outstanding specialist teaching in music for all pupils, and in mathematics for gifted and talented mathematicians, confirms the high standards and expectations staff set for themselves and the pupils.

The children in Nursery and Reception settle quickly in the bright and colourful Foundation Stage Unit and benefit considerably from outstanding teaching. All teachers

share with pupils what they are to learn in the lesson. In a small number of infant classes these learning intentions are worded in complicated language which restricts pupils' achievement because pupils initially are not clear what they are meant to be learning. Some junior pupils are skilfully challenged to say what the teacher will expect them to have learned by the end of the lesson, which makes them think really hard about their learning. All pupils, and particularly those with learning difficulties, benefit from the excellent support provided by the talented teaching assistants. Highly effective procedures for tracking pupils' progress underpin outstanding lesson planning, providing staff with the necessary information to match precisely pupils' learning to their abilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Since the last inspection the school has successfully reviewed all aspects of its curriculum. This highly effective review, spearheaded by the senior leadership team has resulted in excellent links between subjects and even greater use of local resources for sport and ICT. Over the last year the school has restructured its classes and its long term planning, which has recently resulted in a small minority of parental concerns. Senior leaders and the governing body are closely monitoring this new initiative to ensure that all pupils continue to achieve as well as ever. Curriculum planning contains a strong focus on pupils' physical, social and health development which very effectively helps pupils to be healthy and stay safe. Parents and pupils appreciate the tremendous number of clubs and special events such as outstanding musical productions and the popular Steel Pan Bands. The school is an extremely valuable resource to other local schools as it provides classes for its own more able mathematicians and for ten other schools in the area.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The headteacher and the staff take excellent care of all their pupils. There is a highly effective system for monitoring pupils' welfare and staff respond swiftly to support vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties. Several parents wrote to say how much they appreciated the sensitive way in which their child's needs had been recognised and effectively catered for. Guidance to pupils about their academic performance is excellent. Pupils know their targets and how to reach them and consequently make excellent progress. There are excellent arrangements for safeguarding pupils and regular training keeps staff up to date with current requirements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher provides excellent guidance and vision. She is ably supported by a highly competent and confident leadership team, which has also played a pivotal role

in improving the school's standards since the last inspection. The headteacher knows the school extremely well which is reflected in the highly accurate self-evaluation, which takes account of the views of staff, governors, parents and pupils. This is a school that shows no sense of complacency and is not content to rest on its laurels. Senior leaders expect and achieve the best from themselves and everyone in the school community.

The outstanding monitoring and evaluation of teaching are highly effective in maintaining pupils' excellent achievements. Senior leaders rigorously and effectively tackle areas requiring slight improvement, such as ensuring that junior boys achieved high standards in writing. This shows that the school has a continuing capacity for further improvement. Morale in the school is very high and teamwork amongst the stable and dedicated staff is a real strength. For example, all staff play a crucial role in monitoring and improving the school's work via the school improvement teams. Leadership is further enhanced by the governors of the school who give an excellent balance of support and challenge. The school provides outstanding value for money.

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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
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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

17 October 2006

Dear Pupils

Roundwood Primary School, Roundwood Park, Harpenden, Hertfordshire, AL5 3AD

Thank you so much for making my visit so enjoyable, and for taking time to talk to me and answer all my questions. I thought that you would like to hear what I found out about your school.

There are many excellent things happening:

- All of you make outstanding progress and reach high standards by the time you leave.
- You love school because teachers, teaching assistants, visitors and special events make learning extremely interesting.
- You get on extremely well with one another and your behaviour is excellent.
- Your teachers and other adults help you when you have problems, make sure that you are safe and give you excellent advice about your work.
- Miss Thomas is an excellent headteacher and together with all the staff makes sure that you are extremely happy and successful at school.

You are very fortunate to go to such a brilliant school and your headteacher and senior teachers know exactly what could make your school even better. I agree with their views and think that it would also be really great if all the teachers made it very clear to you what you are to learn in lessons.

It was so good to find that all of you are very happy at school and doing so well and that your parents appreciate and value your school so highly.

Keep working hard and enjoying life at Roundwood. I really hope that all the acorns you received in Monday's assembly grow into huge oak trees.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Joyce Cox

(Lead inspector)