



The Ropsley Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120536
Local Authority LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number 291774
Inspection date 13 February 2007
Reporting inspector Roger Brown

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Lane
School category	Voluntary controlled		Ropsley, Grantham
Age range of pupils	4-11		Lincolnshire NG33 4BT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01476 585379
Number on roll (school)	95	Fax number	01476 585878
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Bob Sheard
		Headteacher	Mr Ian Wilkinson
Date of previous school inspection	11 February 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector for one day.

Description of the school

This is a small village school that serves the local community and the surrounding area. All pupils are from White British backgrounds. The area is advantaged both socially and economically. Fewer than average pupils are eligible for a free school meal, but the proportion with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average. Attainment on entry to the school is above national expectations. The school has secured an award for Investors in People.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has some outstanding features. In the words of one parent, 'It is a lovely, friendly village school with a caring ethos.' Just as importantly, it is a successful school where pupils thrive and attain good levels of achievement, not just in their academic subjects, but also across a range of activities including the arts and sport. This school provides its pupils with an excellent grounding and preparation for adulthood. The curriculum it has developed integrates the subjects in an exciting and thought provoking way. As one Year 6 pupil remarked, 'We are taught to think and we have to practise this skill all the time.' Information communication technology (ICT), which was a relative weakness at the time of the last inspection, is now one of the more notable components of the curriculum.

Standards in the school are good. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress and are well prepared to begin Key Stage 1. Year 2 pupils achieve higher than expected levels in reading and mathematics, but their writing is only in line with the national average. Year 6 pupils achieve results in the key stage assessments that are considerably above that expected for their age in all respects, except writing. The school recognises the pattern of weakness in writing and has begun to address the issue. Pupils with particular needs or learning difficulties are well supported and as a result make good progress. Pupils with special gifts and talents achieve well, but the school has not yet developed a policy or programme to identify and promote their achievements even further.

Parents recognise the important role the school plays in successfully developing pupils' personal development. It 'nurtures well rounded individuals with a strong sense of fair play and tolerance', wrote one parent. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is given just as much importance as their academic development. As a result, the pupils' behaviour is good; they enjoy their learning, they like school and consequently attend well. The good quality care, support and guidance they receive from all staff and the adult volunteers that work with the school reinforce their sense of well-being very effectively. The school sets individual targets for all pupils to improve their performance, but this approach is more successful with the older ones who understand and apply the targets to all their learning.

The quality of teaching is consistently good. There are times when it is outstanding. The good relationships between all the adults in school and the pupils ensure that the pupils are committed to succeeding with their learning, no matter how challenging this might be.

The leadership at the school is very good and is exemplified by the headteacher, who, with the good support of the governors, encourages commitment, enjoyment, innovation and teamwork. The school was considered to be a good school when it was last inspected; it has moved forward and improved since then and very clearly has a good capacity to continue to do so.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the quality of pupils' writing.
- Ensure that there are systems in place to promote and support pupils with particular gifts and talents.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

A good start in the Foundation Stage prepares children well for the rest of school. All pupils, whatever their ability or starting point, make good progress in almost all areas. The relative weakness is writing. The school understands this and is beginning to see pupils make improvements in the quality of their writing, following changes to its approach. It is concentrating on making pupils aware of different styles of writing and helping them to think more about the audience they are writing for. Standards are above the national average in reading and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1. Standards in Key Stage 2 are well above the national average in reading, mathematics and science. The good level of achievement is also reflected in the high standards that pupils achieve across a range of other subjects, especially in ICT, the arts and sport.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils like coming to school and are very happy. Attendance rates are good, and pupils are understandably proud of their school and what they achieve. They try hard to live up to the values they are taught, for instance through their care of the environment. Pupils rightly believe that they influence what happens at the school and know they are listened to. All pupils understand the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle; they really enjoy the opportunities for games and know about healthy eating and try to commit themselves to it. The high quality curriculum has a significant influence on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is good. The school's policy of developing the pupils' ability to think creatively means that when they are asked to reflect on an issue they do so seriously and with sensitivity. However, the school has not yet exploited the well developed ICT resource it has established in order to widen and strengthen the cultural development of the pupils in what is a relatively isolated community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The nature of the teaching in the school by all the adults is characterised by warm, caring relationships. Consequently, the pupils are excited and enthusiastic about their learning, they are eager to share their successes and discoveries with the teachers.

The very best teaching, which is at times outstanding, uses gentle humour and well prepared resources to motivate pupils to want to discover more. Senior leaders are working hard to bring all teaching up to the level of the best. Experienced teachers are successfully sharing their knowledge and skills with the new teachers. Alongside this, the school rightly devotes time, energy and resources to the professional development of all staff. The success of this high quality training, at times carried out in conjunction with partner schools, is helping teachers to become very creative in the way in which they teach.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The thought provoking and exciting curriculum the school has developed over the last two years is an outstanding component of the school's success. Staff have not only integrated the subject areas, but have used many elements of ICT to motivate pupils and promote learning across a range of themes and topics. Combined with this has been the development of 'Philosophy for Children', a powerful tool which both excites the pupils and gives them the confidence to explore stimulating and challenging ideas and concepts. It not only strengthens their academic learning, but also encourages their empathy for others and gives them insights into the adult world. This is further enriched by a wide range of visits, visitors clubs and activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils correctly believe that the care guidance and support they receive is good. They value and respect the relationship they have with the adults in the school. All the pupils spoke enthusiastically about how their work was valued and praised by the staff. Older pupils know and understand what they have done well, what they need to improve, and how they should set about doing this. Younger pupils were less certain and slightly confused about the nature and purpose of their targets. Careful attention is paid to the pupils' welfare. Child protection procedures are well established and rigorously maintained. Links with parents are strong, links with the community through the Church and the events the school leads or takes part in are equally effective.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher actively seeks out, listens to and tries to act on the views of the children, parents, staff, governors and community. In doing so he has established an accurate picture of the performance of the school, its strengths and relative weaknesses. He knows where and how he wants to take the school forward, and does so sensibly by cementing relationships and building partnerships. Staff play an active role in leadership and management, sharing some of the workload and developing new initiatives. The governors also give good support. They are involved in the school and committed to its success. They help to manage the budget carefully and, although

there is currently a higher than recommended carry forward, plans are in place to spend this to improve the buildings. Despite the relatively high cost per pupil, the high quality of the provision ensures that the school gives good 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?	2
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	2
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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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?	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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

14 February 2007

Dear children,

Ropsley CE Primary School, School Lane, Ropsley, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG33 4BT

Thank you for your warm welcome when I visited your school. It was a real pleasure to be with you. I enjoyed watching your classes, and I really enjoyed talking to you about your work.

I thought that the things that were good about your school were:

- The interesting and exciting themes your teachers give you.
- The impressive way you use information and communication technology.
- The fact that you enjoy your school, you learn well, and think learning is fun.
- The great way in which you use the thinking skills you are taught to get insights into adult life.

However, I would like your teachers to:

- Help you to achieve even higher standards in writing.
- Plan to give those of you with special gifts and talents even more opportunities to do well.

Many of your parents wrote to me, and almost everyone said that they think that you go to a good school, and I agree with them. I thoroughly enjoyed the time I spent with you in school.

Best wishes for the future.

Roger Brown Lead inspector