

Road Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121854
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	292242
Inspection dates	13–14 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Helen Hutchings

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	166
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Greg Owen
Headteacher	Alison Bailes
Date of previous school inspection	20 January 2003
School address	Hartwell Road Roade Northampton NN7 2NT
Telephone number	01604 862309
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, including those with a statement of special educational need, is higher than in most schools. In some year groups, a higher than average proportion of pupils enters or leaves part-way through their primary education. The school provides out-of-school care after school. The headteacher joined the school in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Roade Primary School is a satisfactory school with some good features. The good care, support and guidance are reflected in pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils are safe and well cared for so that they develop confidence and a pride in their school. As one group said, 'It's just a nice place; teachers and children like being here.' Pupils believe in the school's motto, 'Aim high, reach for the sky', and because school interests them, display this in their enjoyment and good attitudes. Pupils and parents know their concerns will be listened to by all staff. Parents are rightly confident in the school's provision and appreciate the changes made to improve communication between home and school.

Stimulating activities enable children to make good progress in the Reception class so that the quality and standards are good. The standards through the rest of the school are mostly in line with national averages, representing satisfactory achievement for pupils, although performance in the Year 6 tests in 2006 was below average and some pupils did not make enough progress. Changes to the curriculum, including a greater focus on improving mathematics and linking subjects, mean that the curriculum is now good and leading to better rates of progress. Teaching is satisfactory, and consistent approaches help pupils to develop good routines for their learning. However, some lessons are insufficiently well paced and tasks not challenging enough for all pupils so that sometimes not enough is achieved in the time. Marking is regular and values pupils' efforts and achievements well but does not always show pupils exactly what they have to do to improve.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has made a very good start in setting the agenda for future improvement. Many other leaders are relatively inexperienced in their responsibilities and have not had a strong enough role in monitoring the effectiveness of their subjects. Staff and governors share a good understanding of the school's priorities indicating a sound capacity for ongoing improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise teachers' expectations of what can be achieved and ensure that all lessons are well paced and work is challenging for all pupils.
- Improve marking so that it is always clear to pupils exactly what they have to do to improve their work.
- Develop subject leaders' role in monitoring the quality of provision in their subjects to focus on key priorities for development.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children join the school with a wide range of abilities but they are below average overall. Provision in the Reception class is good and children make good progress. They learn to enjoy school and play together so that they join Year 1 with skills in line with those normally seen at this age. Pupils reach standards broadly in line with national averages in the tests in Years 2 and 6, although there are variations from year to year because of the differing abilities across cohorts. This represents satisfactory achievement for most pupils. However, in the last two years some pupils did not achieve as well as they should have done, particularly in mathematics and science, leading to declining standards in Year 6. In 2006, pupils' performance was significantly below national average, although learning was disrupted for a high proportion of

pupils joining the school later than their peers. The school has taken prompt action to improve standards, and revised and consistent approaches to teaching and subject planning are already helping pupils to make better progress. Pupils with learning or emotional difficulties progress in line with the targets set for them. Some exceed these because they are included fully in all aspects of school life and planning effectively meets their individual needs. The school has set challenging targets for pupils' performance this year and is on course to achieve them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils say they enjoy school and show this in their good behaviour. Attendance is broadly average. Very good relationships, based on politeness and mutual respect, are well established amongst the pupils themselves and with adults, contributing significantly to the friendly and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils have good attitudes and work eagerly together. Class work and homework do not always give pupils enough responsibility for planning, organising and presenting research to develop the range of independent learning skills necessary for their future education. The school council represents pupils' views well and its management of a budget for playground games helps raise their financial awareness. The playground is a pleasant environment and pupils play and relax without fear because intimidation is rare. Pupils say that there is no bullying and they know exactly what to do if they feel uncomfortable.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils respect the views of others and enjoy the increasing opportunities to understand the values and beliefs of religions different from their own, for example, through a visit to a local synagogue when learning about Judaism. They also enjoy contributing to the wider community, such as helping with local fund raising events or Maypole dancing. Current initiatives are encouraging pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles and success is evident in the achievement of Healthy School status. Pupils try to influence others with the food they bring in their lunchboxes and many keep fit by participating in a range of sports.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Lessons begin by explaining the learning intentions and end with opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they have achieved. A recent development, where older pupils agree their own success criteria, is helping to make the intended learning clearer and is a good approach which the school intends to use more widely. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well so that there is a purposeful atmosphere in classrooms. Pupils appreciate the help and support of adults. They say that 'teachers explain things well' and feel able to ask if there is anything they do not understand. Careful planning for learning is helping pupils to make faster progress than in recent years but there are still times when learning is a bit slow. This is when teachers talk for too long, leaving insufficient time for pupils to test out their own understanding. Sometimes teachers do not make tasks challenging enough or expect enough work to be completed in the time available. The need for more challenge is an ongoing development priority in the new school improvement plan. Teachers mark work regularly and acknowledge what pupils have achieved but do not always identify clearly enough what has to be done to make work better. Marking is not always followed up to ensure that misconceptions have been addressed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and includes a number of activities beyond statutory requirements to make learning interesting for pupils. For example, learning is linked well across different subjects. Literacy and numeracy are reinforced well in other subjects, making a major contribution to pupils' improved achievement. As a result of recent developments ensuring that tasks are planned against a clear progression of skills, work is generally matched effectively to pupils' earlier achievements. Specialist teaching in science, music and sport gives pupils variety and an understanding of different ways of learning. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to enliven and enrich learning but is not yet used enough to help learning in other subjects or in all classes.

Pupils participate in additional opportunities to enrich learning. These include residential visits, themed activities such as book week, an artist in residence and ICT projects. Pupils attend a very wide range of extra-curricular activities, providing well for many interests and age groups.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's supportive environment helps pupils to be happy and confident. Teachers know pupils well and the level of care is high and consistently applied by all staff. In the Reception class, children are carefully introduced to the routines of school life, and the welcoming and secure environment contributes significantly to the success of their early learning. Procedures for ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils are good. Incidents of bullying are rare and taken seriously when occasional incidents take place. The school works very well with a range of external agencies, such as the health authority or behaviour service, when additional expertise is needed to provide appropriate help for pupils with specific problems. The very good induction and transfer arrangements mean that the pupils feel valued as individuals and are confident about their ability to cope with new situations.

The school's procedures for monitoring the progress of pupils have been extended this year to include more regular assessments. This information is used effectively to provide additional support where this is seen to be necessary.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides strong leadership and has used her first months in the school very effectively to establish a vision for the future which is understood and shared by others. This start has been recognised by parents. One parent wrote about the essential ingredient of 'joy' apparent in the school. The headteacher has worked closely with the local authority to evaluate current levels of effectiveness. She has drawn on this and involved others well in development planning so that priorities are appropriate. This is shown in the success of action already taken to bring about improvement. Subject leaders support colleagues in a variety of ways but their leadership skills and roles in monitoring the quality of provision in their subjects have not developed sufficiently since the last inspection. Their understanding of the impact of teaching of their subjects is limited because they do not have many opportunities to observe lessons. They are not yet making the most effective use of information about how well pupils are doing.

The governing body works very effectively and is a source of good support and encouragement. Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses and are making an important contribution to the school's accurate self-evaluation.

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

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?	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	3
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	3
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	3
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	3

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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome and talking to us about the school and the things you do. We are pleased that everything is at least satisfactory and that some things are good.

- Pupils are really polite and considerate and this helps you to be happy in school.
- The good behaviour in lessons and around school means that you concentrate and work hard.
- You really do try to live up to the school motto to 'Aim high, and reach the sky'.
- The youngest children get off to a good start in the Reception class.
- The way teachers share the learning objective with you at the beginning helps you to understand just what you have learned at the end of the lesson.
- You said that teachers explain things well and give you extra help if you need it, and this helps you to reach standards similar to those of other pupils of your age.
- You are cared for well and know that you will be listened to if you have a problem.
- We are pleased that you do not think bullying is a problem in the school.
- Many of you enjoy a lot of school clubs and you are keeping fit and healthy because so many attend sports clubs.

The headteacher and the staff have planned some things to help you to make your work better. We also think that these will help, and hope that you will also concentrate on these too. We have asked your teachers to:

- make some of your tasks more challenging and make sure that lessons keep up a good pace
- give you a clear view about exactly how to make your work better. We hope that you will try to follow this advice
- help each other by looking at how successfully subjects are planned and taught in each class.

Very best wishes for the future