



St Robert Southwell Catholic Primary School, Horsham

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 126053
Local Authority West Sussex
Inspection number 293449
Inspection date 7 March 2007
Reporting inspector Eileen Chadwick

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Lambs Farm Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Roffey
Age range of pupils	4-11		Horsham RH12 4LP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01403 252357
Number on roll (school)	144	Fax number	01403 252394
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Peter Mullarky
		Headteacher	Anne Hudspith
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

This smaller than average sized primary school serves the Roffey suburb of Horsham and also takes pupils from a wider area. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is low. Pupils' attainment on entry is broadly at the level expected but there is a wide range. The number of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities is above average. Most pupils are White British, although some have other backgrounds, and a slightly higher than average proportion are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Mobility of pupils is above average, especially in Years 5 and 6. The school has achieved Gold Eco, a national award for pupils' care and management of the environment. There has been a change of headteacher since the previous inspection and the number of pupils attending the school has risen.

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 with some outstanding features. Pupils' personal development, including their behaviour, is excellent. The school has improved considerably over the last few years under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher. Parents justifiably hold the school in high regard. Pupils' overall achievement is good, and excellent in English. Strong teamwork by the staff is a major reason why the school has improved so well since the previous inspection and for its good capacity to continue to do so.

Pupils make good progress in Reception and Years 1 and 2. By Year 2, pupils achieve exceptionally high standards in reading and writing and above average standards in mathematics. Standards for Year 2 pupils have substantially improved in recent years due to good teaching throughout Reception to Year 2. Good progress continues in Years 3 to 6 so that pupils in Year 6 reach standards that are exceptionally high in English and well above average in mathematics. Throughout the school, boys outperform girls in mathematics. By Years 2 and 6, boys reach exceptional standards in both English and mathematics. Girls attain above average in mathematics, and in English they too reach exceptional levels. Pupils' good achievement stems from good teaching and a rich and varied curriculum. However, a few inconsistencies in teaching hinder the potential progress of some pupils. When questioning pupils during mathematics lessons, teachers do not target girls often enough. This prevents girls taking a more active part in mathematics lessons. In Year 1 writing lessons, teachers do not consistently demonstrate writing clearly before expecting pupils to write. As a result, progress in writing in Year 1 is slower than for Year 2 pupils. The school has already identified this as an area for improvement. Provision for care, support and guidance is good. Outstanding pastoral leadership promotes a strong and caring Catholic ethos and a sense of family in which all pupils feel valued. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils' great enjoyment of school is shown by their very good attendance. Pupils know how to stay safe and healthy and make the most of the wide range of sporting opportunities offered to them. They make an excellent contribution to the community in their care for their environment and by helping others less fortunate than themselves. Partnerships with other schools, churches and outside agencies are excellent.

Leadership and management are good, with senior leaders having a very clear vision for improving the school. Subject leaders and governors are effective in their roles. A strength of the school is its ability to evaluate itself accurately and to use this knowledge to drive forward improvements. Systems for checking and improving pupils' progress are good. However, systems for checking the progress of boys and girls as separate groups are not as thorough as for other groups, for example for those with learning difficulties.

What the school should do to improve further

- Give girls better opportunities to achieve as well in mathematics as in English by closer checks on their progress and improving teachers' questioning skills in mathematics

- improve pupils' progress in writing in Year 1 by the consistent use of clear demonstrations and good examples.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' overall achievement is good. From broadly average attainment on entry, pupils reach exceptionally high standards in English and well above average standards in mathematics.

Children make good progress in Reception and reach at least the standards expected, with some exceeding these in reading, writing and mathematics. Improvements in provision for Reception over the past few years have greatly improved children's progress in all areas.

Pupils make good progress overall in Years 1 and 2. Their progress is excellent in reading and good in writing and mathematics. Standards have risen significantly in the past two years due to improved assessment and the setting of targets and more challenging learning opportunities. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are given good support to help them catch up. In writing, pupils make faster progress in Year 2 than in Year 1 because in Year 1, writing skills are not always taught systematically enough using good models as the basis.

In Years 3 to 6, pupils' progress in relation to their starting points is good, including that of the many later entrants into Years 5 and 6. These pupils sometimes have limited English on entry or have learning difficulties. They catch up very well because of the support they are given. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities also make good progress. These pupils' progress is excellent in English because of the rigorous support they are given. More capable pupils' progress is also good because teaching is well matched to their needs.

Boys and girls do exceptionally well in English throughout the school. Boys also do exceptionally well in mathematics. The very high standards reached by girls in English show they should do better in mathematics, where the standards they reach are only above average. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in science, design and technology, music and sport and leave the school as well-rounded young people well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' outstanding personal development is a major reason why pupils achieve so well. Pupils take great pleasure in all aspects of school life and this shows in their positive attitudes to learning and excellent behaviour in and out of school. Support from the local church and its community helps to promote the school's family atmosphere and pupils' great sense of belonging. The Catholic ethos strongly promotes pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils have a very good understanding of cultural diversity and accept each other's differences. They know that racism and

bullying are unacceptable. Pupils' contributions to the school and wider community are excellent. They develop a very good sense of responsibility for improving their local environment. As a result, the school is litter-free and pupils recycle rubbish. There is a thriving school council which is a very good vehicle for enabling pupils to contribute to school decision-making. Pupils develop good problem-solving skills, for example through their design and technology activities. Enterprise awareness, teamwork and decision-making skills develop well. Their good achievement in literacy and numeracy also prepares them well for their future working lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The overall quality of teaching and learning across the school is good. Teachers make learning enjoyable and expect high standards of behaviour and application. They have good subject knowledge and high expectations of their pupils. Pupils are clear about what they are trying to achieve because teachers explain lesson purposes very well. Teachers ensure pupils learn as successfully through investigation and problem-solving as they do through absorbing information and practising skills. Pupils are given good opportunities for sharing ideas and for developing their speaking and thinking skills. Assessment is used well to match pupils' work to their prior attainment. However, in mathematics, teachers are inclined to focus more on boys than girls when asking questions. Pupils' progress in writing is occasionally interrupted when teachers do not demonstrate writing skills clearly enough before asking pupils to write. Teachers use interactive whiteboard technology well to support pupils' learning, although screens are not always clearly visible when there is bright sunlight.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with outstanding features. It provides a broad range of interesting academic, practical, creative and physical opportunities. There are outstanding learning opportunities in environmental science. Links between subjects and practical work bring learning alive, especially in reading and writing. Good provision for children in Reception strikes an appropriate balance between learning through play and through adult-led learning. The outdoor facilities are fine features. The well-organised support for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, including effective support by teaching assistants, enables these pupils to achieve well and reach national standards in English by the time they leave the school. Regular use is made of the computer suite but pupils' use of computers in the classroom to support their learning is irregular. Specialist teaching in music and physical education makes for strong provision and effective learning. The school has rightly identified art and design as an area for improvement to bring provision in line with other areas such as that for design and technology.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Outstanding pastoral care provides pupils with great support. As a result, pupils learn in a very safe and healthy environment. Systems for ensuring pupils are safe are very good and meet all requirements. Pupils say they have excellent relationships with staff and know they will be listened to if they are having problems. Support is thorough for those pupils who have English as an additional language and those who begin the school as late entrants. Induction and transfer arrangements to secondary school are excellent. The school's excellent partnerships with other schools and with outside agencies for supporting vulnerable pupils strongly promote pupils' well-being and good achievement.

Academic assessment is good overall and has been much improved in recent years. Older pupils are very clear about their targets but younger pupils are not always certain. Teachers' marking does not consistently show pupils clearly enough what it is they need to do in order to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides excellent leadership. She has brought vision and co-ordination to the work of the school. She has created a strong school ethos where the whole staff work together with determination to raise standards and achievement. Much improved systems for checking and evaluating teaching and pupils' progress have given school leaders an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. This information is used purposefully to drive forward initiatives. As a result, there have been many improvements, including the raising of achievement in Reception and in Years 1 and 2, and in the breadth and quality of the curriculum. Subject leaders are now effective in their roles and this is a major reason why standards are improving. Systems for them to monitor the quality of teaching and learning are robust, except for the fact that there is not enough emphasis in their monitoring of the impact of teaching on the progress of girls and boys as separate groups. Governors have an accurate view of their roles and have developed their ability to monitor and evaluate the work of the school well. However, on occasions, they are still inclined to rely too much on the headteacher when checking how well pupils are achieving.

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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?	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	2

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?	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.

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

Thank you for making us so welcome when we recently visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing you at work and at play. This letter is to tell you what we think about your school and how we think it can be even better.

You receive a good education and there are some extremely good things about your school. Here are some of the good things:

- you make good progress and, by the time you leave, you reach excellent standards in English and good standards in mathematics
- you are a credit to your school and behave extremely well
- you really enjoy school and get on very well with each other
- good teaching makes sure you make good progress
- you have really good opportunities to learn in design and technology, music and sport
- teachers take superb care of you and make sure you are kept safe
- your headteacher leads you all extremely well and your teachers are working very hard to make the school even better.

Here are a few things we are asking the school to change:

- make sure girls reach as high standards in mathematics as they do in English
- make sure teachers ask girls as many questions in mathematics as they do boys
- for those of you in Year 1, you need to be shown how to write more clearly.

You can help your teachers by trying your best, and we are sure that you will.

Thank you again for your help and for being so friendly.