



Romanby Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121312
Local Authority North Yorkshire
Inspection number 300472
Inspection dates 5–6 March 2007
Reporting inspector Christopher Keeler HMI

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

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| Type of school | Primary | School address | The Close |
| School category | Community | | Romanby, Northallerton |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 | | North Yorkshire DL7 8BL |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 1609 7811708 |
| Number on roll (school) | 272 | Fax number | 1609 7839206 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Mrs P Dennis |
| | | Headteacher | Mr J Foxwell |
| Date of previous school inspection | 5 December 2005 | | |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is situated in the village of Romanby on the edge of Northallerton. The school community is generally socially and economically advantaged. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This school has been through a difficult and challenging period since the previous inspection, when overall effectiveness was deemed to be inadequate. The morale of school staff fell and improvements were hard to secure. However, significant changes to staffing, good support from the local authority (LA) and a rejuvenated governing body under the leadership of a determined chair of governors has been instrumental in bringing about significant change. This school has 'turned the corner' and is well placed to build on the satisfactory progress that it has made since the previous inspection. The recently appointed headteacher enjoys the confidence of parents, staff and governors. He is ably supported by the deputy headteacher who shares his vision of excellence. As a result of these factors Romanby Primary School is a satisfactory and improving school. This view is shared by the school and parents readily acknowledge the extent to which the school has improved over the past 12 months.

Pupils enter school with standards that are generally above the national average. In the Foundation Stage most children make good progress towards the early learning goals. They make good progress, due to effective teaching overall in Key Stage 1 and attain high standards. However, some pupils find the transition to Key Stage 2 challenging because of the need to work much more independently. As a result, the progress of these pupils levels out. The results of national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2006 are broadly in line with regard to English and mathematics and above in science. The school monitoring systems, together with a scrutiny of work seen during the inspection, indicate that pupils are on track to attain standards in English, mathematics and science above the national average in 2007. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT), while satisfactory, need to be improved.

The quality of teaching is good overall, which is why pupils are making better progress than they were at the time of the previous inspection. There is no consistent process across the school that enables teachers to assess pupils' progress during lessons in order to plan the next steps in their learning. There is limited access to interactive whiteboard technology to support learning in classrooms or for pupils to develop ICT skills. The curriculum is well planned and meets statutory requirements. Pupils partake in a number of extra-curricular clubs and older pupils are given the opportunity to experience a range of outdoor activities on residential visits. The use of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum is not sufficiently exploited.

The care, guidance and support afforded pupils are satisfactory overall. The quality of care demonstrated by all staff is good. The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is good and this is reflected in the way pupils enjoy all aspects of school life. The use of assessment of pupils particularly during lessons is not fully established in all classes.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils' behaviour is good in all classes and often exemplary. They are polite, courteous and respectful of each other and school staff. This is evident in lessons and during playtimes.

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory overall. The current headteacher is the fourth spanning a period of 15 months. Considerable credit goes to the governors, the LA, acting leaders and the staff in general for pursuing the improvement agenda during this phase. It is now time for a period of stability while maintaining the drive for higher standards. The recently appointed headteacher has made a considerable impact in a short space of time and together with key members of the senior leadership team is determined to get the job done. He realises the urgent need to bring key stages together, thereby enhancing greater consistency in practice. Subject leaders have received good support but must now take greater responsibility through becoming more involved and skilled at monitoring teaching and standards across both key stages. Governors are holding the school to account well and developing a sense of partnership with school leaders. The school has very good capacity to improve and provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the role of subject leaders so that they are able to play a full role in raising standards.
- Improve the standards of ICT throughout the school.
- Improve assessment during lessons in order to plan future work that will enhance pupils' progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

When pupils first start school, their attainment is average and often above average. Good provision in the Foundation Stage results in pupils reaching and in many cases exceeding the levels expected for their age as they commence Year 1. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and results in 2006 national tests were good. However, for some pupils, the ability to work independently is not as well established as it should be. As a result they do not adapt as quickly as they should to the demands of the Key Stage 2 curriculum and progress slows.

The results of the national tests in 2006 were broadly average in English and mathematics and above the national average in science. Due to effective teaching the current pupils in Year 6 are on track to attain levels above the national average in English, mathematics and science. This is borne out by the school's own assessment data and a scrutiny of pupils' work during the inspection. This represents a significant improvement on the previous inspection when standards were inadequate. Standards in ICT are not as good as those in other subjects. This is because pupils throughout the school are not given sufficient opportunities to acquire and practice ICT skills. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. No pupils have been identified as gifted and talented and while greater challenge is being provided for more able pupils in some classes, the specific needs of this group are not being fully catered for.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being have improved since the previous inspection and are now good. The standard of behaviour in lessons is good and often exemplary; bullying is no longer an issue; and pupils are more health conscious. Success in sporting competitions gives pupils a sense of pride in themselves and in their school. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is satisfactory overall. The moral and social elements are good and form a secure basis for learning. In comparison, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to extend their spiritual and cultural development, which are satisfactory. Opportunities are sometimes missed in Years 1 and 2 for pupils to work independently and show initiative. Pupils enjoy their schooling, as high attendance figures indicate. They accept responsibility for themselves and for others. Teachers encourage older pupils to set themselves targets, thus giving them ownership of their own learning. School councillors show a genuine sense of pride in their achievements, such as the increased opportunities for pupils to play at break time. Pupils in Year 6 are prepared well for the next stage of their education and beyond. Standards in the life-skills of literacy, numeracy and science continue to improve. Experiences within the school and on residential visits develop key qualities of leadership, responsibility and teamwork.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching is having a positive effect on pupils' learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well. Teachers and their capable assistants ensure that work is interesting and relevant. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to outstanding. Where it is good, assessment is used more effectively to structure future planning; opportunities for pupils to be creative, or to undertake investigations, are regularly grasped; and ICT is better exploited to enhance teaching and learning. In most classes questioning is used skilfully. Consequently, pupils are given opportunities to think and articulate their ideas.

Teaching is good overall in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. It has improved significantly in most Key Stage 2 classes, where some of the best practise is now seen. Here, pupils gain a clear understanding of exactly what it is that they are going to learn in each lesson, rather than what it is that they are going to do. Teachers in these classes make good use of interactive whiteboards, to stimulate learning and engage the pupils. The added pace and challenge that results often makes learning fun. However, a lack of ICT provision and teacher confidence with regard to technology in Key Stage 1 inhibits teaching and learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. There is a lack of cohesion in terms of provision between the key stages and pupils' learning is insufficiently enriched through outings and visitors with specialist knowledge. Literacy and numeracy are well planned and pupils are gaining a good grounding in basic skills. Pupils are given insufficient opportunities to acquire and practice ICT skills, particularly in other subjects. This represents a weakness in curriculum provision. The curriculum provided for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory. The most able and talented pupils fare less well in terms of extension and enrichment.

A healthy and expanding range of sports and outdoor activities cater adequately for pupils' preferences. Personal, social and health education enables pupils to express opinions and feelings while discussing important issues including health and safety. A number of responsibilities, including play leaders and membership of the school council, allow pupils to make a valued contribution to the school community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides a secure, healthy working environment and good care on site for its pupils. Well considered child protection procedures ensure pupils' welfare and safety. Educational visits are infrequent, but staff have been made aware of the need for formal and detailed risk assessments.

Good systems have been introduced to track pupils' progress in English and mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 2. This supports the setting of class and individual targets and is proving to be an effective tool in raising standards. However, this is not carried out in a consistent manner throughout the school. The assessment of pupils' progress during lessons in order to identify the next steps in their learning has also not been sufficiently embedded in both key stages. Satisfactory support is given to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and as a consequence, they make satisfactory progress. Intervention programmes are in place to give extra support to identified pupils in literacy and numeracy and this is beginning to impact positively on the progress they are making.

The school takes care to include all pupils in every aspect of school life. Arrangements are in place to teach older pupils about alcohol and drug abuse and the school nurse is involved in delivering a programme of sex education. Parents, particularly those with children that have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, benefit from helpful advice from teachers that enables them to assist their children while at home. Some teachers effectively promote independent learning, to enable pupils to take responsibility for what they do, but this is inconsistent across the school. Pupils relate well to adults and the atmosphere is good humoured and orderly. Teachers, their assistants and administrative staff are sensitive and respond well to pupils' feelings and anxieties. The relationship with external agencies is good and, as a result, pupils receive valuable support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The recently appointed headteacher has quickly secured the confidence of staff, parents and governors. He has accurately assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has a clear educational vision for the future which is strongly aligned to raising standards. He is well supported by an astute deputy headteacher who also recognises where improvements are required. Together they demonstrate a range of skills that will help them to effectively implement strategies designed to improve the quality of educational provision. They are aware that there is a pressing need to ensure the consistent implementation of agreed school policy and procedures across both key stages. Two key stage teams working in isolation do not effectively support continuity and progression with regard to the learning opportunities afforded pupils.

The school has identified the need to develop the role of subject leaders. Support has been forthcoming from the LA. However, at present they are too reliant on others and not sufficiently involved in the analysis of pupil performance data and evaluating and monitoring teaching and learning across all year groups in their own right. Furthermore, plans to bring about improvement in respect of their own subjects are not directly related to the impact the initiative is intended to have on pupils' learning. As a consequence, the rate of improvement in terms of pupil performance is not as quick as it should be. The extent to which the governing body is now performing its role bears no resemblance to that which existed at the time of the previous inspection. They are well informed and take very seriously their role as a 'critical friend'. Monitoring the work of the school has improved significantly. However, care must be taken to ensure that monitoring the impact of initiatives as detailed in the school improvement plan is not confused with the inspection of lessons.

The work of the administrative team provides valuable assistance to the headteacher in the day-to-day running of the school. They interact well with parents, staff and pupils and as such help to perpetuate the friendly and open ethos that is developing.

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.

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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? | 3 |
| 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

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|--|---|
| 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 | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |
| 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? | 3 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 3 |

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

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| 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

Thank you very much for welcoming Mr Bulman, Mr Nettleship and me to your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you work during lessons. I would particularly like to thank the school council who helped us understand a lot about your school.

This letter is to tell you what I think about the school.

Your school is better now than the previous time inspectors came, just over a year ago.

The main strengths of your school are:

- although Mr Foxwell has not been headteacher for very long he knows what to do to make the school even better and is determined to do so
- teaching is good overall, which is why you are making better progress in English, mathematics and science
- teachers, support staff and office staff take good care of you
- your behaviour is good and often very good during lessons and in the playground
- you know how to keep healthy and safe.

To help you do even better I have asked the school to:

- allow some teachers to look carefully at how you are all doing, particularly in English, mathematics and science, so that everyone can help you improve further
- give you more opportunities to do ICT so that you become very good at it
- ensure your teachers look closely to spot if you are having any problems during lessons so that they can help you straight away.