

Romiley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106075
Local Authority	Stockport
Inspection number	309019
Inspection date	22 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Sarah Drake

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	448
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Brenda Owens
Headteacher	Mr J Furse
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2004
School address	Sandy Lane Romiley Stockport Cheshire SK6 4NE
Telephone number	0161 4303101
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' achievement especially in English; the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage; the impact of the school's care, guidance and support on pupils' personal development and well-being; and the success of the leadership. Evidence was gathered from: national published assessment data; the school's self-evaluation, assessment records, policies, minutes and other documentation; observation of the school at work; discussions with members of staff, pupils, a group of governors and a group of parents; and the questionnaires returned by parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This large school serves a socially and economically mixed suburban village to the east of Stockport. The overwhelming majority of pupils are White British. The proportion eligible to receive a free school meal is smaller than average. The proportion that has learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average but few pupils have a statement of special educational need. The school has achieved the Activemark for Physical Education.

Since the previous inspection, the school has undergone much change. In 2005 it greatly increased in size due to the closure of a neighbouring school and the opening of a maintained Nursery class. In September 2007, seven class bases moved from longstanding temporary accommodation into a new extension which includes a purpose built Foundation Stage unit. In December 2007 the refurbishment of the 90 year old building was completed.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Romiley Primary is a good school with outstanding features. Not the least of these are the excellent leadership and management that have guided it through a very difficult four years, of neighbouring school closures and subsequent building expansion, without having any adverse impact on the pupils. An unusually close partnership between staff, parents, governors and the wider community has resulted in what parents understandably describe as, 'A strong, balanced school with excellent community spirit that holds a special place in the heart of our village.' Under the clear-sighted, steadfast and highly approachable direction of the headteacher, staff morale has remained high and pupils have thrived. His skill is reflected in parental comments such as, 'I was very angry when I was told that my last child would have to move schools to Romiley. working together with the class teacher and the headteacher we all work as a team. but I must hold my hands up, they work hard to get everyone sorted out in this school.'

Pupils achieve well. Standards are consistently above average by the end of Year 6. Until recently, children's skills on entry to the school were broadly average. With a widened catchment area and increasing numbers of pupils who find learning more difficult, children's overall skills on entry are now below average. Over the past five years, results in science and, particularly, in mathematics have been stronger than in English. Well above average numbers of pupils gained the higher level in these subjects in 2007. The school far exceeded its target for mathematics, due in part to its popular after-hours booster classes. As the school has identified, but not yet managed to rectify, the broadly average results in English are due to weaknesses in the quality of boys' writing that are already evident by the end of Year 2.

Good quality teaching and a rich, interesting curriculum lead to pupils enjoying their learning and making good progress. Very good relationships are a shining feature in classrooms throughout the school. As pupils said, 'You can have a laugh but learn as well.' Teachers make clear to pupils both the purpose of lessons and what they need to do. Their skilful questions encourage pupils to think logically about their work. Staff use interactive whiteboards well, make good links between subjects and add imaginative, often humorous, touches that spark pupils' interest. For example, in Year 4, a range of possible time-related connective words are displayed around the clock. In Year 1, pupils use paper cubes that they made in mathematics and illustrated with either characters or landscapes, to help plan their writing. Adults provide pupils with good quality guidance in the classroom while equally encouraging them to learn independently. However, they are not always successful in ensuring that boys in particular, get all their ideas down on paper. Teachers' marking is supportive but it does not always provide sufficiently precise guidance for pupils about how to improve their work.

Pupils are polite, self-confident and very well aware of others' importance and needs. Their outstanding personal development helps to create a lively, happy community where everybody pulls together. Excellent staff role models, combined with activities such as sports and membership of the locally renowned brass band and choir, develop a strong sense of commitment and teamwork among pupils. They readily and democratically engage in decision making, such as how best to spend £10,000 on a trim trail for the Key Stage 1 playground. The school council has had a major role in improving pupils' awareness of healthy eating. Pupils' excellent behaviour and very positive attitudes ensure that lessons progress without interruption and playtimes are happy. Pupils feel very well looked after and are confident that staff will swiftly help with any problems. Parental comments such as, 'The communication and consideration toward the children and the families is without fault' and 'My son is treated as an individual and his learning

needs are delivered as such,' confirm the exceptional quality of the care, guidance and support provided for pupils.

There is highly skilled identification of the individual needs of pupils who need extra support with their learning. This leads to very good extra provision for these pupils which includes working closely with outside agencies and the good use of teaching assistants. These underpin the good progress that pupils make, both academically and in their personal development. From Year 1 upwards, pupils know their group and individual targets. The school also provides much appreciated advice for parents on how to help their children. This includes parenting classes and website links to, for instance, mathematics puzzles.

Leadership and management are outstanding at all levels. Leaders and managers are analytical, dynamic and put into practice the belief that, 'Only your best is good enough.' All staff have a clear sense of purpose and work exceptionally well as a team, building on each others' strengths. Governors, too, are extremely dedicated and knowledgeable, ready to challenge the school but also to lend a hand whenever necessary. Despite its increased size, the school retains its family feel because its outstanding headteacher ensures that all who work in it have the pupils' well-being at heart. It provides very good value for money, has excellent capacity to improve and, in parents' words, 'doesn't only push children academically but makes sure they have their two feet on the ground'. They leave the school extremely well equipped for the next stage of their education.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

With its purpose-built accommodation, the Foundation Stage is now forging ahead as a unit in which the children make good progress in all areas of their learning. Good leadership, strong teamwork and a clear understanding of how young children learn result in consistent practice across this key stage. Past discrepancies in the assessment of children's skills have been largely eliminated. Increasingly sharply focused checks on individual children's progress lead to staff having a good awareness of those who need more help, those who need more challenge and those who need to be encouraged to broaden their range of activity. The outdoor area has been greatly improved since the previous inspection, well supported by the generosity of parents that has provided much exciting equipment. All areas of learning are catered for well, both outside and in. In 2007, pupils' skills on entry to Year 1 were somewhat below those expected nationally because this year group has a higher than average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Currently, Reception children's skills are broadly as expected for their age with particular strengths in their counting ability and personal development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of boys' writing at both key stages.
- Ensure teachers' marking provides precise guidance for pupils on how to improve their work.

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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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	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?	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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

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

I really enjoyed my recent visit to your school and would like to thank you all for the warm welcome that you gave me. Particular thanks should go to those who gave up some of their lunchtime to help me understand what it is like to be a pupil at Romiley Primary. Thanks also to others who let me look at their books in lessons and willingly talked about their work.

You told me that your school is happy, friendly, caring and exciting. I agree with you that Romiley Primary is a good school. It is quite clear that everyone from the youngest pupil upwards to the headteacher and governors are proud to belong to it and enjoy working there. What a great start to your education! You all get on really well with each other and have managed the difficulties of your increasing numbers and building work extremely well. You understand that other people are just as important as yourself and your behaviour is excellent. Your teachers organise interesting things for you to do and explain them clearly. They get to know you really well as individuals and take very good care of you. Because of this you concentrate well on your learning and make good progress. This means that by the end of Year 6 your work is quite a bit better than that of lots of other children around the country.

Your headteacher and other senior staff are constantly striving to make the school even better and they have already done lots of good things. I know that you have helped with this by offering your ideas. I have suggested that the school should do two things to improve even more. First of all, make sure that boys in Years 1 to 6 improve their writing. Secondly, that when teachers mark your work, they make clear to you exactly what you need to do in order to improve it.

Your jobs will be to continue to enjoy attending school as much as you do now and to take on board the advice given to you in teachers' marking. The boys also need to try just that bit harder with their writing.