

Royston Summer Fields Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106613
Local Authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	309176
Inspection dates	27–28 November 2007
Reporting inspector	John Rutherford HMI

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	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Christine Cox
Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Fretwell
Date of previous school inspection	6 October 2003
School address	Haigh Croft Summer Lane Royston Barnsley South Yorkshire S71 4SF
Telephone number	01226 722480
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Royston Summer Fields is smaller than most primary schools and it serves an area of broadly average social and economic circumstances. The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is below average. Very few pupils are from a minority ethnic background or have English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average.

The headteacher has been in post since Easter 2007. In her first term, a major priority was the removal of serious health and safety problems in the building. Staffing is undergoing considerable change and almost all of the Key Stage 2 teachers have only been in post since September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a rapidly improving school that provides a satisfactory quality of education. Despite the time and energy required for essential building improvements, the new headteacher, well supported by a largely new governing body, is providing a strong drive for raising achievement and improving pupils' enjoyment of learning. Measures that have been put in place recently are already making a positive difference to pupils' progress. Pre-inspection questionnaires returned by parents show overwhelming support for the school with a significant proportion of parents commenting favourably on improvements since the appointment of the headteacher.

Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. They start in Year 1 with skills and knowledge above those typical for their age and standards are above average when they leave in Year 6. Between Year 1 and Year 6, however, there are peaks and troughs in progress and standards. Standards are no higher than average at the end of Year 2 and they do not start rising again until pupils reach Year 4. This unevenness is linked to variability in the quality of teaching, which is satisfactory overall. Where progress is good, it is because lessons are interesting and provide appropriate challenge for most pupils. Progress slows down in the middle year groups because work does not sufficiently inspire or stretch the pupils.

While most pupils make satisfactory progress between Year 1 and Year 6, this has not always applied to two particular groups. Lower-attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 have been making insufficient progress. However, recent improvements in planning their support are already making a positive difference. The highest-attaining pupils in Key Stage 2 are not achieving as much as they can and, while the school has recognised this, programmes to give them additional challenge are at an early stage of development.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. By the time they reach Year 6 the majority are thoughtful, polite, mature young people who are able to make sound choices about their health, safety and relationships with others. The school is at an early stage of systematically involving pupils in decision-making. Pupils' attendance and behaviour are good. Their personal qualities and their basic academic skills provide them with a satisfactory foundation for their future.

The curriculum is satisfactory. Art, music and physical education (PE) are particular strengths, however, pupils' opportunity to develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills has been limited by accommodation problems. The care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory overall. Staff are very encouraging and they provide considerable care for vulnerable pupils. Guidance to help pupils improve their progress is at an early stage of development. A small number of teachers have recently started giving personal targets to pupils and this is already increasing their motivation to work hard.

While the headteacher provides strong direction in raising pupils' achievement, teachers with senior responsibilities do not have sufficient experience or skill to support her as part of an effective leadership team. Middle leaders are very new to their posts and have not yet had time to fully develop their roles. The governing body has a good partnership with the headteacher and provides effective support and challenge in securing improved provision for pupils. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children start in Foundation Stage they have skills broadly in line with those expected for their age. They make good progress because staff work well together and use assessment effectively in order to provide care and education that meets the children's needs. Children's progress in the development of personal, social and emotional skills is a particular strength because they have good opportunities to develop independence and confidence in activities they have chosen for themselves. In these activities they practise their early writing skills and talk about what they are doing with adults and this contributes to their good progress in language development. There are also times when children are directed to an activity, for example, when staff teach them counting skills and the relationship between letters and sounds. Children enjoy these sessions and learn much from them. The Foundation Stage is led effectively and there is a good partnership with parents.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement and standards across the school, especially for higher-attaining pupils.
- Eradicate weaknesses in teaching and learning.
- Improve the leadership and management of teachers with senior responsibilities.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

When pupils start Key Stage 1, their skills and knowledge are above those typical for their age. Their progress is good in the first year but it slows down after this and, by the end of Key Stage 1, standards are average. Pupils' progress remains slow until they reach Year 4, after which it is good, and although variable in some earlier years, by the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above average.

Until recently, lower-attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have made insufficient progress in Key Stage 1. Their progress is now improving because the school has introduced more effective methods for providing them with suitable support. This is particularly effective in Year 1 where, in addition to the extra support, lessons are adapted well to meet these pupils' learning needs. While standards are above average at the end of Key Stage 2, some of the highest-attaining pupils are not achieving as much as they are capable of. New assessment methods have enabled the school to identify these pupils more quickly, but teachers are at an early stage of providing more challenging work for them and this is not yet making a positive difference to their progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory. Pupils generally enjoy school and their behaviour and attendance are good. They work and play together well and they feel safe from bullying. They know the rights and wrongs of how to react to bullying behaviour if it should occur, but they are not

always confident about approaching adults with concerns. The school is at an early stage of developing methods for pupils to express their views and to take part in decision-making. Pupils learn to contribute to the well-being of the wider community through involvement in charities. They are developing a good knowledge of other cultures and beliefs, but they do not fully understand the place of people from different ethnic backgrounds in British society. They have a sound understanding of the importance of diet and exercise to a healthy lifestyle. Pupils' ability to work on their own initiative and as part of a team, and their progress in developing literacy and numeracy skills, give them a satisfactory preparation for their future education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Pupils receive good teaching in their first two years at school and from Year 4 onwards. However, weaknesses in the middle year groups result in progress between being no better than satisfactory overall. Where teaching is most effective, teachers are beginning to use assessment information well to enable most pupils to make good progress. Further development is still needed in providing sufficient challenge for the highest-attaining pupils. Lessons are stimulating and provide plenty of opportunity for pupils to extend their skills with interesting problems and practical tasks. Teaching assistants work in effective partnership with the teachers to help underachieving pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to improve their progress. In these lessons, pupils have positive attitudes to learning and they try very hard. In weaker lessons, there is no clear focus, teaching is not adapted to meet pupils' different needs and most pupils are inattentive because they are expected to spend too much time sitting and listening.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils are taught a suitably broad range of subjects and there is a good balance of interesting practical activities. Art and music are particular strengths and PE is enhanced by involvement in a national programme and by joint activities with other schools. ICT does not contribute sufficiently to pupils' learning because use of equipment has been hampered by accommodation problems.

Teachers have a clear programme for the subjects they are going to cover with each class. However, in some subjects, new coordinators are at an early stage of preparing plans to ensure that pupils will make good progress as they pass from one class to the next. There is little systematic provision for extending literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum, although there are occasional good examples of exciting first-hand experiences in science being used to motivate pupils to improve their writing skills.

The school has made a good start in introducing an assessment system that enables teachers to identify underachieving pupils. This is already helping teachers to plan work that is improving the progress of lower-attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. While teachers have identified higher-attaining pupils who are underachieving, they are at a very early stage of planning programmes to meet this group's particular needs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care of the new headteacher and governors for pupils' health and safety has recently been demonstrated by the high priority they have given to securing essential building improvements. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are in place. Staff provide good care for vulnerable pupils and the school is establishing effective partnerships with external agencies to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff take every opportunity to boost pupils' confidence and when there are rare incidents of misbehaviour they effectively combine disapproval with guidance.

In a minority of classes, teachers have recently started to provide pupils with personal targets to improve their skills in English and mathematics. They give pupils guidance on their progress towards the targets and pupils talk about how this is helping them to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The newly appointed headteacher provides very good direction for improving the quality of education. Effective self-evaluation has helped her to identify accurately the improvements needed to teaching and assessment in order to raise the achievement of all pupils. A clear and manageable school development plan is in place to bring about these improvements.

Governance is good and governors are providing effective support to the headteacher in securing essential improvements to the building and in making strong appointments to the staff. They have a good understanding of pupils' performance and have set suitably challenging targets to raise standards in the future. They are fully aware of the changes needed to meet these targets and their new methods for keeping themselves informed about the school's work enable them to monitor the implementation of these changes.

While the headteacher and governors are providing strong leadership, the capacity for future improvement is no better than satisfactory because leadership at other levels in the school is inadequate. Most subject leaders are new to their posts. They have made a good start in planning for the future but they have not yet had time to lead improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in their subjects across the school. Teachers with more senior leadership responsibilities are not new to their posts but nevertheless have insufficient experience and skill for leading whole-school improvements.

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
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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	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?	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.

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	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Inspection of Royston Summer Fields Primary School, Barnsley, S71 4SF

Michael Sheridan and I spent two days in your school carrying out an inspection. I wish to thank you very much indeed for the help you gave us, especially those of you who took the trouble to talk to us or answer our questions. You helped us enormously to make our judgements and I would now like to tell you what these are.

Mr Sheridan and I judge your school to be satisfactory and it is improving rapidly. Now that recent building work has made your school a healthier and safer place than it used to be, the headteacher and staff are introducing new methods to help you make better progress in your learning. One of these new methods is to give you each a target to improve your work in English and mathematics. Some of you already have these and I was pleased to see how well you are using them and how much you like them. All of you are playing an important role in helping the school to keep on improving. You try very hard in most lessons and work well with your partners when you have a problem to solve. You are very sensible and can be trusted to be responsible, for example, when you are given the chance to sing together at lunchtime. You know the best things to do when other pupils are not behaving very well. Your staff are very helpful to you when you need help, so you must always talk to one of them if you feel you have a problem.

I have talked to the headteacher and governors about how they can develop the school further. Although you achieve good standards when you leave school, they could be better throughout your time at school and can be even higher if some aspects of teaching are improved and all pupils receive work that is neither too easy for them nor too difficult. Many of your teachers are very skilful and we have asked that they give more guidance to the other members of staff. For you, I recommend that you all look forward to receiving your targets and, once you have them, please work as hard as you can to achieve them.