

Rossmere Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111641
Local Authority	Hartlepool
Inspection number	310650
Inspection dates	11–12 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Maureen Bennett

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	403
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Boyd
Headteacher	Ms Lisa Biggin
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2004
School address	Catcote Road Hartlepool TS25 3JL
Telephone number	01429 274608
Fax number	01429 235282

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Rossmere is a large primary school in Hartlepool with a well established children's centre attached. The school is in an area of high social deprivation. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The very few pupils who speak English as an additional language come mainly from China and Lithuania. The percentage of pupils in receipt of a free school meal is much higher than the national average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average but few have a statement of special educational need.

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 satisfactory school with good features. Recent decisive action taken by the strong leadership team is having a positive impact in raising standards and pupils' achievement, although many measures are relatively new and not fully embedded. Pastoral care is given high priority and is a strength of the school, although teachers do not yet make full use of assessment information to guide pupils. Parents are extremely supportive of the school and very positive about the good work they see the school doing to encourage their children to become considerate young people.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall because there are variations in the rates of progress through the school. Children enter the Nursery with skills well below those expected nationally. The recently improved Foundation Stage provision is having a significant impact on the present cohorts and children are making good progress, particularly in language development. As a result, this year they have reached standards in line with those expected at the end of Reception. Pupils make steady progress during Key Stage 1 and standards by the end of Year 2 are also slowly rising from previous years. However, the current cohort is still below national averages. By the end of Year 6, standards in lessons and school assessment data are average, again a good improvement on past years. This is the result of regular analysis of progress and the swift response made by the school to support pupils who need extra help. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. The few pupils from minority ethnic groups also make good progress.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Although some teaching throughout the school is good, there are inconsistencies. The more effective lessons are well planned and take account of the mixed ages and differing abilities. Speaking and listening is given high priority. Good questioning challenges pupils well to extend their thinking and use interesting vocabulary. In some classes, the pace of pupils' work is slow and they are kept in teacher-led activities for too long. This results in loss of interest and does not allow pupils enough time to work independently. The good curriculum has improved as a result of remodelling with better provision for English and mathematics within other subjects. A very good range of enrichment activities is provided and this supports pupils' learning well. Academic guidance is satisfactory and there is careful monitoring of pupils' progress. Pupils know their targets and work in books is regularly marked but they are not always given sufficient information about how they can improve.

Pupils' personal development is good because the school provides a very caring and supportive atmosphere. Pupils feel safe and secure and enjoy school. They behave well and develop positive attitudes which help them to concentrate in lessons. Rigorous and effective strategies, including identifying and supporting families where attendance is weaker, are ensuring satisfactory attendance. The school places a high emphasis on health and physical fitness and the Healthy Schools and Sportsmark awards are testimony to this.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides strong leadership and has established effective teams to lead innovations and raise achievement. The skills, experience and sense of vision of the senior leadership and the commitment and enthusiasm of staff give a firm foundation to further progress. Staff with management responsibilities play an increasing role in checking teaching and learning and sharing expertise. Governors are keen to support the school and hold it to account. Weaknesses are being successfully addressed and improvement

since last inspection has been satisfactory. The impact of recent improvements in improving teaching and raising standards indicates the school's good capacity for improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start having entered Nursery with skills significantly below those found in children of their age. By the time they leave the Reception class they have made good progress in all areas of learning and very good progress in communication, language and literacy. Their abilities are in line with those expected at this age. Since the last inspection, there have been significant improvements in provision that are improving performance. Better planning enables staff to react to children's interests and ideas whilst maintaining a focus on core skills. There is a good balance between activities that are adult led and others from which children may choose. Adults constantly talk with and stimulate children establishing a happy and secure environment in which they soon learn to work and play together with a growing understanding of the needs of others. Leadership and management are very effective in guiding and supporting teachers and assistants and sharing a genuine enthusiasm for the Foundation Stage. There is good monitoring of provision and its impact on children's development. Staff plan outdoor activities to make good use of the available facilities but the lack of covered areas means that all-weather provision is not possible.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching is consistently effective and promotes learning that raises pupils' achievement in all classes.
- Improve marking and target setting so that all pupils are well guided to improve their work.

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

Overall, achievement is satisfactory. However, variations in the quality of teaching mean that rates of progress vary at different points. The recent improvements in the Foundation Stage provision are now improving standards by the end of Reception. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make sound progress. Standards by the end of Key Stage 1 are improving from previous years although the current cohorts remain below the national averages. Progress continues to vary in Key Stage 2 but in Years 5 and 6 it accelerates as a result of the good and sometimes outstanding teaching. As a result, current standards at the end of Year 6 are in line with national averages. The school's actions in response to a dip in national test results in 2007 have been successful. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those learning to speak English make good progress. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also improving as a result of the very effective support from teaching assistants and support staff with specialist responsibilities. These pupils make consistently good progress throughout the school. More able pupils are achieving well as a result of more challenge in lessons and opportunities for pupils to develop and extend their abilities and talents.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils are ambitious and have high expectations. They say, 'We want to go far'. This is reflected in their improved attendance, good behaviour and positive approaches to learning. Pupils feel safe and secure and say that the school 'gives us lots of chances to improve our behaviour' if issues such as bullying arise. Opportunities for sport and special responsibilities are seized eagerly and the school council successfully backed the introduction of adventure equipment in the school grounds. Pupils organise the library and lunchtime play activities and are involved in recycling initiatives. Their request for fridges to store packed lunches at the correct temperature illustrates their good understanding of healthy eating. The school council is fiercely proud of its voice in school and community life; pupils' efforts in fundraising have benefited outside charities and the school fund. Parents are enthusiastic; they see the school's pupils as 'pillars of the community with all the children happy and settled'. With each class linked to a specific country, pupils' awareness of global issues is good, and they respond enthusiastically to the wide range of culturally diverse experiences open to them. Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. Pupils mature into considerate young people ready to take on the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Although some lessons are good, there are variations throughout the school and within year groups. Teachers set clear learning objectives for lessons and give pupils a good understanding of their learning over time. When teaching is most effective, staff use time efficiently, provide a variety of stimulating activities and use questioning well to challenge pupils' thinking. Pupils respond with good levels of concentration and a keenness to contribute their ideas. Teaching assistants are well deployed to help individuals and groups make progress. In less effective lessons, pupils often spend too long as a whole class without the challenge of individual activity. This lack of challenge and activity can lead to weak levels of concentration and attention. Teachers' good relationships, encouragement and appropriate levels of praise effectively increase pupils' confidence. Some teachers, particularly at the end of Key Stage 2 give pupils good opportunities to assess their work, helping them understand the process of assessment and where they need to improve. Although marking often celebrates what individual pupils can do and understand, it is used inconsistently to set targets and identify next steps to pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is appropriate to the needs of all pupils including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The curriculum needs for these pupils are regularly monitored to ensure appropriate levels of support. Regular review and recent remodelling ensure that key skills and requirements for all subjects are linked with enjoyment through a practical, investigative approach. This includes initiatives for enrichment such as World Arts Week and science workshops and a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Their contribution to pupils' personal development is identified and their effectiveness is monitored. Outside agencies make a significant contribution to the curriculum often preparing pupils for transfer to the

next stage in their learning. Whilst teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) regularly to enhance their teaching, they do not maximise the potential learning opportunities in other subjects in all classes.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The school's pastoral system is extremely strong, but guidance and support for learning are not yet sufficiently robust. There are close and effective links with a wide range of support agencies to support the most vulnerable children and those who need specialist educational services. Parents are particularly positive about the ways the school is a safe haven for pupils. All procedures are in place to ensure pupils are safeguarded and their health and safety assured. Focused efforts to improve attendance such as the Fast Track initiative and Walking Bus, are beginning to successfully encourage families to support their children's regular attendance and punctuality. Systems have been established to track pupils' academic progress carefully. These are helping teachers to identify pupils who may be underachieving and those whose gifts and talents need extra input. However, the information from these assessment systems is inconsistently used in planning work and setting targets. Although pupils generally know their targets, they are not always sufficiently well informed of what they need to do to improve their work. As a result, they do not progress to the next stages as fast as they otherwise might.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and support the school's good capacity to improve further. The headteacher has high aspirations and provides strong leadership. Her vision is shared by all staff and is reflected in strong teamwork and the successful impact of recent decisive action to raise standards and achievement. Robust monitoring and target setting systems are in place, which provide regular and accurate information on pupils' performance. Senior leaders and some subject coordinators provide practical help and advice, checking teaching and learning in classes so that expertise can be shared more effectively. Other staff with responsibilities have less well developed roles and the school is currently working to improve this aspect of its organisation. All staff and governors contribute to the school's thorough knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses, which is reflected in the well focused school improvement plan. The successful impact of this can be seen in improved Foundation Stage provision and better standards by the end of Year 6. Governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have the pupils' interests at heart. They ensure that the school operates effectively within the constraints of budget.

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

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	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	2

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?	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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

13 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rossmere Primary School, Hartlepool, TS25 3JL

Thank you for making our visit to your school so enjoyable and for making us so welcome. It was a pleasure to hear so much about your school and to hear about all you have done with your school council to make your school a healthy place, for example, your Trim Trail and the fridges to store your packed lunches.

Your school is satisfactory, but there are also some good features, including lots of interesting activities. We particularly agree with your parents that you are very well cared for. You are all working hard to improve your work, especially in Year 6. We also saw some very good writing in the Reception class. Your behaviour is good and you look after each other very well. You have lots of chances to learn about other countries and you obviously enjoyed the World Arts activities that were happening when we were in school especially the African drumming!

There are some things that we would like you and your teachers to do to make your school even better. These changes will help you to improve your work. We have asked your headteacher and teachers to make sure that you are learning as much as you can in every single lesson. We have also asked them to make sure that the marking in your books tells you how you can improve your work next time. This will help you understand what to do next so that each piece of work gets better and better!

We were impressed that you say you 'want to go far' and we wish you lots of success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Maureen Bennett

Lead inspector