

# Rodmersham School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118346
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	326811
<b>Inspection date</b>	5 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Timothy Feast

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	76
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	16
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Roche
<b>Headteacher</b>	Malcom Saunders
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 May 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Rodmersham Green Sittingbourne ME9 0PS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01795 423776
<b>Fax number</b>	01795 423776

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a small school where nearly all the pupils are of White British heritage and a few are from Traveller families. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has increased since the last inspection and has been above the national average. Most of these pupils have either moderate learning difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Pupils enter the Early Years Foundation Stage at the school in the Reception class. The headteacher was appointed in January 2008 and there have been some staffing difficulties since the last inspection. In recognition of its work, the school has received the Activemark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Rodmersham is a satisfactory school. It is, however, improving and the improvements are welcomed by both pupils and their parents. A typical comment from a parent was, 'The school has come on leaps and bounds over the past year.' The school has a number of good features. The Early Years Foundation Stage is particularly effective. Pupils throughout the school like coming to school and attend and behave well, reflecting their good personal development. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points because of effective support. The school looks after pupils well. Some important aspects need improvement, the main one being the rate of progress the pupils make once they leave the Reception class.

The achievement of the pupils is satisfactory. Children start school with standards that are broadly as expected for their age and they leave in Year 6 with average standards. They leave with only average standards primarily as too few pupils achieve the highest levels in Year 6. The headteacher has introduced a new system for tracking pupils' achievement and this indicates some improvement in pupils' rates of progress this year. However, achievement is not yet sufficiently consistent across Years 1 to 6 and across the different subjects.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, reflecting the good relationships in classrooms and the pupils' positive attitudes. Insufficient time is set aside for more able pupils to attempt more challenging work and there are too few opportunities for pupils to work independently. Additionally, planning of different tasks to meet the needs of different year groups in each class is not consistent. The curriculum is satisfactory and is enriched with a wide range of activities that pupils value and participate in well. The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are satisfactory and all the necessary safeguarding arrangements are in place. Pastoral care is good and there are good arrangements for meeting the needs of vulnerable pupils, helped by effective links with parents and external agencies. The academic guidance given to pupils is not yet effective in making sure that pupils' progress is good and in letting pupils know what they have to do to improve to reach the next level.

Satisfactory leadership and management ensure that the school operates smoothly, and improvements are evident in areas such as the learning environment and in tracking pupil progress. Leadership at all levels is not yet consistently effective to bring about the improvements in the priorities the school has identified. The headteacher has established a clear vision and is in the process of building up a staff team to implement it. Capacity to improve is satisfactory whilst this process is taking place. Leaders are not always adopting sufficiently challenging targets. The great majority of the parents hold the school in high regard and school numbers are increasing. Governors are very supportive of the school but have not challenged the leadership sufficiently over pupil progress, which has been routinely average since the last inspection.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

All aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Nearly all children reach expected standards in all areas of learning by the end of the Reception Year, and many exceed them. This is a result of good teaching and children make good progress in relation to their starting points. The curriculum is well planned, covers all the required areas of learning and results in

innovative activities which engage the children and ensure that their needs are well met. Good use is made of both the outdoor and classroom areas; for example, during the inspection much fun and learning was had looking at food used during space travel, authentic space packs being used.

There is a good balance between adult-led activities and those chosen by the children, enabling children to develop independence. Occasionally activities do not allow the children to make the progress that the staff would hope they would make. The outdoor provision is constrained by the need to share with the external nursery provider in the village hall but this is outweighed by the partnerships built up and by children feeling secure and confident when they enter the Reception Class. Children benefit from good quality care, guidance and support, which helps to promote their personal development. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, and the current teacher is building on the secure foundations so that all the adults involved are successful in promoting the best for the children.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Accelerate pupils' rates of progress and make clear to both the pupils and staff what is expected for good or better progress, and check staff provide appropriate guidance to pupils on how to improve.
- Plan activities in all lessons that are more closely matched to pupils' different capabilities, especially the more able, so that they are challenged to reach their full potential.
- Ensure leaders at all levels set more challenging targets and evaluate the quality of provision in relation to the progress that pupils make. 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**

Children make a good start in Reception. Since the last inspection, standards at the end of Year 2 have remained broadly average; they are higher in reading and mathematics than in writing. Results overall in 2008 were higher than the previous year, although the proportion of pupils attaining the highest levels declined in writing and mathematics. Current standards in Year 2 are average and are higher in reading than in the other subjects. Progress this year has been better in reading than in either writing and mathematics, and achievement overall is satisfactory.

Since the last inspection standards at the end of Year 6 have been average, being higher in mathematics and science than in English. Results in 2008 were higher than the previous year, although the proportion of pupils attaining the highest levels dropped. Current standards in Year 6 are average. Pupils' progress since the start of the year has been satisfactory. There has been a focus on improving writing throughout the school and there is evidence of accelerating progress through the use of a new scheme. Parents support pupils' progress in reading well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because they receive good support.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The school is happy and harmonious. Pupils feel valued and secure as a result of the many positive relationships. Pupils' moral and social development is good but there are more limited

opportunities for their spiritual and cultural development. Pupils respond positively when given responsibility, for example, as members of an active school council. They play an important role in a number of local activities, for example, social activities with the local community on the village green, and are developing a good understanding of sustainability through their eco work. They have a good understanding of healthy living and are very proud of all their sporting links and other opportunities to be active. Their current satisfactory achievement in English and mathematics means that their preparation for the future is satisfactory, although they demonstrate positive attitudes in working hard and being punctual.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and satisfactory in the other classes. Classes are managed effectively and teaching assistants are deployed well to support those who need help. Teachers have good relationships with both pupils and their parents. Pupils are engaged in lessons. There is insufficient guidance on what pupils should succeed in doing by the end of the lessons and what constitutes success. Work is marked and assessed but comments do not helpfully explain what pupils need to do to improve to the next level. All, bar the Reception Class, are mixed-age classes and there is insufficient planning of activities which encourage pupils to work independently or creatively, or of teachers moving more able pupils on quickly so that they tackle the full range of extension work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The satisfactory curriculum enables most pupils to enjoy their education and make satisfactory academic progress. A wide range of enrichment activities allow the pupils to make good progress with their personal development, including the ability to work in teams. The school has acknowledged the need for pupils to use information and communication technology more effectively. The curriculum meets the needs of those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities well, but there are fewer planned ways to meet the needs of those pupils who are gifted and talented or to promote pupils' awareness of Britain's cultural and religious diversity.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Adults show a good commitment to pupils' care and welfare. The support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and where necessary the school works well in partnership with parents and external agencies to ensure that they receive the support they need. The school takes appropriate steps to safeguard the pupils and meets all the statutory requirements. Though the pupils have academic targets, pupils' knowledge of these targets is inconsistent and too few know what they need to do to improve.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

There are signs of school leaders being successful in raising standards, for example, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but this is not consistent across all subjects and in all year groups. The headteacher has a clear vision, shared with the governing body, for improvement and the removal of any barriers to high quality provision. Nonetheless, school leaders have not been sufficiently focused on setting challenging enough targets in respect of pupils' achievement. The school improvement plan is imprecise in respect of success criteria linked to school priorities, especially those relating to pupil progress. The school is good at promoting equal opportunity and ensuring that all pupils can benefit from the provision. It promotes community cohesion satisfactorily, knowing the context of the school well, planning suitable actions and having an understanding of the impact of its provision. The impact is inconsistent across the three areas but at its best when pupils are made aware of the origins and background of the local community. There are good links with parents and external agencies such as the Speech and Language Service.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

**Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	2

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<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	3
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**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rodmersham School, Sittingbourne ME9 0PS

Thank you for making us feel welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing you at work and play. Rodmersham is a satisfactory school. You are happy; you enjoy coming to school, you attend well and feel safe. You like all the activities you can do. We think you behave well and so do your parents. We agree with you that the staff look after you well. The children in the Reception class make a good start in the school. Those of you who find learning difficult are given good support and make good progress in relation to your targets.

Those of you in Classes 2, 3 and 4 make satisfactory progress whilst you are at school but we think you can do better than this and that your standards could be higher. We have asked the teachers to make sure that they plan work so that you all feel the work is more challenging. We have asked the teachers to make sure that you know your subject targets and what you need to do to move to the next level. We have asked the headteacher and the governors to be more challenging in what they can expect from you and to check that you are making the best progress that you are capable of. You can help by letting teachers know when you are finding the work set too easy.

Yours faithfully

Tim Feast

Lead inspector