

Roberts Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103821
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	336169
Inspection dates	12–13 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Kenneth Thomas

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 of pupils on the school roll	669
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Walters
Headteacher	Mr David Baker
Date of previous school inspection	4 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 26 lessons, including two joint observations with senior staff, and held meetings with governors, staff, pupils, parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at data on pupils' attainment and records of progress, policies, documents linked to the procedures for safeguarding pupils, teachers' planning and pupils' work. Questionnaires submitted by 162 parents were analysed, as well as those from pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- pupils' current attainment and progress, and the effectiveness of action taken to raise attainment in mathematics
- the strengths in pupils' personal development and the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding procedures
- the effectiveness of strategies to improve teaching and the use of assessment and the impact this is having on pupils' progress
- the effectiveness of school leadership, including that of the Early Years Foundation Stage, in monitoring and evaluating performance and in securing improvement.

Information about the school

This is a much larger than average primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and come from a mixed social background. Four pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, but the proportion with a statement of special education needs is average. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is in two Nursery and three Reception classes. There is also a Phase 2 Children's Centre attached to the school. The school runs before and after school clubs and has gained recognition for its work in several areas, including the National Healthy Schools, Activemark and Green Flag ECO Schools Award, and is a Creative Partnerships 'Change' school.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good and improving school. Pupils enjoy coming to school where they benefit from an attractive, welcoming and encouraging learning environment. Because the vast majority of pupils are willing to take responsibility, behave well and show respect to their peers, adults and visitors, they do much to make this such a harmonious community. Pupils learn to respect the customs and beliefs of others, and this makes a good contribution to the promotion of community cohesion. Pupils feel safe and secure. They have a good understanding of the importance of diet and fitness to their health and take full advantage of the additional activities, sports and clubs provided.

All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the few who are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language, achieve well because teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection and are now good. As a result, pupils make good progress and attainment at the end of Year 6, which is broadly average, is rising. Because staff have been particularly successful in focusing on the development of pupils' reading and writing skills the school's most recent provisional test results in English rose sharply to above average. Much is being done to raise attainment in mathematics and although below the standards being reached in English, test results and inspection evidence confirm that attainment in mathematics is also rising. Pupils' personal development benefits from the good curriculum and the good quality care, guidance and support that they receive from staff and the various external agencies who work in partnership with the school. Preparation for pupils' future economic well-being is secure because, in addition to the satisfactory development of basic skills, they acquire good team-working skills and demonstrate an increasing capacity to work independently.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get a satisfactory start to their education. The children's welfare has a high priority and staff work closely with parents and carers. New assessment procedures have been introduced so that children's skills on entry and their progress are being measured with more accuracy. Staff use a range of methods to assess children as they learn and develop, but do not use regular focussed assessments that allow learning activities to be closely matched to children's needs. Not all sessions are planned well enough to enable children to practise their basic skills across all areas of learning and in play situations. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are not robust enough to allow weaknesses in provision to be identified and tackled systematically.

The headteacher and senior staff lead the school well and there is a strong emphasis on positive achievement for all. Thorough systems for tracking pupils' progress towards their challenging targets have been introduced. These provide reliable information to guide teaching and enable staff to identify any pupils in need of additional support. In

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some classes, the continuous assessment of pupils' learning as the lesson proceeds enables the teacher to focus on ways of helping pupils to better understand their next steps in learning, but much remains to be done to embed such approaches across the school as a whole. Governance is satisfactory. While governors are very committed to the school, they are not sufficiently involved in the direct monitoring and evaluation of school performance to fully act as 'critical friends'. Nevertheless, the good improvement seen since the last inspection, together with the enthusiasm of all staff to tackle weaknesses, gives the school good capacity for continued improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that through the regular assessment of pupils' progress in lessons, any gaps in understanding are identified and pupils are given clear guidance on their next steps in learning.
- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by
 - ensuring that learning activities are guided by accurate daily assessments of children's needs
 - providing opportunities for pupils to extend their developing skills in early reading, writing and number through their play
 - implementing rigorous procedures for monitoring and evaluating provision so that weaknesses can be identified and tackled more systematically.
- Strengthen governance by developing the capacity of governors to engage more directly in the monitoring and evaluation of school performance.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

When children join the Nursery, the knowledge and skills of many, in all areas of learning, are lower than expected for their age. Although some achieve the age-related expectations by the time they leave Reception, the skills of the majority remain below average. From Year 1 to Year 6, all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. No group of pupils underachieves and attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 shows a rising trend over the last three years. In English, concerted action to improve pupils' reading and writing skills has had a positive effect, and the provisional 2009 national test results rose to be significantly above average at both Level 4 and Level 5. Similar attention is now being given to mathematics and observations of lessons and of pupils' work during the inspection confirm that attainment, while broadly average, is rising.

Pupils achieve well both personally and academically. They have a good awareness of how to stay safe and healthy and speak enthusiastically of their responsibilities, including being on the school council or the Eco committee. They report that while some bullying has taken place, they fully trust the adults in the school, and know that someone will help them if needs arise. Their behaviour is good, particularly in lessons, and this contributes strongly to the progress they make. Attendance is satisfactory and

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the vast majority of pupils are punctual to school and to lessons. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has in the recent past been enhanced through links with schools from other areas. These have enabled pupils to gain first hand experience of culturally diverse communities. Such experiences help to ensure that by the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6, they are well-rounded and sensible young people, satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Common features of all lessons are the very good relationships between adults and pupils, pupils' consistently good behaviour and the active involvement of well-trained learning support assistants. In the best lessons, pupils are expected to work independently and to think for themselves as they work through tasks well-matched to their learning needs. When teaching is less effective, introductions and explanations are overlong and learning slows in consequence. In many lessons, the ongoing assessment of pupils' learning is very effective. As a result, teachers know precisely how well their pupils are doing and pupils in turn know exactly what they need to learn next. This good

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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practice is not consistent in all lessons. However, a real strength in teaching is the good written guidance given to pupils on improvement through the marking of their work.

The school provides a good range of activities to help pupils learn within the classroom and beyond. Pupils' experiences are enhanced through the creative arts and the school's ecological activities. There is a strong focus on acquiring basic skills in literacy and information and communication technology (ICT), balanced with other subjects.

Increased attention is now being given to the development of pupils' mathematical skills in all subjects. Good provision for personal, social and health education contributes to pupils' good personal development. This is reinforced by opportunities for pupils to broaden their experience of the diversity of cultures beyond the immediate locality. A good range of well attended additional activities, clubs and visits add interest and help to promote pupils' enjoyment of learning. Parents and pupils share the view that all pupils are well cared for and that at times of transition between schools, for example, staff provide good support and guidance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

A determined drive for improvement, initiated by the headteacher and fully supported by all senior leaders and staff, is at the heart of a school in which pupils enjoy learning and achieve well. Underpinning the successful action taken to tackle the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection is the effective monitoring of the work of the school and in particular, the more effective use of information about pupils' performance to set targets and to track each pupil's progress. Individual subject areas are led and managed effectively with staff taking their roles and responsibilities seriously. They share up-to-date information concerning their areas through staff briefings and training events. Staff and governors provide good standards of care and there are good systems for safeguarding pupils' welfare, safety and security. While governors have a satisfactory awareness of the school's main strengths and areas where improvement is needed, they are over-reliant on reports from the headteacher and staff and not sufficiently involved in the direct monitoring of the work of the school. Staff work well with outside agencies, families and carers to support pupils' progress. Pupils are well informed on many issues that help to promote community cohesion, particularly through the school's Eco activities. Through collaboration with those from different backgrounds, pupils have also gained a real insight into what life is like for others in

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different social contexts. The school is increasingly successful in ensuring that all forms of inequality are tackled and in developing pupils' understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity. The school gives good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Although there are some weaknesses in the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which account for satisfactory outcomes, there are also some significant strengths. The setting provides good quality care, which is much appreciated by parents and carers. Close links with families assist in the smooth transition of children into the setting, and children are nurtured by staff and happy at school. The environment is stimulating and well resourced, with an interesting outdoor area that is used effectively as a learning resource. As a result of these strengths, children make good progress in personal, social and emotional development. In other areas of learning, progress is satisfactory. Leadership and management are satisfactory rather than good because procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of provision are not systematic enough to provide a secure base for planning and improvement.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers express overwhelmingly positive views of the school. The only aspect that a significant number expressed any concern about was the extent to which the school takes account of suggestions and concerns. Inspectors do not agree. They found that the school is responsive to the concerns of parents and carers, and regular surveys of views are carried out to ensure that staff are aware. Several parents and carers wrote comments on the questionnaires illustrating ways in which staff had responded positively to their concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Roberts Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 162 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 669 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	82	51	79	49	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	72	44	86	53	3	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	58	36	94	58	10	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	58	36	99	61	3	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	71	44	87	54	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	56	35	92	57	8	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	65	40	93	57	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	42	26	101	62	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	54	34	94	58	5	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	42	26	93	57	12	7	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	23	96	59	18	11	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	47	29	95	59	5	3	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	66	49	66	49	2	1	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 November 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Roberts Primary School, Dudley, DY3 2AZ

Following our visit to inspect your school, I am writing to tell you what we found. First I would like to say thank you for making us feel so welcome and making our visit one that we will remember for a long time. We have told your teachers how you were all really helpful and polite, and it was good to hear how much you enjoy school.

We agree with you and your parents that this is a good school and one that is helping you to do well. This is seen in the good progress that you make as you move through the school. Your good behaviour in lessons is a considerable help to your teachers because it enables them to concentrate on making your work interesting and helping you to learn. This is one of the reasons why you are doing well. We have asked your teachers to help you to do even better by giving you closer guidance in lessons on what you have to do to take the next steps in learning. We have also asked the governors to check more closely the work of the school.

There is a really friendly and positive atmosphere in the school. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits and after school activities that broaden your experiences. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are well looked after and we have asked staff to make more frequent checks on how well you children in the Nursery and Reception classes are progressing and to provide more opportunities to practise your skills. We have also asked that the work in this key stage is checked more carefully. You know that all the staff take good care of you and work hard to keep you safe and healthy. Your headteacher leads the school well and, together with staff and governors, makes sure that you make the most of your time there. You are key players in the school's success and, having met you, we know you will all want to continue to play your part in helping it to be even better.

Yours sincerely

Kenneth Thomas

Lead Inspector

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