

# Rossmore School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111112
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	337622
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 May 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gill Jones HMI

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

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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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	121
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Anthony Williams
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Susan Davis-McCoy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 July 2007
<b>School address</b>	Red Lion Lane Little Sutton Ellesmere Port CH66 1HF
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Inspectors observed six lessons and five teachers and looked at the pupils' exercise books. They held meetings with governors, the local authority, the School Improvement Partner, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at policies and documentation including: the school improvement plan; the headteacher's reports to the governing body; and the minutes of the governing body. Inspectors scrutinised responses from 90 parental, 14 staff and 67 children's questionnaires.

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

- pupils' progress from their starting points to the end of Year 6
- the quality of teaching and learning
- how well staff know the pupils' abilities and whether the curriculum suits the pupils' needs
- how well the leaders and managers at all levels evaluate the impact of their actions against the progress made by the pupils.

## Information about the school

Rossmore Primary is a smaller than average-sized school, situated in Little Sutton, a residential area close to the industrial town of Ellesmere Port. Most of the pupils walk to school, but a minority travel from nearby towns on the school bus. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is broadly average. Most of the pupils who attend the school are of White British heritage. A very small percentage of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a small proportion is learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly below the national average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The percentage of pupils who move in to and out of the school is higher than that found nationally.

The school has achieved a number of awards, which include the Active Mark, Healthy Schools and the Inclusion Quality Mark. The school provides a pre-school, breakfast and after-school club. The governing body does not manage these and separate inspection reports are available on the Ofsted website.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

Rossmore is a caring school which provides a satisfactory quality of education. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make satisfactory progress during their seven years at school and attain broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6. Pupils behave well overall. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are active at playtimes and know how to keep healthy. Pupils say they feel safe and happy in school. Staff care for and support the pupils well. However, their expectations for pupils' academic achievement are not always high enough. Parents' are overwhelmingly positive about the school and appreciate the approachability of the headteacher.

All the statutory requirements to safeguard the health, safety and well-being of pupils are in place. In addition, this small school supports its most vulnerable pupils particularly well. It is improving the circumstances of some of its pupils and their families through its well focused work with external agencies. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. Pupils' attendance is now above average, reflecting improvements to the procedures for checking on absence and the good partnership work with parents and carers. Pupils make a good contribution to the local community and are proud of their school. They make friends easily and are welcoming to visitors. The active school council is highly articulate and is a good ambassador for the school.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff take good account of pupils' views and this is demonstrated in their efforts to make lessons interesting and engaging. Teachers' assessment of pupils' ability levels is satisfactory overall, but varies in quality across the school. Not all teachers set high enough expectations for pupils' progress; consequently, not all pupils reach their potential. The curriculum is satisfactory. It meets statutory requirements and in addition pupils learn French and go on residential visits.

The school has maintained steady improvement since the last inspection. However, some previously identified weaknesses remain. This is because leaders and managers do not set out their expectations for pupils' achievement clearly enough in the school's plans for improvement. The information on individual pupils' starting points and progress is inconsistent and senior managers do not accurately know the extent to which outcomes for pupils are improving. This means that staff are not always held sufficiently to account. Governors, although highly supportive of the school, do not set challenging enough targets for the pupils to make any better than satisfactory progress. The headteacher knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school and self-evaluation is broadly accurate. Staff work well together in support of the headteacher and their morale is high. Recent improvements to assessment and the analysis of pupil progress data, together with the strengths in promoting pupils' health and well-being,

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demonstrate that leaders and managers have a satisfactory capacity to promote sustained improvement. The school continues to provide satisfactory value for money.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise standards in English and mathematics at Key Stage 1 and 2 by ensuring that all teaching staff:
  - accurately assess the levels at which individual pupils are working
  - set high expectations for individual pupils' achievement
  - provide sufficient challenge in lessons, particularly for the more able pupils.
- Improve the quality of school self-evaluation by:
  - ensuring consistency in measuring pupils' starting points
  - clearly stating the expected outcomes for pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics in the school improvement plan
  - monitoring the work in lessons and pupils' exercise books to check that pupils are working at levels commensurate with their ability
  - using all the information available to leaders and managers to measure the impact of their actions against the outcomes achieved by pupils.
- Governors should ensure that:
  - all aspects of target-setting are clearly documented in their minutes
  - they set targets in English, mathematics and science which are sufficiently challenging to enable pupils to make better than satisfactory progress
  - they use all the information available to them to hold the school to account rigorously for pupils' achievement.
- Approximately 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Pupils generally start Year 1 with skills, knowledge and abilities that are at the levels expected nationally for their age. This varies with each cohort, but the majority of children currently in Reception are already working at levels at or above those expected nationally for five-year-olds. They make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and attain standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are broadly in line with national expectations for seven-year-olds.

Since the last inspection, standards in mathematics, English and science attained by eleven-year-olds have fluctuated broadly in line with the national average. The standards reached by Year 6 in 2009 were lower, particularly in writing. Progress for this cohort of pupils was poor. The school identified the reasons for this dip and is tackling it effectively. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2 and pupils with

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special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language achieve as well as their peers.

Pupils enjoy their lessons. Where teaching is good, pupils' progress is more rapid. This was evident in the work in pupils' exercise books and in the school's own pupil progress data. Pupils' current standards are at levels expected for their age. However, in some year groups not all pupils are reaching their potential, particularly the more able. Pupils have a good attitude to their work and are keen to do well. In group activities they willingly take turns and are supportive of one another. They listen to the teacher and each other well. For example, in one Year 5 English lesson, pupils worked effectively in pairs to write a poem based on the feelings of a character in the class book they were reading. They included words from the text effectively and were confident to read their poems out loud to the whole class.

Pupils are active both in school and the local community. Older pupils take responsibility well and lead outdoor activities at break times. They are keen to raise money for local charities and the school council has a good understanding of democracy. Pupils understand how to keep safe and could explain to inspectors how to avoid cyber bullying. They know the difference between right and wrong. Pupils are keen to take part in the wide range of clubs and contribute regularly to local arts festivals. Most pupils have secured satisfactory levels in the basic skills by the time they leave Year 6 in preparation for starting their secondary education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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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<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Inspectors observed lessons which ranged in quality from satisfactory to good. Typically, teaching was lively and pupils were interested in the lessons. Staff made effective use of resources, such as the interactive whiteboards, computers and the virtual learning platform. They display pupils' work well around the school. The work in pupils' exercise books is marked regularly and there were some good examples of marking linked to pupils' individual writing targets. Where teaching was good, work matched pupils' ability levels well. On the occasions where teaching was satisfactory, it was mainly because the teacher spent too long explaining the task and the pupils lost concentration. There was not always sufficient challenge for the more able pupils in particular and lesson planning was inconsistent in quality.

The school introduced a new system for assessing pupils' progress in September 2009. Following some initial difficulties in levelling work accurately, teachers now have a satisfactory grasp of pupils' levels of attainment and there are some pockets of good practice. However, teachers' expectations for what pupils should achieve are not always high enough and this is leading to slower than expected progress in some classes.

The curriculum is of satisfactory quality. It matches the interests of the pupils well by good use of topical events, such as the World Cup. However, there is not always sufficient rigour in teaching the basic skills, in particular writing. Some of the strategies introduced, such as 'the big write', have taken too long to impact on improving achievement and there is a lack of consistency across classes. There are clear signs of improvement since the introduction of the new assessment system, but this is not yet robust enough to ensure that the curriculum is meeting the needs of all pupils well. The school provides a good range of clubs run by school staff which includes Spanish, art, sporting activities and gardening.

The school provides a good level of care and support for all its pupils. It provides for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities well. Pupils learning English an additional language say they are happy at school and appreciate the support they receive from teaching assistants and the other pupils. Teaching assistants ensure that these pupils are confident to contribute in lessons alongside their peers. Good partnership work supports the vulnerable pupils particularly well. Parents report that their children are happy in school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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<p><b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	<b>3</b>
	3
<p><b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b></p>	<b>3</b>
<p><b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b></p>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has maintained the good aspects of the school identified at the previous inspection, despite some changes to staffing and fluctuating pupil numbers, which has a big impact on this small school. However, some of the key issues, such as improving standards in writing, remain. This is because agreed systems for teaching and learning are not fully in place in all classes. Consequently, there is a lack of consistency. Staff are not always held sufficiently to account for pupils' progress and the system for setting targets is not yet robust enough to secure better than satisfactory outcomes. This means that equality of opportunity for all pupils remains satisfactory.

Governors and staff are working well together in the new leadership teams and see this as a positive step forward. They report that they now feel more involved in the leadership and management of the school. Middle leaders are strengthening their contribution by evaluating the impact of their work, though this remains a relatively weak aspect of the school's work. Self-evaluation, although broadly accurate, is too generous because leaders and managers do not use all of the information available to them to check their effectiveness against the outcomes achieved by pupils.

The school safeguards the health and safety of its pupils well. Leaders and managers ensure that pupils' well-being is their first priority. The school knows its own community and works well with parents and carers. However, in developing community cohesion more effectively, it has not made a comprehensive enough analysis to ensure that it is meeting all its pupils' needs fully.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<p><b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b> Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning</p>	<b>3</b>
	3
<p><b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b></p>	<b>3</b>
<p><b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b></p>	<b>2</b>
<p><b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b></p>	<b>2</b>
<p><b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b></p>	<b>3</b>



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<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, (Reception) with levels of skills, knowledge and understanding that are generally below those typical of their age. They make good progress in Reception and by the time they enter Year 1, most are at or above the levels expected for five-year-olds nationally although this varies slightly year-on-year.

Children are confident to use all the areas available to them, both indoors and outdoors. They are welcoming to visitors and keen to share their experiences. During the inspection, they were pretending to be pirates and all entered into the imaginary world of pirate adventures with enthusiasm. Children respond well to instructions and listen well to adults. They are equally confident to talk and play by themselves and inspectors noted how the theme was encouraging some children, particularly boys, to use a wide vocabulary. The level of care and support for children is good and procedures to safeguard their health, safety and well-being are effective. Relationships between staff and parents are good and parents are closely involved in helping their children to make progress. The quality of planning and assessment is good. The curriculum is adapted well to meet individual children's needs and abilities. This key stage is well led and managed and staff prepare children well for the next stage in their education.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

There was a good response from parents and carers for this small school; very few made additional comments to the form. From the small proportion that commented, these were mainly favourable, saying, 'I have been very impressed by the quality of care at Rossmore.' and 'The kids enjoy coming to this school as it is fun for them and they enjoy it.' One letter was received which was highly supportive of the headteacher and the school. The few negative comments were mainly about a lack of communication and

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the way the school handles some discipline issues. Where inspectors agree with comments, this is in the main body of the report.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rossmore 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 90 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 121 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	61	30	33	3	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	59	66	30	33	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	49	54	36	40	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	44	49	54	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	55	61	35	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	50	56	38	42	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	52	42	47	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)	40	44	41	46	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	53	40	44	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	52	58	30	33	5	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	44	47	52	3	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	58	64	29	32	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	63	70	25	28	2	2	0	0

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



28 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rossmore School, Ellesmere Port, CH66 1HF

You may remember that I visited your school recently with another inspector to carry out an inspection. Thank you for talking to us and for telling us about your lessons, showing us your work and explaining about your clubs and activities and the curriculum. We listened very carefully to what you said and this letter is to explain what we found.

We judged your school to be providing you with a satisfactory quality of education. This means that although it does some things well, it still needs to do some things better. We were impressed during the inspection by your good manners and behaviour. Your art work on the classroom walls and in the corridors was good and the school council represents you very well. Your headteacher and her staff care for you well and you told us that you are happy and feel safe in school.

To improve your school, we have asked the leaders and managers to do the following things

- Raise standards in Key Stage 1 and 2 in English, mathematics and science.
- Improve how effectively the school checks on what it does.
- Ensure the governors set high enough targets for you to make better than satisfactory progress.

Another inspector may visit before your next inspection to see whether your school is improving. You can help your teachers by always trying your hardest in lessons and continuing to be polite and courteous pupils. I wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gill Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector

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