

Rolph CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115248
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	338546
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Graham Preston

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Lesley Bostock
Headteacher	Mr John Crane
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed eight teachers in 19 lessons. Meetings were held with governors, groups of pupils and staff. Different aspects of the school's work were observed and documentation scrutinised, including that relating to safeguarding practices, the school's self-evaluation and development planning, as well as 96 returned parental questionnaires.

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

- the consistency of teaching in ensuring that pupils learn well in their lessons across all years
- the effectiveness of the recently introduced thematic curriculum in supporting pupils' learning
- the extent to which the school's ethos and strong community links have an impact on its care systems and promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- how well senior leaders and governors have responded to areas for further school improvement.

Information about the school

Rolph is average in size for a primary school. It draws its pupils almost equally from the village and the surrounding north east Essex area. Virtually all pupils are of White British heritage and none speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, as is the proportion of those known to be eligible for free school meals. The school has National Healthy Schools status and has just gained a British Council curriculum grant to develop its international links.

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

Rolph is a good school. It is led by a well-regarded and effective headteacher who, with the support of governors and staff, has sustained the good school improvement recognised in the last inspection. This is reflected in the continuing rise in standards and the growing popularity of the school. It has a positive and supportive ethos and is a successful church school with strong links with the local village.

Pupils make good progress to reach around average standards at the end of Year 2 and above average standards by the end of Year 6. Pupils' progress accelerates as they move through school because of consistently good teaching and learning opportunities. Writing is slower in showing improvement further down the school, but the school is already tackling this and pupils reach above average standards in writing by the time they leave.

Pupils like coming to school and this is reflected in their enthusiastic participation in lessons and school activities, and their good attendance. They feel safe in school and appreciate the care and concern staff show for their welfare. They fully support the healthy eating initiatives in the school and a large majority pursue the different sports and other physical activities. In lessons pupils readily cooperate with each other through group and paired work and take on the opportunities to be involved in school affairs such as the school council. Pupils actively participate in assemblies and appreciate the visits from the local churches. Pupils value the good opportunities to explore other cultures and religions in lessons and welcomed the visits from a Kenyan school and continuing links as pen pals. All this contributes to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, there are no pupils of other faiths or backgrounds in the school, and leaders are aware that links with other schools in this country and abroad are not yet sufficiently well developed.

Pupils learn well and make good progress because teachers and learning assistants work hard to help pupils improve, both in lessons and through other specially arranged support groups. Good relationships and effective classroom management are evident in most lessons. Learning is well resourced and provides good opportunities for pupils to be actively and collaboratively involved. Lessons generally have specific and relevant learning outcomes though these are not consistently shared with pupils or varied to accommodate different abilities and needs. The commitment of teachers is evident in their detailed marking, which is invariably positive and encouraging. However, the school recognises that not enough guidance is given to help pupils improve their work. The school is now providing a thematic curriculum that interests the pupils and develops learning skills that they can apply in different subjects and contexts. French is taught in

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all years, information and communication technology (ICT) is regularly used and physical education and sports contribute well to healthy lifestyles. The overall curriculum provides valuable opportunities for pupils to develop as considerate and reflective individuals. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and high levels of pupil participation.

The school knows its pupils well and tracks their progress and personal development carefully. Effective school practice ensures that pupils are safe and has enabled it to improve attendance and behaviour and work with the different social agencies and other schools to enable it to meet the needs of all its pupils.

The headteacher provides good leadership and has been effective in encouraging a shared staff commitment for school improvement. The school has an accurate picture of its strengths and areas for development. Governors, including parent governors, know the school well and have played a key role in improving the school over recent years. Good partnership links and effective safeguarding procedures, along with the commitment of the staff and governors, underpin the school's good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and assessment to more consistently reflect the best practice in the school by ensuring that:
 - all lessons have clear learning outcomes with sufficient challenge to enable all pupils to make good progress
 - marking and teacher feedback provides clear achievable steps that enable pupils to improve against National Curriculum levels.
- Help pupils develop a better understanding of local, national and global communities by:
 - implementing proposed links with a contrasting urban school in Britain
 - building on current international school and other links.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Current pupils in Years 2 to 6 entered Year 1 with standards a little below those expected for their age and are making good progress. Standards seen in lessons and pupils' books were above average for older pupils in English, mathematics and science. Recent Year 6 assessments place the school's pupils in the top third of all schools in terms of progress made, although there is some variation in the rate of progress in different years. Standards reached in Years 1 and 2 are more variable, and writing was below average in the most recent end of Year 2 assessments. The school has recognised this and placed a greater focus on developing writing skills. Progress accelerates in later years helped by consistently good teaching and good use of an interesting and well-organised thematic curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and are benefiting from the work of the new

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coordinator, who is carefully tracking pupils' progress, particularly that of boys, and organising effective additional learning support.

Other outcomes are all positive. School efforts to improve pupils' attendance have been successful and it is now above average. Pupils come to school eager to learn, and behave well in lessons and around the school. They are at their best when working together and being actively engaged in their learning and in the different school activities. For example, they clearly enjoyed the hymn practice where they sang and played recorders and keyboards and readily shared each other's success in the celebration assembly. The school council has been active in choosing the outdoor play apparatus and three quarters of pupils participate in different sports and other after-school activities. Pupils are generally thoughtful and considerate and although they have little day-to-day contact with the wider multicultural society, do show an interest and insight through their contact with a Kenyan school.

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	2
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

There is some variation in the quality of teaching, but certain positive aspects are

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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evident in all lessons. Teachers and support staff have very good relationships with pupils, who appreciate the considerable help and support they receive. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well for teacher presentations using interactive whiteboards and by pupils for written work and research on laptop computers. Lessons have a clear purpose and most teachers regularly check that pupils have understood and are making progress. The use of small whiteboards by pupils is used well for this and for enabling pupils to produce rough drafts and ideas. The best teaching has clear learning outcomes that are shared with pupils and varied to match differing abilities and needs. These lessons are fast paced with the right balance of teacher-led presentations and opportunities for pupils to work actively in groups or individually. All lessons have varied learning activities but some are less clear about the learning purpose and some have too much whole-class work, which makes it difficult to ensure that pupils of different abilities are sufficiently challenged.

Teachers' assessment practice is sound. Staff work hard and marking is regular and often very detailed, particularly in writing tasks. However, the 'next steps' guidance to help pupils improve is less well developed and insufficiently related to the National Curriculum levels used in the school progress tracking system.

The curriculum has considerably improved in response to the last inspection and staff work closely to implement new approaches. There is a greater focus on helping pupils to become more effective learners and, through a more integrated, thematic curriculum, to be more interested and involved in their learning. French is taught in Years 1 to 6 and the school has gained a British Council grant to promote language teaching through a developing link with a school in France. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities which include gardening, rugby, cricket tennis, squash, speaking competitions and band club.

Care, guidance and support are a further strength and reflect the school's strong, inclusive ethos. A number of parents and carers comment positively on the school's impact on their child's progress and personal development. One parent wrote glowingly of how her son, with a statement for considerable behavioural and learning difficulties, transferred to the school and with help transformed into a successful and well adjusted pupil when he moved on to secondary school. Special educational needs and/or disabilities provision is good and the school has various 'catch up' groups for reading and numeracy as well as those for comprehension and social skills that contribute to pupils' personal development. The school uses its close proximity to the adjoining secondary school to ensure good transition arrangements and enable gifted and talented mathematicians to benefit from higher level teaching in Year 7 classes. The school facilitates cooperation between gifted and talented coordinators from the local schools, has hosted an event for gifted art pupils and currently organises tennis coaching for promising 'Andy Murrays'.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	3
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?

The developing and ambitious leadership team includes a good mix of new and experienced staff. School improvement is further assisted by good staff morale and a readiness of teachers and others to improve their practice. The effective tracking systems are used well to monitor pupils' progress and identify concerns. These are being used well by the coordinator for special educational needs and/or disabilities in support of the school's equal opportunity strategy. The school has no ethnic or similar groups but there is an emerging pattern of more boys than girls having learning difficulties, and these findings are being used well to focus additional support. Similarly, robust self-evaluation is being used to improve teaching and the curriculum, and work with educational consultants and other schools is also helping to develop good practice. Strong links with parents and carers are maintained through active parent governors, parents' evenings, newsletters and a readiness to consult parents and carers regularly on specific issues such as the recent change in the school uniform.

The school has reflected on its links with local, national and global communities. It has a strong village presence and is seen to be a focal point for the community. There is also a well-established link with a school in Kenya, but it has yet to develop its link with a French school and follow through its intention to develop ties with a contrasting urban school. Despite a few understandable concerns about the traffic movement in the front of the school all safeguarding procedures are clear and well established and help create a safe and inclusive school. For example, the installation of a new climbing pyramid in the playground resulted in a careful risk appraisal and clearly defined supervision arrangements.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2

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	
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

On entry, attainment has been below average for four of the last five years. However, children in the current Reception class entered with skills and understanding at levels broadly expected for their age. Children make good overall progress, particularly in their personal, social and emotional, creative and physical development, although their skills in communication, language and literacy are weaker. In lessons, children behave well and relationships with adults and each other are positive, evident in the way they play together harmoniously.

The newly qualified Reception teacher has developed into an effective practitioner and is well supported by a learning assistant and volunteers. There is a good balance between carefully planned adult-led learning, as seen in a study of 'mini-beasts', and a good range of child-initiated activities such as working together to build a castle. The learning areas are well resourced and welcoming and the outside area is particularly good, including as it does various play apparatus, a greenhouse and an organic garden. During the inspection, children worked with the volunteer gardener and were completely absorbed in growing flowers and vegetables. Staff work well together to assess and record children's progress.

The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are effective, as reflected in good outcomes. Teaching staff are well supported and plans are in place to expand the indoor learning area and develop closer links with the adjoining but separately run pre-school. All resources are well deployed and child protection and safeguarding concerns are fully addressed.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

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

Parents and carers are very positive about the school, particularly in terms of its leadership, the quality of teaching, and the care and support it provides. A number of parents wrote very positively about the help the school has provided in helping their children overcome particular learning difficulties. The great majority are happy with the progress their children are making, though a few parents and carers would like more information about their child's progress. The inspectors found that the school did provide regular information and opportunities to discuss pupils' progress. A few parents were also concerned about the cramped school entrance where cars and pupils are not separated. Inspectors felt that the school was successful in safeguarding children through staff supervision of the area.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rolph CofE 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 96 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 207 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	63	33	34	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	57	59	33	34	6	6	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	37	39	47	49	10	10	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	40	51	53	6	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	51	53	41	43	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	40	42	45	47	9	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	40	42	53	55	1	1	2	2
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)	35	36	50	52	6	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	33	52	54	6	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	36	46	48	7	7	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	41	48	50	4	4	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	46	48	41	43	2	2	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	50	52	42	44	2	2	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

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). 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">■ 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.



17 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rolph CofE Primary School, Clacton on Sea, CO16 0DY

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. Rolph is a good school where you are making good progress and attaining above average results by the time you leave. We were pleased to see how well behaved you were and how you took a real interest in each other's success in the celebration assembly. We noted that many of you like to participate in school through the school council, including recently choosing the new climbing pyramid.

Very many of your parents and carers told us how much you like school, and this is reflected in your good attendance. You get on with your teachers and like the opportunities to be actively involved in discussion and group work. We could see that your teachers have made a real effort to help you improve your writing and mathematics and plan different activities that make your learning interesting. The school has various after-school sports and other activities and it was good to see that the large majority of you participate in these.

We agree with your parents that you have good teachers. However, we think some of you could do even better if your teachers explained more carefully what they wanted you to learn in each lesson. Your teachers mark your work regularly and often tell you how you can improve your work. This is very important and we have asked them to do more of this so you can make even better progress. From lessons and assemblies it was clear that the school is keen for you to know more about the wider world. To help in this we have asked them to build on the good links with Kenya by developing other links in Britain and abroad.

We agree with your parents and carers that the headteacher, the school governors and all the staff run the school very well and are working hard to make it even better. You can all help by maintaining your good attendance and continuing to take an active part in school affairs. Thank you again for being so friendly and helpful on our visit.

Yours sincerely

Graham Preston

Lead inspector

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