

George Romney Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112234
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	354369
Inspection dates	6–7 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Brian Dower

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs J Lowes
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Holohan
Date of previous school inspection	19 April 2007
School address	Cobden Street Dalton-in-Furness Cumbria LA15 8SE
Telephone number	01229 897917
Fax number	01229 897917
Email address	admin@georgeromney.cumbria.sch.uk

Age group	7–11
Inspection dates	6–7 July 2010
Inspection number	354369

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited eight lessons and observed eight teachers. Visits were also made to classrooms to look at pupils' books and talk to individuals about their work. They held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and groups of pupils and there was a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including monitoring and assessment records, displays, pupils' files, minutes of the governing body meetings, school improvement planning and curricular and lesson plans. Seventy questionnaire returns from parents and carers were analysed, together with six from staff and 181 from pupils.

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

- pupils' current progress and the level of their basic skills
- pupils' ability to evaluate for themselves how well they are doing and what to do to improve
- the ability of pupils to work creatively and independently
- the extent to which the curriculum broadens pupils' education and adds to their enjoyment of school
- the extent to which the care and support afforded pupils breaks down any barriers to their learning
- the quality of development planning to secure improvements in provision and outcomes.

Information about the school

It is average in size for a junior school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below that seen nationally; that of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line. Almost all pupils are White British with very few from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school has achieved Healthy School status and the Bronze award for Eco Schools. The school has been led by an acting headteacher during a period of staffing difficulties. A substantive headteacher has been appointed for January 2011.

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 school. Pupils enjoy their work. All groups, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the very few from minority ethnic backgrounds, learn well in lessons and make excellent progress in the core subjects of English and mathematics. This has resulted in high attainment and outstanding achievement in these subjects by the end of Year 6.

Pupils have the personal qualities for future success. They say they feel very safe in school and they take responsibility for themselves and each other. They understand the risks associated with using the internet and the older pupils participate in the local junior citizenship initiative. Behaviour is excellent. Bullying is rare and pupils say that when it does occur it is dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils eat healthily in school and take part in the wide range of physical activities provided by the curriculum and the after-school clubs. The older pupils take on responsibilities in school, for example, as lunch time leaders for the younger ones. All are involved in the life of the local community and have recently completed an art project which is on display at the railway station. Their understanding of global issues is good for their age. Attendance is above average and punctuality to school and to lessons is excellent. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Teaching and the use of assessments to support learning are good. Curriculum provision is good overall. Provision for the teaching of English and mathematics is excellent and accounts for pupils' high attainment in these subjects. However, opportunities for being enterprising or for researching topics in depth in subjects other than English and mathematics are limited. Pupils do not always get the opportunity to work independently and learn for themselves. Very well targeted support enables potentially vulnerable pupils to make the same outstanding progress as others in the core subjects. The level of support and guidance for all pupils is good and, as a result, any barriers to learning are broken down.

The school has experienced significant staffing difficulties at a senior level for some time and it is a tribute to the common endeavour of all staff that attainment in the core subjects has risen further this year to an even higher level. Self-evaluation is accurate and staff know that there needs to be greater breadth in the curriculum and a higher profile given to fostering independence. They also accept that development planning lacks precision. The capacity to improve further is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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

- Develop more opportunities within the curriculum for pupils to work independently, by:
 - ensuring that pupils can understand for themselves how well they are doing and what to do to improve
 - extending opportunities for pupils to evaluate each other's work
 - providing greater opportunities for them to use their own initiative and be enterprising.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning and use of assessment by:
 - using individualised improvement targets for pupils to gauge the progress they are making
 - ensuring greater precision in marking to show pupils how to improve
 - a greater use of probing questioning to challenge pupils to explain and justify their thinking.
- Improve the quality of development planning so that:
 - there are only the most pressing priorities being addressed over a given period
 - responsibility for checking progress against the priorities is clearly delegated and that there are monitoring milestones in place to ensure that all are playing their part in the drive for improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils are eager to learn. They talk enthusiastically about their impressive achievements in sport and proudly show off their outstanding art work. They work well together, are confident and articulate and listen with respect when others are speaking. They know right from wrong and are sensitive to the needs of others. As a result, their social and moral development is excellent. They have a good awareness of the diversity of faith and culture in the United Kingdom and an understanding of what it is like to be a pupil in other countries through the links with schools in Egypt and Uganda.

Attainment in the core subjects has risen further this year because of the rigorous monitoring of pupils' written and problem solving skills and the precise verbal instructions they receive on how to improve. Their ability to work out for themselves how well they and others are doing and how to improve is limited. The scrutiny of pupils' books shows that the progress they are making in developing independent skills, for example, in historical analysis or in data handling in subjects like geography and science, are less well developed. Pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills are highly developed. Skills of information and communication technology are good. Attendance is above average and behaviour is excellent. However, opportunities to develop skills of independent learning in the wider range of subjects are limited. Overall, pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
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?

Teachers have good subject knowledge and teaching assistants work effectively to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The marking of pupils' work is regular and supportive, but written guidance on how to improve lacks precision. Questioning to test factual recall is good, but its use to challenge pupils to explain at length and justify their thinking is limited. Although good practice was seen, the use of personalised improvement targets relevant to individual need was not widespread. Extra-curricular provision is good, with a wide range of activities which do much for pupils' personal development and add to their enjoyment of school. Excellent links with the infant and secondary schools ensure continuity in curricular provision. The core subjects of English and mathematics are given a high priority but there is not always enough use of other subjects to promote pupils' skills of independent learning. Opportunities for enterprise working and initiative, for example, in the outside environment, are at an early stage of development. Pupils benefit greatly from the good guidance provided for their health, safety and well-being. The learning environment in the school is both welcoming and stimulating. Pupils feel supported and cared for. Everywhere there are impressive displays showing the high level of artistic creativity and skill attained by very many pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

<p>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</p>	
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Adults are ambitious for the school's success and there is a drive for further improvement. They have taken on board the acting headteacher's astute evaluation of the school's performance and recognise what needs to be done to provide pupils with greater challenges. They accept that development planning has to focus on clearly defined priorities for improvement and on rigorous monitoring and evaluation of their implementation. The outstanding attainment of all pupils in national tests is testimony to the commitment of staff to an equal chance for every boy and girl. There is a good understanding of the religious, ethnic and social characteristics of the community the school serves. It is a harmonious working community and it does impact on the life of the local community through sport and cultural activities. It is, therefore, making a good contribution to community cohesion generally. Partnerships with other institutions and services and the support given by parents and carers add to the quality of education the school provides. Members of the governing body know the school well and are closely involved in its day to day life. The leadership of the Chair of the Governing Body has provided stability and guidance during the long period of staffing difficulties. Safeguarding procedures are effective. Safe working is evident in daily routines and risk assessments are carried out when appropriate for practical activities and trips out of school. Health and safety audits are undertaken on a regular basis. The school gives good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

<p>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</p>	
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

Views of parents and carers

A majority of parents and carers returned completed questionnaires. Of those, almost all were totally supportive of the school and expressed appreciation for the support and guidance their children receive and the high standards attained in national tests. A few returns recorded concerns about behaviour. Inspectors observed behaviour in lessons and around the school and looked at the school's incident logs. They also asked pupils about conduct in class and at lunch and break times. These inspection activities showed that behaviour is excellent, a judgement borne out by the pupils' own views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at George Romney Junior 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 70 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 193 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	53	29	41	3	4	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	37	53	32	46	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	39	39	56	4	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	46	35	50	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	39	56	30	43	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	41	35	50	4	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	41	40	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)	37	53	28	40	2	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	43	36	51	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	43	32	46	7	10	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	37	35	50	6	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	29	41	36	51	2	3	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	57	25	36	4	6	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). 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.



8 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of George Romney Junior School, Dalton-in-Furness, LA15 8SE

Thank you for the warm welcome we received when we visited your school. We enjoyed our time with you and were impressed by how hard you are working and your excellent behaviour. You helped us understand your school by talking openly about your work and your involvement in activities outside of lessons.

We judge that your school provides you with a good standard of education. In terms of your attainment in the national tests in English and mathematics, your achievement is outstanding. Your art work is impressive and most of you are involved in and often excel at the many sporting activities. The quality of your work in other subjects is not so high and we have asked that greater attention is given to raising standards in them. You are well informed about how well you are doing and you are told what to do to get better. We have asked that you be shown how to work out these things for yourselves. This means that you would be working more independently and not be so reliant on the teacher. You work well in groups, learning from and supporting each other.

You told us how much you enjoy school and that everyone gets on well together. You like your teachers and the classroom assistants because they are always there for you if you have a problem. You show sensitivity to the needs of others through your fund raising events and you do a lot to help out in school, particularly the older pupils who look out for the younger ones at lunch time. You clearly have the personal qualities for success when you move on to the secondary school. We have asked, however, that more be done to encourage you to be enterprising and to take greater responsibility for finding things out for yourselves. We have asked that the plans to do this are set out clearly.

You can play your part by continuing to work hard and showing concern and support for each other. Our best wishes to you all and particularly to those pupils who will be leaving to go to secondary school in September.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Brian Dower

Lead Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.