

Roxton VA CofE Lower School

School Lane, Roxton, Bedford, MK44 3DR

Inspection dates 26–27 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and, by the time they leave at the end of Year 4, have skills and knowledge above those anticipated for their age.
- Teaching is good with some that is outstanding. The teaching of mathematics has improved since the previous inspection.
- The headteacher and governing body are taking strong and effective action to improve the quality of teaching even further.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well, feel very safe and have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. Older pupils show excellent levels of courtesy and maturity and take pride in supporting younger pupils.
- Pupils enjoy a very wide range of stimulating learning activities. They develop outstanding personal skills as they move through the school.
- The headteacher and governors know the school very well. They know what they have to do to raise pupils' achievement, and are in a good position to do so.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always define what skills and knowledge they intend pupils to learn and so do not communicate learning purposes clearly enough in some lessons.
- Teachers do not always challenge the more-able pupils.
- Teachers cannot easily access the school's data on pupils' progress and attainment to help with the planning of learning.
- The skills of middle leaders are underdeveloped.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited seven lessons taught by four different members of staff and conducted lesson observations jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector heard several pupils read and looked at the work in the pupils' books across the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, a representative of the local authority, teachers and members of the governing body.
- The inspector also took account of 19 responses to the online Parent View survey and 12 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- A range of documentation was examined, including the school's information on pupils' progress, plans for improvement and records relating to pupils' safety, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Ronald Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Roxton is a smaller-than-average first school. There is one class in the Early Years Foundation Stage, one mixed-age class in Years 1 and 2 and another in Years 3 and 4.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is above the national average. The proportion supported by school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- Few pupils are from minority ethnic groups and none speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides funding for pupils in local authority care, those with a parent in the armed services and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the amount of outstanding teaching by making sure that:
 - all teachers have a clear understanding of what skills and knowledge they intend pupils to learn in each lesson and communicate these intentions to the pupils
 - teachers always challenge the more-able pupils in lessons so that they can make the progress of which they are capable
 - teachers can access the school data easily to plan future learning for pupils.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management further by developing the middle leadership skills of staff so that they can take greater responsibility for teaching and pupils' achievement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- With very small numbers in each year group, rates of progress and standards of attainment can vary from year to year. When the achievement of each individual pupil is analysed, it is clear that they make good progress from their starting points.
- Children generally enter Reception with skills that are around those expected for their age. They make good progress in all areas of learning. The children gain confidence and independence in their learning due to the excellent relationships they have with the adults.
- In Years 1 and 2, pupils are making better progress than that found nationally, and standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Although the standards in the Year 1 national phonics screening check last year were average, currently, reading is a particular strength. From the start, pupils learn their letters and the sounds that follow (phonics) so they become strong readers.
- By the time they reach Year 4, pupils reach standards above those typically anticipated for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Every half-term teachers submit their latest progress information on each of their pupils. This is analysed and used to set challenging targets in English and mathematics. Pupils who are at risk of falling behind receive extra help to help them catch up, which is very successful.
- Pupils gain confidence and understanding quickly across the whole range of subjects. The good-quality teaching allows them to find out things for themselves. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress and the extra help and resources they get allows them to narrow the gap between their attainment and that of their classmates.
- A small number of pupils attract the pupil premium and the funding this brings is successfully spent on staff and resources so that individuals can be well supported. There are not usually enough pupils eligible for the pupil premium to make reliable comparison of their attainment in English and mathematics with that of other pupils. The extra help they receive helps them to make good and, at times, outstanding progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- The teaching seen during the inspection was good and some outstanding, confirming the view of the senior leadership team. The work in pupils' books, discussions with pupils, records of the progress of pupils currently in the school, and the school's own checks on teaching support the view that teaching is good overall.
- When teachers and teaching assistants work with small groups of pupils they challenge them well. They ask probing questions to draw out their understanding. They make sure less-able pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress and understand the work.

- The current planning of learning for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is effective. The teacher effectively deploys the other adults who support the children's learning, and makes sure there is a good balance of adult-led and child-chosen activities. Moreover, she is planning carefully so that activities provided for children to choose are deliberately designed to build on the teacher-led work.
- The work set for pupils in Years 1 to 4 usually takes account of what they can already do or already know. Groups are chosen and activities for the different pupils are carefully planned to make sure that tasks are well matched to what the teacher wants them to learn. This is not always the case though throughout the school. Sometimes teachers fail to present work to the more-able pupils which fully challenges them and so slows their progress. For example, in a literacy lesson seen on descriptive writing pupils were asked to describe their own creature. However, the work set for the more-able pupils consisted of creating simple sentences and so these pupils did not really engage in the learning.
- Occasionally, teachers do not explain to pupils effectively what they are going to learn and why, due to the teachers not really being clear themselves as to the skills and knowledge they are going to teach the pupils. For example, in a mathematics lesson seen, the teacher had so many areas of learning for the pupils that they were not sure what to do and so progress in the lesson slowed.
- Although teachers generally use the information they gather on pupils' progress and attainment to effectively plan future learning, the school data are not easily accessible for all teachers and so opportunities are missed to make sure all pupils' progress is well planned.
- Some teaching is excellent. For example, in a mathematics lesson on weight, pupils were fully engaged using a range of apparatus and measures to accurately weigh parcels they made. Not only did the adults supporting learning question and challenge the pupils but the pupils themselves challenged each other's thinking and ideas throughout the lesson. The use of subject language was excellent and pupils at all levels made outstanding progress in their learning.
- Lessons taught are generally fun and engaging and this supports the pupils' highly positive attitudes to learning. As one pupils stated, 'I love learning as lessons are fun, like this one; we are doing mathematics but linked to our topic on the Egyptians.'

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' excellent behaviour, thoughtfulness towards others and attitudes to school are a major factor in helping achieve their good progress. The school is a very happy and safe place to be and parents fully support this view. There have been no exclusions for a number of years and little persistent absenteeism. Attendance is high.
- The school's outstanding, caring character is a feature consistently praised by parents and has a highly positive effect on the way that pupils relate to their peers and adults. In lessons, around the school and at play times, their behaviour is always exemplary.
- This aspect is exceptionally well fostered by outstanding provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which helps make sure that discrimination in any form is strongly discouraged and prepares pupils especially well for their future in a culturally diverse society.
- Pupils have very high expectations of one another. Although they feel that there is no bullying in

school, they are also very clear that if any issues arise they can and do talk to the teachers who deal with issues very effectively.

- Pupils are very well aware of how to stay safe and healthy both in school and outside. They are very well briefed on how to deal with cyber bullying and how to keep safe on the internet.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a very accurate awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She is taking strong action to improve teaching where it is weaker, although has not yet been fully successful in securing more rapid progress throughout the school. Staff responses to the questionnaire and their comments show she has their full support.
- The headteacher observes teaching regularly and identifies its quality, giving good attention to the learning that results. She uses the expertise of other headteachers with whom she is in contact and the local authority adviser to make sure judgements are accurate and consistent with those in other schools. Teachers engage well with the process of improvement, for example, although a very small staff, teachers do give a lot of their time and energy to help the headteacher.
- Middle leadership is, currently, underdeveloped. The headteacher is working to develop the expertise of middle leadership to make sure that, in her absence, there is someone who could take on her responsibilities fully if required.
- The local authority takes a 'light-touch' approach to this school, recognising the strengths in its management. The school has made good use of support from the local authority, as well as other schools in the area, to work on specific areas, such as the way the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are catered for.
- Detailed records are kept of pupils' attainment and their progress is carefully analysed. However, data in school are not easily accessible. The situation reduces the opportunity for staff to use the progress data to plan learning for pupils. Having accurate data already means that any slowing of progress for individuals, groups of pupils or particular year groups is quickly identified by leaders. It also allows the school to evaluate the progress that results from particular actions, such as the way pupil premium funds are used. Development plans focus on the right things, and have clear targets and deadlines.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well and this is reinforced by its very close links with the church. Pupils learn to work exceptionally well together, and are given really good opportunities to reflect on emotions and moral issues.
- Pupils enjoy a wide and very stimulating range of subjects and topics. For example, pupils are clearly enjoying learning about the Egyptians and the way in which this knowledge is integrated into all aspects of their learning. For such a small school, there is a wide range of extra opportunities for pupils to learn sporting and other skills, which is testament to the dedication of the staff of this school.
- **The governance of the school:**

The governing body uses the wide range of expertise it has available to work effectively in this school. The Chair of the Governing Body and the governors have an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Governors rigorously compare data about progress in the school with data about progress nationally. As a result, they have the information they need to

challenge the school effectively and hold it to account. Governors know about the quality of teaching and manage staff performance effectively. They provide the headteacher with strong support to challenge any underperformance. However, its small size does limit the rewards they can offer to develop staff to support the headteacher further. Governors make sure that all national safeguarding requirements are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	109625
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	412625

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	62
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eamonn Nicholson-Clinch
Headteacher	Jane Trott
Date of previous school inspection	16 April 2008
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