

Roach Vale Primary School

Roach Vale, Parsons Heath, Colchester, CO4 3YN

Inspection dates 13-14 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- The headteacher, supported by staff and governors, has established a culture of high expectations and a positive environment for learning in which pupils make good progress.
- The school's well-managed and rigorous system of performance management has ensured weaknesses in teaching have been systematically tackled. This has led to clear improvements in pupils' achievement.
- Often from low starting points, pupils make good progress in English, particularly in writing, and reach standards that, over time, are broadly average by the end of Year 6.
- As a result of the good support they receive, disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well.
- The Reception class provides a calm, nurturing environment in which children thrive and flourish.
- Most teaching is now good, with some that is outstanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and build very positive relationships with pupils, helping them to do their best.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They feel safe and enjoy coming to school. They are considerate to others and work well together, reflecting the school's provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance rates are above average.
- Governors know the school well. They are supportive, visit regularly and are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not make as much progress in mathematics as they do in English.
- Teachers do not adapt their teaching sufficiently in the course of lessons to reflect pupils' understanding.
- Pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to extend their own learning and use their writing and numeracy skills across all subjects.
- Not all teachers are aware of how to use the school's tracking information to monitor the progress of their pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 18 lessons, taught by eight teachers. All teachers present during the inspection were observed. Three lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- In addition the inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons, listened to pupils read, scrutinised their work and attended two assemblies.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff, members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority.
- A wide range of documentation was looked at, including the school's own self-evaluation, assessment data from the monitoring of pupils' progress, the school's development plan and minutes from meetings of the governing body. School policies and performance management documentation and records relating to behaviour, safety and attendance, together with the school's safeguarding procedures, were also evaluated.
- Inspectors took account of the 15 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the school's own surveys with parents and carers and the views of several parents and carers who spoke to the inspectors during the inspection.
- Questionnaires from 17 staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Christine Mayle, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Maria Rees Johnson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language is significantly lower than average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is significantly above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and for whom the school receives additional funding (the pupil premium) is average.
- A significant number of pupils, currently in Year 6, have joined the school at times other than the usual entry year in Reception.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by ensuring that all teachers:
 - provide more opportunity for pupils to work independently and apply their writing skills in subjects other than English
 - make better use of informal assessment in class to change activities in the course of the lesson so that teachers can more quickly respond to pupils' emerging understanding and help them to make better progress
 - are aware of how to use the school's tracking information to monitor the progress of their pupils.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics at Key Stage 2, so that it is at least as good as that in English, by planning activities that encourage pupils to apply their mathematical learning across a range of topics and subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children generally enter the school with skills that, overall, are below those expected for their age, although due to small cohort sizes this varies year-on-year. All children make good progress in the Reception class as the adults have high expectations of what the children can achieve.
- Children quickly settle into routines and get on well together and develop their personal and social skills well. A wide range of interesting, well-resourced activities helps engage children's curiosity and imagination.
- The children who have recently joined Reception with English as an additional language also make good progress. Well planned and targeted programmes are in place, offering both individual and group work, that support their learning and develop their language skills. Parents are highly positive about their children's achievements.
- Standards vary in this small school but evidence in pupils' books and from inspectors' lesson observations confirms that the current Year 6, a significant proportion of whom joined the school other than at the usual times, are on track to reach standards that are broadly average for reading and writing.
- Standards in reading are broadly average. Pupils enjoy reading widely for pleasure and are encouraged by the school to do so. The teaching of phonics (the links between sounds and letters) is enabling pupils to make good progress lower down the school; results in the 2012 national phonics check showed that pupils have already begun to improve on their below-average starting points by the end of Year 1.
- Although still below average, standards in mathematics have been improving over the last two years and results are expected to rise again this year. Pupils have a positive attitude to mathematics and particularly enjoy lessons in which short, briskly-paced numeracy activities help them to practise their basic skills. Although the gap is narrowing the progress that pupils make in mathematics is below that made by pupils in reading and writing.
- In two numeracy sessions observed, one in Year 6 where children were given the choice of different questions to complete using fractions, and one in Year 5 where children found the perimeters of shapes and then converted centimetres to millimetres, pupils were engaged and enthusiastic about their learning. They worked at a very quick pace and were enjoying explaining the mathematical strategies they were using to their partners or to their teachers. In both sessions outstanding progress was made.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates. They receive effective support both in class and through individual help.
- In 2012 the pupils in Year 6 supported through pupil premium funding were about a half a level behind their classmates in mathematics and English. The school has used this additional funding to provide extra support in the form of one-to-one teaching and mentoring, as well as music lessons and other out of school activities. All these pupils made expected progress in English. The number of pupils receiving support through this additional funding varies significantly between year groups.

The quality of teaching is good

- Across the school, most teachers plan interesting activities that capture pupils' interest and inspire them to work hard. Typically teaching is lively and enthusiastic and, consequently, pupils enjoy learning and make good progress.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use questioning effectively. They also build positive relationships with pupils that increase the pupils' self-esteem. Pupils say they enjoy school and appreciate the help they receive. Support staff make a good contribution to pupils' learning and progress.
- In Reception the adults have created a stimulating environment in which children explore and investigate, both indoors and outside. During the inspection, one child was talking about her 'normal' day. She told the inspector the order of her activities and described confidently what she did, often reading accurately the words she had written. Outside children had access to the Roach Vale Café where they busily served hungry customers with imaginary sandwiches and drinks, whilst practising their money-handling and social skills.
- In the majority of lessons, learning activities are well planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils and this helps to move their learning on. Teachers set out clearly what pupils are expected to learn so that they understand what they need to do to succeed. The pace is usually brisk and pupils are keen and interested. However there are occasions when the teachers do not use their on-going assessment to change activities in the course of the lesson so that pupils make better progress.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in subjects other than English.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and teachers' written comments help pupils to understand what they did well and what they need to do next time to make their work better. Pupils respond well to the written comments, and subsequent work in their books demonstrates that they have understood.
- Occasionally, pupils are not given enough opportunity to use their own initiative and learn on their own. Where teaching is less effective there are missed chances for pupils to apply their learning, particularly in mathematics.
- Teachers make good use of areas within the school grounds to extend pupils' learning. One of these is 'Ella's garden', which was established with money awarded to a Year 6 pupil for winning a national literacy competition. Pupils were very keen to talk about this and their 'Forest school' in interviews with inspectors. These areas helped them reflect on environmental issues as well as develop their social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour over time is exemplary in lessons and around the school. Pupils work diligently to complete tasks and always give of their best. They listen well and eagerly engage in tasks and activities. They enjoy coming to school and attitudes to learning are very good. Attendance is above average.
- Pupils' safe and mature attitudes reflect their strong sense of responsibility. They are proud of their school and are keen to take on additional roles, such as representing their classmates on the school and Eco councils. They work together constructively and are respectful and

considerate towards each other.

- In one Key Stage 2 assembly, pupils worked in small mixed-aged groups with Year 6 pupils acting as leaders to write down other pupils' thoughts and ideas. The focus for their discussions was; 'Why we appreciate our families.' This encouraged them to think deeply about relationships and developed the confidence of younger pupils in speaking to older ones. One group wrote: 'Your family is your shield.'
- The atmosphere in school is highly positive. Pupils participate eagerly and confidently in discussions because they feel secure and know that their contributions are highly valued.
- Pupils are able to talk about the different forms of bullying and know what to do and who to inform if it occurs. They have a keen understanding of fairness and 'right' and 'wrong'.
- The majority of the parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire and the school's own surveys feel that pupils behave well and that their children feel safe in school.

The leadership and management are good

- With her drive and enthusiasm the headteacher has created a strong sense of community, amongst the staff, pupils, parents and governors. All share a determination to bring about further improvement.
- The senior leaders maintain a programme of monitoring, through analysis of data, regular lesson observations and the checking of pupils' work. However, not all subject teams understand how to use this information to make teachers accountable for the progress their pupils make.
- Teachers' performance is carefully managed and previous weaknesses in teaching have been successfully tackled. Decisions regarding their pay and progression are directly linked to whether staff meet their targets and have had a significant impact on pupils' achievements. Training is matched to teachers' needs and its impact is reflected in the improving quality of teaching and adult support observed in lessons. Staff morale is high.
- Teaching programmes are well-planned. Pupils are taught through a range of exciting topics, such as 'Space -the final frontier', and community projects like 'Stands Tall', a collaborative piece of art-work based on model giraffes to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Colchester Zoo. Whilst this promotes the teaching of reading and writing, there are too few occasions when pupils are encouraged to use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.
- Arrangements for protecting pupils are good and safeguarding procedures meet all statutory requirements.
- The school makes significant contributions to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Every opportunity is taken to celebrate diversity including inviting visitors from different faiths and cultures and visits to mosques and churches.
- The local authority provides effective 'light touch' support for the school. Partnerships with other schools have been beneficial both in sharing resources and in helping teachers share good practice.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors demonstrate a realistic and in-depth understanding of the school's performance. They ensure that performance management and salary progression take proper account of teachers' effectiveness and impact. Since the last inspection they have undertaken training to ensure that they ask challenging questions of the headteacher and hold curriculum teams to account for the progress the pupils' make. They are regular visitors to the school, both to evaluate its work and also to provide support for children in their reading. Governors are fully involved in the monitoring of the school's expenditure, including the way that the pupil premium is spent and the impact it has on the progress of those pupils eligible for it. They are justifiably proud of the school and the learning environment it provides.

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	114823
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	412354

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	176
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Orme
Headteacher	Serena Williams
Date of previous school inspection	19 Jan 2010
Telephone number	01206 861324
Fax number	01206 869751
Email address	admin@roachvale.essex.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', 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 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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 assesses 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 0300 123 4234, 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 information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

