

Robartes Junior School

23 Barn Lane, Bodmin, Cornwall, PL31 1LU

Inspection dates 4–5 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement Select	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- The quality of teaching over time requires improvement because, although achievement is improving for some groups, there is not yet consistently good progress and attainment for all groups of pupils.
- The achievement of some groups of pupils is not as high as it should be given their starting points.
- Standards reached in reading and writing by the end of Year 6 are well below the national average. Standards in mathematics are higher but remain below the national average.
- Leaders and managers have not used information about pupils' progress thoroughly enough to implement sharply focused action plans to raise achievement rapidly.
- Governors have only recently become more involved in checking and supporting the work of the school, but not for long enough for them to fully hold senior staff to account.
- Some pupils become restless when their activities do not keep them fully interested or occupied, and they occasionally disturb the learning of others.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils feel safe in school because adults know them personally and look after them well.
- Staff in the area resource base, which caters for pupils with a wide range of difficulties, provide a calm purposeful environment where pupils make good progress in their social skills as well as in their reading, writing and mathematics.
- Attendance has improved and is now above average.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through a wide range of community events, as well as through the curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

Information about this inspection

- Three inspectors carried out this inspection; the lead inspector was present for both days, while each team inspector was present for one day.
- Inspectors observed teaching in 10 lessons or parts of lessons, seven of which were joint observations with the headteacher or assistant headteacher. One inspector also made a series of shorter visits to the structured literacy and numeracy lessons, joined by the assistant headteacher. Inspectors also visited the area resource base to observe the pupils at work.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in their books, and spoke to some about their work and other aspects of school. They listened to pupils from Years 3 and 6 reading.
- They held meetings with senior leaders and other members of staff regarding pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy and the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Inspectors looked carefully at the displays of pupils' work in the classrooms. They also looked at the wide range of work on display around the school.
- The inspectors had lunch with the children, chatted informally to them about the school, and observed their behaviour during playtime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documentation including records of the quality of teaching, the school's data on pupils' progress, the school improvement plan and records of behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- A meeting was held with six members of the governing body, and a telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Information was considered from the 10 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, and two of the inspectors spoke informally to a number of parents and carers.
- In addition, inspectors took account of the 19 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- One inspector visited the breakfast club, which is managed by the governing body and therefore formed part of the inspection.

Inspection team

Anne Newall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Ian Cload

Additional Inspector

Janet Dinsmore

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is similar in size to schools of this type.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils eligible for free school meals, those who are in the care of the local authority and those who have a parent or carer in the armed forces, is well above average, and forms the large majority of pupils.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also well above average.
- The school has an attached additional resource base which has places for 10 pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs, including communication and behavioural difficulties.
- In 2013 the school did not meet the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not have access to any additional provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently at least good across the school by:
 - improving teachers' skills in planning and in preparing teaching activities which are suitable for pupil needs, including those of lower ability, and which build upon their existing knowledge and skills
 - making sure that pupils know how to improve their work, especially through refining teachers' marking so that it is clear to pupils what they need to do to improve
 - ensuring that teaching captures pupils' interest so that they are better able to concentrate, thereby eliminating any low-level disruptive behaviour.
- Improve achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, by:
 - carefully planning more frequent opportunities for pupils to write at length and for different purposes such as writing letters or writing instructions in other subjects in the curriculum.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - establishing clear criteria for judging good progress over time, using this to determine where teaching needs to be improved and taking prompt action to improve it
 - using progress information about pupils to implement sharply focused action plans
 - providing governors with in-depth analyses of the progress of each group of pupils compared to national expectations, so that they can challenge school leaders about the impact of teaching on pupils' progress.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Across the school there are inconsistencies in the rates of progress made in reading, writing and mathematics in different year groups. Some groups, particularly lower-attaining pupils, do not make the progress expected of them from their individual starting points.
- A large majority of pupils within the school are supported through additional funding. Their achievement is similar to that of other pupils, in that it also requires improvement.
- Lower-ability pupils do not make the progress that could be expected of them in writing and mathematics from the start of Key Stage 2, because teachers do not always provide small, achievable steps for them to build on what they have already learnt.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported with school action or school action plus is improving because the capable special educational needs coordinator is helping to improve provision for them. However, their progress, like that of other pupils in the school, is not yet consistently good.
- Although attainment in reading is showing some improvement it is still well below average. Pupils now have regular opportunities to read in literacy lessons, but not all low-attaining pupils have sufficient opportunities to read or enjoy stories at other times.
- The progress of most groups of pupils has improved since the last inspection because the school has implemented structured teaching programmes for reading and mathematics which are enjoyed by most pupils.
- In mathematics, in particular, there have been improvements for the most-able pupils, including those supported with additional funding, and more pupils are now being entered for the higher-level test in mathematics.
- Current evidence of pupils' attainment in Year 6 shows that the attainment gap of around two terms between those eligible for pupil premium support and other pupils, which was seen in the Year 6 test results in 2013, will be closed in 2014.
- Pupils attending the area resource base make good progress because it is well led and managed, and staff are knowledgeable about the needs of each pupil. They ensure that the unit is a calm and purposeful environment where pupils can thrive.
- Most parents and carers responding to Parent View and all of those spoken to say they are pleased with the progress that their children are making.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teachers do not always plan work which builds, upon what pupils already know and can do. This means that sometimes the work is too easy, and sometimes it is too hard. Consequently, some pupils, particularly those who have lower ability and who find learning more difficult, do not make enough progress.
- Pupils' skills in writing are underdeveloped because they have too few opportunities to write at length and for different purposes in other areas of the curriculum and their basic skills of spelling and punctuation are weak.
- Marking and feedback to pupils are thorough and represent an improvement since the last inspection. However, pupils do not always have a chance to respond to their teachers' comments, and comments do not always lead to improved work.
- In some cases, the same comments appear regularly and are related to basic skills, such as 'Remember capital letters and full stops!', rather than telling pupils how to improve the content of their work.
- Each pupil has targets for improvement, and pupils that were spoken to during the inspection knew what they were, however, they do not always know how to achieve them.
- Pupils make most progress when they are enthused by the activities and when their teachers'

skills in questioning them to deepen their understanding keep them involved in learning. This was seen, for example, in a Year 5 lesson on improving sentences by using better word choices and changing the order of words, where pupils learned how an adverb can make their sentence more interesting.

- There have been some improvements in teaching. The structured reading, writing and mathematics schemes are proving successful, mainly in improving achievement in reading and mathematics, because the activities are suitable for most pupils' needs.
- Teaching assistants typically provide valuable support for individual pupils and small groups which helps them to learn.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement because some find it difficult to maintain their concentration in lessons where the work does not interest them fully, and they become restless which then disturbs the work of other pupils.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very warm and caring, and pupils are respectful and courteous, both to each other and to adults in school.
- The school places a strong emphasis on keeping pupils safe. Pupils are confident that any adult in school will help them, which contributes to their strong sense of security.
- The playgrounds are well organised and calm, and there is plenty of supervision from members of staff, including the pastoral support team. This helps to ensure a good degree of pupils' safety as well as encouraging happy playtimes.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe when using the internet; older pupils attend training at 'Flashpoint'. They have a good understanding of different types of bullying, and say that any incidents of bullying or misbehaviour are dealt with quickly by staff.
- Attendance is improving and is now above average. This reflects the success of the work of the pastoral support team, as well as the system of imaginative and regular rewards provided by senior leaders to tackle previous low attendance. It also demonstrates that pupils clearly like coming to school.
- The behaviour of pupils attending the area resource base, some of whom have behavioural difficulties, is skilfully managed. They are able to join in with many school activities including assemblies and physical education lessons without disturbance.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- The school's leaders gather information about the progress of pupils but their criteria for judging progress overall progress have given them a misleading picture of the progress of different groups of pupils.
- Leaders have recently begun to analyse in which year groups and in which subjects pupils are not achieving as well as they should, and are now linking this to their judgements of the quality of teaching over time.
- Middle leaders are involved in checking the quality of teaching in their subjects, and giving guidance to teachers which is beginning to lead to improved achievement.
- Teachers have received additional training to enable them to teach the structured literacy and mathematics schemes. Systems in place to check their work now include targets for the progress that their pupils will make, and set higher expectations for achievement.
- Leaders, including governors, have established a pastoral support team led by the special educational needs coordinator. This has resulted in improved attendance and more involvement of parents and carers in their children's learning. It has also given leaders more time to focus upon improving teaching and learning.
- The breakfast club provides a warm and welcoming environment in which many pupils, sometimes with their parents and carers, can enjoy a good breakfast before the school day

begins. The school provides many opportunities for parents and carers to become involved with school activities.

- The school is using the additional sports funding it receives to develop physical education in a range of ways, for example through master classes for pupils who are talented in different sports. It also provides for lunchtime and after-school sporting opportunities which are presently involving many pupils in physical activity.
- Pupils from the area resource base are also supported through this funding which enables them to join in physical education lessons with other pupils, demonstrating the school's commitment to equal opportunities.
- The improvements in teaching and achievement since the last inspection show that the school has the capacity to continue to improve.
- The school meets its statutory duties for safeguarding pupils.
- The local authority has provided support for the school in tackling previous underachievement.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have only recently begun to challenge the senior leaders about the progress of pupils in relation to other schools but this has not yet had an impact on improving achievement. Although some governors have only recently joined the governing body, they are already developing a good understanding of the circumstances of the school, and are undergoing training to help them to hold leaders more effectively to account. Governors receive information about the appraisal of staff and the quality of teaching, but as yet are not involved in making decisions about teachers' pay, or in ensuring that teachers' pay is aligned to their performance. They have contributed to decisions about the spending of additional funding, for example the pupil premium, and they know that the progress of eligible pupils is similar to that of other groups of pupils. Governors receive a range of reports from school leaders and are knowledgeable about the difficulties faced by vulnerable pupils.

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	111922
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	431075

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Kerridge
Headteacher	Ewan Murray
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 May 2012
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