

Roman Way First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116733
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	358018
Inspection dates	8–9 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Patricia Potheary

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lee Woodward
Headteacher	Jane Scarborough
Date of previous school inspection	31 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors who observed 17 lessons, taught by 10 different teachers. Meetings were held with a group of pupils, staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. The inspectors observed the school's work, looked at information about pupils' progress, staff and pupil surveys and safeguarding procedures. They analysed 114 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What are the rates of progress for all pupils, particularly boys, in writing and mathematics?
- How consistent are the quality of teaching and the use of assessment in meeting pupils' differing needs in the different age groups and subjects?
- How has the leadership demonstrated the effectiveness their actions in improving outcomes for pupils, particularly for boys and in writing?

Information about the school

This is a broadly average-sized first school. Most pupils are of White British origins with a very small minority from a range of other ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also broadly average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than average. The school has several recent awards including the Healthy Schools Award, Active Mark and the Leading Parent Partnership Award. There is a privately run children's centre and after school club on the school site.

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 achieve well because they make good progress in their academic subjects and personal development. The school is a bright and welcoming community where everyone is valued. A key strength of the school is in the way it nurtures each individual and provides good, effective, additional support to those who need it most. Pupils feel exceptionally safe and act very safely, and this is particularly appreciated by parents and carers.

Attainment is broadly average when pupils leave the school and they make good progress overall, especially in reading and writing. There are, however, inconsistencies in the rates of progress being made throughout the school. In mathematics particularly, although good for the majority, a few pupils in all ability groups make slower progress. Progress in mathematics has improved recently because the school has introduced more practical work, based upon real-life situations. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress and, by the time they move to middle school, few need specialist support to continue. Boys now progress as well as girls, in part because the curriculum is more activity based and an increased amount of outside learning has inspired them.

Lessons throughout the school are interesting and often fun, with a wide variety of activities to keep pupils engaged and help them learn. Pupils enjoy their lessons and, as one explained, 'When we are stuck teachers explain really clearly.' Pupils behave well and enthusiastically share their ideas, working productively together as a result of this good teaching. The use of assessment, although good overall, is not consistently effective. Pupils do not have individual targets, to show clearly the next steps in their learning, in any subject. This particularly affects mathematics and means that work is not always planned precisely enough to meet the needs of every pupil in the group. As a result, for a few, the work lacks challenge.

Attendance is a little below average and there has been a recent increase in holidays being taken during term time. The school uses many strategies to try to improve attendance, but has not yet drawn parents' attention to the strong link between attendance and achievement. Pupils' preparation for the future is good because they are encouraged, from an early age, to use their initiative and play a full and responsible part in the work of the school. This includes running a business enterprise which raises money to enable equal participation in school trips. They also support many good causes and take great care of the environment.

Good leadership is based upon very detailed information about pupils' progress which is regularly monitored. This rigorous self-evaluation means that senior staff understand and regularly address any weaknesses well. Several improvements to outcomes are evident as

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a result, such as boy's engagement with learning and their progress. The school's capacity to improve is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase consistency in the rate of progress being made, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - providing pupils with individual targets to show them clearly the next steps in their learning
 - ensuring that the work set more precisely meets the needs of every pupil in each lesson.
- Improve attendance and reduce the number of holidays taken during term time, in particular by drawing parent's attention to the link between attendance and attainment.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In lessons, pupils listen very carefully to instructions and then work hard to do their best, clearly enjoying their learning. Children's skills on entry to the school are below national expectations but this hard work ensures that by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 4, their attainment is broadly in line with national averages and they have achieved well. Progress overall is good, with most pupils of all abilities making more than expected progress in reading and writing. In mathematics, although the majority are making good progress, progress varies between age groups and for a few pupils progress is satisfactory rather than good. Reading is the strongest subject and progress in writing has improved considerably in the last year. The atmosphere in lessons is purposeful and enjoyable. In one mathematics lesson, pupils worked very responsibly in pairs to write problems and then solve them: they showed good progress and plenty of confidence in explaining their thinking to the group. More-able pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities also progress well because their work and the support they receive is organised well to provide challenge and meet their particular needs. The number of pupils with special educational needs in each class reduces every year as they move through the school and begin to attain in line with their peers. Pupils develop a range of other skills well; they are enthusiastic artists and show good singing skills, for example. In one lesson, pupils designed beautiful clay tablets with great care which they decorated and circled with a message translated into ancient script, showing an appreciation of art and history.

The most effective personal skills that pupils develop are in their sociable, caring conduct and appreciation and respect for those who are different to themselves. They work exceptionally well together and in teams and play a keen part in contributing to the work of the school. This also helps them to be well prepared for the future. Pupils' strong awareness of how to lead healthy lives is well supported by school initiatives and is particularly valued by parents and carers. Uptake of sport and other exercise is good and pupils usually eat plenty of fruit and vegetables, resulting in the Healthy Schools Award and the Active Mark. The quality of activities available to pupils brings a strong spiritual dimension to pupils' experiences as they begin to respect more deeply the nature of the world around them.

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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	3
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	1
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

The welcoming and attractively decorated learning environment sets the tone for the smoothly run, calm and purposeful atmosphere in the school. This is a place where learning is valued. Several parents and carers commented about how much their child enjoys school. Despite this, the school's detailed work in trying to ensure better attendance, so that all pupils have the very best start in their education, is not fully effective. In lessons, teachers use technology well to aid pupils' understanding and provide good opportunities for pupils to work in teams, where they learn more from each other. Lessons are well organised to hold pupils' interest and this is one reason why behaviour is usually at least good and sometimes outstanding. The use of assessment to support learning is usually good as teachers have an accurate and detailed knowledge of pupils' levels and plan work accordingly. There are, however, no individual targets provided to help pupils know just what they personally need to do to improve. It also means that work is not planned in enough detail to meet the needs of every pupil in a very small minority of lessons. This is why, for a few, the work lacks challenge and their progress slows as a result.

The curriculum contains a wide range of imaginative activities, creative links between subjects and games to help bring learning to life. This greater focus on practical learning has contributed to the recent increase in progress, especially in using and applying

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mathematics, which is beginning to improve the subject. Strong links with other providers ensure that experiences of music, science and sport, for example, are of good quality. The school has a motivating focus on outdoor learning where, for example, pupils are helping to develop the local park as part of a geography and art project. The school recognises that provision for information and communication technology (ICT), although satisfactory, does not securely ensure that pupils' skills develop in a systematic way. They have recently begun to improve ICT provision in order to address this. Effective care guidance and support includes very strong, successful support for vulnerable pupils, including those with behavioural difficulties. In-depth work with other providers, including the children's centre, ensures that this is a very caring community.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
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 school is well led by the headteacher. This has ensured that staff work closely as a team and share the same high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Accurate assessment and very regular monitoring support an effective drive for improvement and the good progress now being made. This has resulted in a significant increase in the amount of good teaching, as well as strengthening the improvements to progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Self-evaluation is broadly accurate although whole-school targets are not always met because, although challenging, they are not well adapted to the differences in attainment between individual cohorts. A good governing body fulfils all statutory requirements and is very well involved with the work of the school. It provides suitable challenge and regularly follows up issues within the school.

Engagement of parents and carers is good, with a high level of satisfaction from parents on all aspects. The school has the Leading Parent Partnership Award. There is a particularly effective support group to help some parents engage more with their child's learning at home, which is improving pupils' progress. The promotion of equal opportunity is good and very regular tracking ensures that anyone falling behind is quickly supported. There is no evidence of any discrimination. Procedures to ensure safeguarding are good, with rigorous systems for vetting and training staff, and careful monitoring and reviewing of systems. Satisfactory promotion of community cohesion includes some good work within school with much improved teaching about people from different cultures and beliefs. This has led, for example, to the eradication of racist incidents. Work with the local community is also strong but links nationally and internationally are at an early stage of development.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	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
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

The Nursery and Reception classes are bright and stimulating. Strong links with parents, carers and pre-school providers ensure that children have a smooth start. They make good progress in all areas of learning and by the time they join Year 1 their skills are just above average overall; they are particularly strong in personal development, where children make outstanding progress. In literacy and numeracy, children's skills are broadly in line with national averages when they join Year 1, with the exception of writing where they remain below average. Teaching by all staff is at least good and the use of questions to help children think, such as 'What would happen if...?' is very skilled. There is some outstanding work in supporting children to develop independence, confidence and speaking and listening skills. In one exciting lesson, they cooked gingerbread men, weighed out the flour, and spooned in the syrup with very little help from adults; they also understood why they should wash their hands. Staff provide an excellent range of activities to help pupils explore the natural environment by growing plants and observing wildlife. The outside play area, however, is not well developed to support the full range of imaginative learning day-to-day, although staff do their best to overcome this with the daily activities provided. Good leadership has ensured continued improvement, with improved use of assessment recently in the Nursery and improved attainment each year for the last three years.

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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

A higher-than-average proportion of parents and carers completed the questionnaire and they were overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school. As one typically commented, 'Roman Way is a lovely supportive school which I am happy to send my child to every day.' They particularly like the way they are informed about their child's progress, how well the school helps their child to lead a healthy lifestyle and how safe their children feel. This is in line with the inspection findings. The very few and largely different concerns expressed were followed up and where supported by inspection findings are reflected in the report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Roman Way First 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 114 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 209 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	73	64	38	33	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	70	61	42	37	2	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	65	57	49	43	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	64	56	45	39	4	4	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	73	65	36	32	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	56	49	54	47	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	62	54	51	45	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)	51	46	54	48	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	60	53	49	43	4	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	40	61	54	5	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	43	38	63	55	5	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	60	53	47	41	4	4	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	75	66	34	30	5	4	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 all 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



10 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Roman Way First School, Redditch, B98 0LH

Thank you for being so welcoming when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed meeting you, joining you for lunch and seeing some of your lessons. Yours is a good school. There are many interesting things going on, such as growing your own food and singing to mothers and babies at the children's centre, just as you described. Senior staff work hard to keep developing the school and this is an important reason why your work is getting better.

Enjoyable teaching helps you to make good progress in your lessons and we like the way you always try to do your best. So that this continues we have asked your school to help a few of you make faster progress, especially in mathematics, and to help some of you to attend more regularly. We would particularly like to see you being given:

- clear individual targets so that you know what steps you personally need to take to improve
- work which provides enough challenge for all of you in mathematics lessons
- information on how attendance and the progress you make is connected.

We are sure that you will share your thoughts about these ideas with your teachers and help them by working hard.

The many responsibilities that you take on, such as helping to develop the local park, composting waste food and running the business club to fund school trips are heartening. You were keen to tell us that the school keeps you very safe and looks after you well. It is therefore very pleasing to see that you behave so well and are kind to each other. You show good respect and understanding towards those who have different beliefs and ways of living, which helps make your school a very happy and welcoming community.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Potheary

Lead inspector

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