

Rowley Hall Primary School

Windsor Road, Rowley Regis, B65 9HU

Inspection dates 13–14 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well in English and mathematics.
- This is because teaching is typically good, and ensures that work is suitable for each pupil.
- The school carefully tracks the progress made by all groups of pupils and gives extra support to those who need it.
- Good relationships result in a positive atmosphere that permeates the school. Pupils behave well, enjoy learning and feel safe.
- Attendance has improved from broadly average in the last inspection to above average now.
- The quality of care is a strength of the school, particularly in supporting pupils who need the most help and guidance.
- Good leadership and management are supporting rising standards. A clear and effective focus on improving writing skills has led to pupils making better progress in English.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The detailed information gathered on children's progress in Reception is not used well enough in planning lessons for Year 1 pupils.
- In a small number of lessons, particularly in Years 1 and 2, teachers do not check enough to make sure pupils are making good progress, or give them enough time to practise their newly learnt skills.
- The school improvement plan has too many areas for improvement to be fully effective.
- The new subject leaders have not yet developed their skills in checking teaching and learning, and lesson observations do not always focus enough on pupils' progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 24 lessons taught by 17 different teachers, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- They observed the school's work and looked at planning documents, monitoring records, assessment data and pupils' work.
- There were 21 responses to Parent View (the online questionnaire) during the inspection. These results were taken into account by inspectors in reaching judgements about the school.

Inspection team

David Shears, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Shahnaz Maqsood

Additional Inspector

Kate Robertson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Rowley Hall Primary is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, and at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs, are above average.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are both below national averages.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Breakfast and after-school clubs are provided for pupils by the school.
- A new headteacher has been appointed from January 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching consistently good or better, particularly in Key Stage 1, by making sure that:
 - teachers make better use of checks carried out on pupils from the Early Years Foundation Stage so that pupils in Year 1 make good progress throughout the year
 - lesson planning takes full account of the different abilities of all groups of pupils
 - teachers check during lessons the progress of all pupils and give further support or challenge as needed
 - pupils have enough time in lessons to practise the new skills they have learnt.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - focusing school development planning sharply on the main priorities for improving the school
 - focusing lesson observations on the quality of learning for different groups of pupils
 - giving subject leaders more training and opportunities to develop their skills in checking the quality of teaching and learning in their subject areas.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children begin school with skills and knowledge that are well below age-related expectations. Positive relationships are built with parents and carers and this helps children to settle quickly into the Nursery. Children make good progress in all areas of learning in both the Nursery and the Reception classes.
- Children are encouraged to think independently while still having opportunities for teacher-led learning. For example, in one lesson children were trying to guess what might be in a present and practising using their early phonics (the sounds that letters make) skills to write labels.
- In Key Stage 1 progress is not as consistently rapid. This is because teachers do not always use what they know about pupils' previous achievements to plan work at exactly the right level for all groups of pupils. For example, in one mathematics lesson about estimating the activities set were appropriately demanding for most pupils, but did not stretch the more-able pupils.
- At Key Stage 2 the pace of learning accelerates again and pupils make consistently good progress in all year groups. Pupils of all abilities are challenged well. In one lesson seen, all pupils had demanding individual targets to help them improve their writing skills. All pupils were able to learn independently and good interventions by the teacher and the teaching assistant kept them on track and on their toes. In Year 6, attainment is broadly average and rising.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good overall. They receive good support and guidance in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 2. For example, in one lesson these pupils were given good support in learning how to use speech marks in their writing. However, they mostly make slower progress in Key Stage 1 in line with other pupils. Pupils from ethnic minority groups make similar progress.
- Pupils with complex needs that require specific support make good progress throughout the school because their needs are met well. Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those supported by pupil premium funding also make good progress in all year groups. These pupils benefit from a range of help and guidance, including one-to-one support from adults. As a result they have made accelerated progress so their attainment gets closer to that of other groups.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching in the large majority of classes is good and there are positive elements in all lessons. Good relationships between staff and pupils result in pupils who are keen to learn.
- Pupils are told what they are going to be learning in lessons, and all teachers plan interesting practical activities to engage them. For example, they make good use of interactive whiteboards to make lessons exciting and maintain pupils' attention.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge extensively to challenge the thinking skills of all pupils through clearly focused questions. Lessons build effectively on pupils' previous learning.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, particularly those who have the greatest needs, often make good progress. This is because the school makes good use of its

close links with external specialists such as therapists to help staff in providing individual support.

- Pupils know their targets, and teachers often refer to them in lessons. Many pupils are able to accurately judge for themselves whether they have understood the work. Marking and feedback in English and mathematics often tell pupils what they need to do to improve their work, although this is not yet consistent in every class.
- In the small number of lessons where teaching is less effective, mostly in Key Stage 1, there are some common weaknesses. Sometimes the teachers' instructions go on for too long, so pupils do not have enough time to practise what they have been learning. During activities teachers do not always check to make sure that all pupils are making good progress. Consequently some pupils occasionally struggle with the work or finish early with nothing else to do, limiting the progress they make.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in lessons because they are eager to learn. They behave well in the playground and noticeably get on well together. Pupils say behaviour in the school is good, and all staff and the majority of parents and carers agree.
- Pupils talk enthusiastically about the school. One said 'we have fun learning' and another that school 'is amazing'. They develop good working relationships with each other and support each other well in their learning. They are equally able to learn independently. Pupils usually behave well even when teaching is not as strong, although there are occasions when younger pupils lose their concentration when work does not meet their needs.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying. They say that this only happens occasionally, and are clear in stating that any incidents are fully explored and addressed and so all pupils feel safe. They say how well they are cared for by staff throughout the whole day, whether in school or out on the playground.
- The school has put much work into promoting attendance. As a result this has improved considerably over the last year, and is now higher than the national average. Pupils are given good incentives to encourage them to attend regularly, and both pupils and parents receive regular information about attendance rates and the target attendance that the school is intending to reach.

The leadership and management are good

- The senior leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and what it needs to do to improve. The areas for development are included in the school improvement plan, although there are too many for it do be fully effective as a sharp tool for driving improvement.
- Leaders have had a good impact on the quality of learning in particular areas. For example, they recognised that the quality of writing was a cause for concern. As a result of a focus across the school on improving the teaching of writing, the progress that pupils made in developing their writing skills has significantly improved last year.
- Leaders track the progress made by all pupils carefully, so that any at risk of falling behind in their work are quickly spotted and given extra help and guidance to make up lost ground. They also check the quality of teaching regularly to identify strengths and areas for further

development, although these checks sometimes focus too much on what teachers are doing rather than the impact of their actions on pupils' learning.

- The results of the checks on pupils' ongoing progress and the quality of teaching give the school a clear picture of the effectiveness of each teacher. Along with individual targets for performance, they are used appropriately when considering staff promotion and pay rises.
- The school cares for pupils particularly well. All feel welcomed and accepted, and know that they can ask for support and guidance when needed. This good care is also evident in the breakfast and after-school clubs. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well in the way subjects are taught, and through a wide variety of clubs and activities.
- The school, including the governing body, fosters good relationships with parents and carers, giving them helpful support such as the successful 'inspire' workshops where they have an opportunity to work alongside their children. Most parents and carers are pleased with the school and would recommend it to others.
- There are a number of new subject leaders. The school has made sure that the previous leaders are giving good support to enable them to learn their role. However, this is still in its early stages and the new leaders recognise the need to develop their skills in checking the quality of learning in the subjects they are responsible for.
- The local authority provides a good level of support and challenge to the school, by giving an independent view on the school's self-evaluation and checking its analysis of standards.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and how well the school is performing compared to other similar schools. It provides good support and as well as asking challenging questions. Governors are involved in their own monitoring although this is not always linked carefully enough to the school's main areas of development, limiting its effectiveness. Their monitoring of the school budget is strong. In particular, governors are very clear about how the extra money to support particular pupils such as those eligible for the pupil premium is used, and the impact that this has had on their learning. They have received effective training about checking how teachers' pay relates to their performance and the quality of teaching. The governing body ensures that safeguarding policies and procedures meet current national requirements. While the governing body has many strengths, it does not have its own improvement plan.

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	103955
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	400675

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	499
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Doman
Headteacher	Lynda Townsend
Date of previous school inspection	18 March 2010
Telephone number	0121 559 1400
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Email address	headteacher@rowleyhall.sandwell.sch.uk

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