

Roxwell Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

The Street, Roxwell, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 4PE

Inspection dates

13–14 February 2019

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Child protection arrangements are weak. Leaders do not always take appropriate, timely action to protect pupils in response to concerns raised by staff. This puts pupils at risk.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.
- The school's self-evaluation is too generous. Leaders have not identified the most important areas for improvement.
- Leadership systems are under-developed. As a result, leadership is weak in areas such as safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that the pupil premium grant is having the impact that it should. Some disadvantaged pupils do not make strong enough progress to catch up.
- Fixed-period exclusions are used too readily. The challenging behaviour of a very small number of pupils is not dealt with well enough. There is evidence of unlawful exclusion.
- The overall rate of attendance is below the national average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is well below average.
- Pupils' knowledge and use of vocabulary and punctuation are less well developed than other areas of the curriculum.

The school has the following strengths

- The school improvement board has been successful in raising the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. These elements of the school are now good.
- Pupils behave very well in their classrooms and around the school. They are polite, friendly and well mannered.
- Staff are vigilant. They notice possible signs of abuse and neglect and report their concerns quickly and appropriately to the designated safeguarding lead.
- Pupils show good attitudes to learning. They enjoy their work and do their best.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- As a matter of urgency, improve safeguarding so that all arrangements are fit for purpose by:
 - improving the knowledge, understanding and effectiveness of the school's designated safeguarding lead
 - ensuring prompt and appropriate action is taken in response to child protection concerns, whenever necessary
 - improving the quality of written records
 - ensuring appropriate advice is taken in response to e-safety concerns
 - developing a system by which governors are able to check that the designated safeguarding lead has taken timely and effective action in response to concerns.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - developing effective systems, particularly around managing safeguarding, behaviour and attendance
 - monitoring the impact of spending of the pupil premium grant more effectively
 - ensuring that governors hold leaders fully to account for all aspects of the school.
- Improve behaviour and attendance by:
 - ensuring that effective measures are put in place to support pupils whose behaviour is challenging
 - reducing the number and frequency of exclusions
 - ensuring that there are no illegal, unofficial exclusions
 - raising attendance, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, so that it is at least in line with the national average.
- Raise standards in reading and writing further by:
 - increasing the focus on the accurate use of punctuation
 - developing pupils' use and understanding of a wide range of vocabulary.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Child protection arrangements are ineffective and this puts pupils at risk. Leaders do not take prompt and decisive action to protect children when they should. In some cases, no action has been taken at all, despite potentially serious concerns being raised repeatedly by staff.
- The designated safeguarding lead does not have an adequate understanding of the role and does not give it the highest priority. Leaders are too quick to accept, at face value, the explanations they are given by parents in response to concerns about possible abuse or neglect. This means that they do not make referrals to children's social care in a timely manner or, in some instances, at all.
- Leaders do not take appropriate action in response to e-safety concerns. There is a lack of insight into the possible repercussions of seemingly low-level concerns raised by staff. Leaders do not routinely seek advice from the right agencies and, instead, rely too heavily on the opinions of colleagues.
- Child protection records are not fit for purpose. They do not show clearly what has happened in response to the concerns raised. Where records say that leaders are monitoring individual pupils, there is no evidence that this has happened. Some of the school's child protection records have been completed in pencil. Altogether, this means that the records are not of a high enough quality to be put before a court, should that ever become necessary.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is overly generous in places. It does not focus strongly enough on analysing the impact of actions taken and identifying what still needs to improve. As a result, some of the most important priorities, such as the key failings in safeguarding, have neither been identified nor addressed.
- Leadership systems are underdeveloped. For example, behaviour records are not kept in such a way that they can be analysed easily. There is no system in place to check whether there are any patterns to the incidents that occur. As a result, leaders do not take effective preventative action.
- The impact of the pupil premium grant is not checked well enough. The funding is spent in a range of ways, but leaders and governors have not checked that pupils are making better progress because of these actions. Some disadvantaged pupils do not make as much progress as they could.
- Parents' views about the school are mixed. While some parents are very happy with the school, others are equally unhappy. It is notable that just over a fifth of parents expressed concerns about leadership and management, and a similar proportion said that they would not recommend the school to others.
- The local authority issued the school with a warning notice in November 2016 because of its significant concerns about what the notice describes as, 'unacceptably low' standards in both key stage 1 and key stage 2. Leaders and governors took this warning notice seriously and have been effective in raising standards throughout the

school.

- Leaders and governors have tackled weaker teaching, where it has occurred, and there have been several changes of teaching staff since the previous inspection. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved and is now good throughout the school.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is led and managed well. Leaders are knowledgeable and bring a breadth of useful experience to the role. Leaders have developed their use of individual plans for pupils, which focus strongly on their achievements. This enables leaders to assure themselves that pupils with SEND are making good progress.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not ensured that leaders take appropriate action in response to child protection concerns. Governors check safeguarding arrangements regularly, but they have not been given the right information to enable them to fully hold leaders to account for this vital area of the school's work.
- Governors are not given information about the number of concerns received and the number of referrals made to social care. This means that they are not in a position to ask the specific questions necessary to satisfy themselves that appropriate and timely action is always taken in response to concerns.
- Following the warning notice issued in November 2016, the local authority established a school improvement board to provide strategic leadership for the school. The remit of this group was to focus closely on raising the quality of teaching and, in turn, improve outcomes for pupils.
- The school improvement board has been effective in achieving its aims. Board members have held leaders to account successfully in these areas. As a result, both the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes are now good.
- The governing body took back control from the school improvement board in November 2018. Governors are beginning to establish themselves well and are starting to hold leaders to account more stringently.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. Leaders have not ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.
- However, staff have been properly trained and they follow child protection procedures well. They are alert to potential indicators of abuse and neglect, and share their concerns with the school's designated safeguarding lead promptly. Staff record their concerns in writing, using the school's template.
- All required pre-appointment checks have been carried out on the adults that work in the school. The school's single central record meets statutory requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Roxwell is a small school with only four classes, including one for children in the early years. Since the previous inspection, all teachers have changed, bar one. The school is now fully staffed, and the quality of teaching is good throughout the school.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Classrooms are happy and harmonious places. Pupils are not afraid to make mistakes and they understand that this is part of the learning process. This helps them to achieve well.
- Pupils enjoy their learning because they are given interesting things to do. Teachers plan tasks carefully so that they both interest pupils and fit closely with what they want pupils to learn. For example, writing a 'Valentines recipe' appealed to pupils but also gave them the opportunity to practise using imperative verbs.
- Teachers routinely plan their teaching to accommodate pupils' different abilities and starting points. This means that pupils who are particularly strong in mathematics, for example, are given work that challenges them and moves them on quickly. Equally, those who find mathematics more difficult are given the support that they need.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils in terms of what they can achieve and how they should behave. As a result, classrooms are orderly and productive places. The work in pupils' exercise books is neat and tidy because pupils know that this is what their teachers expect.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together. Teaching staff monitor and assess pupils throughout lessons. They notice when pupils have not understood concepts and ideas and intervene appropriately. Their input is well-timed and helps pupils to move on and make good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Weak child protection practice means that the school's most vulnerable pupils are not safe. Swift, appropriate and decisive action has not been taken to protect children when it should have been.
- Pupils are polite, well-mannered and friendly. Pupils routinely say 'please' and 'thank you', and hold doors open to allow others to pass through. They are welcoming to visitors and are supportive of each other.
- Pupils feel safe at school. Their strong relationships with staff help them to feel secure and well supported despite the inadequacy of safeguarding. Pupils know that they can speak with any member of staff if they are worried about anything, whether at home or at school.
- Pupils know about bullying and the forms it can take. Pupils feel safe from bullying and say that it does not happen very often. They know that they should tell a member of staff if someone bullies them. Pupils know that staff will help them to sort things out

quickly if a problem does occur.

- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They enjoy their work and learning about a range of different subjects. Pupils do their best and their work is presented well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The vast majority of pupils behave extremely well. They know the school's rules and follow them closely. In their classrooms, they respond quickly to teachers' directions. As a result, the school is an orderly place where pupils are happy and learn well.
- However, the behaviour of a very small number of pupils is challenging. Leaders do not deal with this as well as they should. Leaders use fixed-period exclusions too readily, without having exhausted all other possibilities or doing everything possible to avoid such actions becoming necessary. In some instances, fixed-term exclusion appears to be a disproportionate response to pupils' actions.
- In some cases, there is evidence that pupils have been allowed to go home with their parents following, and as a result of, behavioural incidents. This amounts to an informal exclusion and is unlawful.
- Records about exclusions are not good enough. Exclusion letters to parents do not contain enough detail about the specific incidents that pupils are excluded for. Generic statements such as 'threatening behaviour' do not help parents to understand the nature and extent of the incidents their children are involved in.
- Systems around recording behavioural incidents are not well developed. Although incidents are recorded, these are not gathered systematically and analysed. This means that patterns of behaviour are neither noticed nor addressed.
- Attendance is too low. The overall attendance rate for the school is below the national average and even more so for disadvantaged pupils. Systems for dealing with low attendance are underdeveloped. Actions to improve attendance are not effective enough in doing so.

Outcomes for pupils

- The very low number of pupils in each year group means that published assessment information must be treated with caution, particularly when looking at data for specific groups of pupils. However, it is clear that outcomes were not good enough, following the previous inspection.
- The school improvement board has been very effective in holding leaders to account for pupils' outcomes. As a result, published assessment information shows a clear improving trend in reading, writing and mathematics.
- This improvement is also evident in pupils' work. Pupils' exercise books show clearly the good progress that they are making in English and mathematics, and a range of other subjects. Most pupils are working in line with age-related expectations, with some pupils working above expectations.

- Pupils with SEND make good progress from their individual starting points. Leaders recognise that, in some cases, the school's usual assessment system does not pick up on the small steps made by pupils with SEND. Leaders and teaching staff set a range of success criteria for pupils with SEND, so that progress can be checked accurately from their individual starting points.
- There are too few disadvantaged pupils in each year group for comparisons with the national benchmarks to be appropriate or useful. The school's assessment information shows that some disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than others. Some disadvantaged pupils are not making the very strong progress necessary to enable them to catch up.
- Vocabulary and punctuation are relatively weaker areas for the school. Pupils' sometimes limited knowledge of a wide range of words and their meanings has a negative impact on both their reading and their writing. Similarly, some pupils do not use punctuation well enough in their writing. In some cases, pupils do not recognise punctuation well enough or quickly enough. This alters or obscures the meaning of the texts they read.

Early years provision

Good

- The school's senior teacher supports the early years teacher well. They meet regularly and work together to improve the provision. This is effective, and the early years provision is good and improving as a result.
- The teacher and teaching assistant work together closely and form an effective team. They know the children in the class well. They check regularly what children can do and use these assessments to plan their next steps. Children's learning journals provide a useful overview of the progress they are making.
- Most children join the early years with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age, although some have lower starting points. Children make good progress during their time in the early years. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has been similar to the national average for the past two years.
- Children behave very well in the early years. They know what they are allowed to do and the things that they are not. For example, they know that they must stay in the early years part of the playground unless they have been specifically told otherwise. They do this routinely without the need for a physical barrier to prevent them straying into the main school playground.
- Children are looked after well in the early years. The same ineffective safeguarding arrangements apply in the early years as in the rest of the school. However, these have not been taken into account in reaching the early years judgement because no specific safeguarding weaknesses were found in early years. As is the case elsewhere, staff are vigilant and report potential child protection concerns to the school's designated safeguarding lead using the agreed procedures.

School details

Unique reference number	115118
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10046353

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clare Milligan
Headteacher	Vicky Kendell
Telephone number	01245 248229
Website	www.roxwellschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@roxwell.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 September 2014

Information about this school

- Roxwell is a small school with a class for early years children and three other, mixed-aged, classes.
- The headteacher joined the school in January 2015, at the beginning of the term following the previous inspection.
- The local authority issued a warning notice to the school in November 2016. This was in response to concerns about progress and attainment in both key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- A school improvement board was responsible for governance between January 2016 and November 2018.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching and learning over time. The inspector observed parts of seven lessons, some jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector looked closely at the work in pupils' exercise books. She listened to pupils read and talked to them about their work.
- The inspector looked at a range of the school's documents, including assessment information. The inspector checked the school's single central record of pre-appointment checks and documents relating to child protection.
- Meetings were held with: school leaders, governors, a representative of the local authority, a representative of the Diocese of Chelmsford and a group of pupils.
- The inspector met with a group of key stage 2 pupils and spoke with other pupils throughout the inspection.
- The inspector spoke with parents and carers as they collected their children from school. The inspector considered 22 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, 19 free-text comments, and one phone call from a parent. The inspector also took note of six responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Wendy Varney, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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