



# The Robert Drake Primary School

Inspection report

**Better  
education  
and care**

Unique Reference Number 115283  
LEA Essex

Inspection number 279563  
Inspection dates 13 – 14 October 2005  
Reporting inspector Mr J R Francis

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

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Type of School	Primary	School address	Church Road
School category	Foundation		Thundersley
Age range of pupils	4 – 11		Benfleet
			Essex SS7 3HT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01268 754124
Number on roll	318	Fax number	01268 752142
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs P Challis
Date of previous inspection	12 – 15 June 2000	Acting Headteacher	Miss C Redpath

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Age group	Published	Reference no.
4 - 11	[add date]	279563

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This larger than average primary school has 318 pupils, mostly of white European heritage. A small number of pupils come from minority ethnic families, but none are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The number of pupils moving in and out of the school is normally below average. A lower than average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and attainment on entry is average. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average.

The school received an Achievement Award in 2002, has Investors in People status, a Healthy Schools Award and a Sports Active Mark award.

Six new teachers have joined the school over the last two years and the deputy headteacher is currently the acting headteacher.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

The inspection and the school's own evaluations recognise that this is an outstandingly effective school. Many aspects of its provision are exemplary. From normally expected levels of attainment on entry, good teaching and provision in the Foundation Stage ensure a good start to children's education. Children achieve above average standards by the time they move into Year 1. Progress through Years 1 and 2 is good, and standards are above average, but achievement could be even better for those pupils who are more capable, particularly in English.

Achievement in Key Stage 2 is outstanding and pupils' attainment is exceptionally high by Year 6. The main reason for their good progress is the outstanding teaching, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Teachers ensure that work is very accurately matched to each pupil's ability and needs. The school has a good record of attaining very high standards in national tests. The effectiveness of the school can be seen in the significant improvement to standards in English since the last inspection. The continued drive to maintain the very high standards provides a good capacity for further improvement. While the computer suite is used well to teach information and communication technology (ICT) skills, ICT is not used enough in the classroom to enable pupils to see it as an everyday tool to help their learning.

The arrangements for pupils' care, guidance and support are excellent. They enable the pupils to feel safe and confident in their work and school life. Throughout their time at the school pupils are encouraged to achieve their best. By means of regular consultation the school ensures that the views of all who are connected with the school are listened to and acted upon.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The acting headteacher gives a very strong lead to the staff who, in turn, perform their duties excellently. The work of the senior management team in monitoring the school's performance is excellent. The governors have a high level of understanding about the strengths of the school and where improvements are needed. The school gives excellent value for money.

### Grade 1

#### What the school should do to improve further

- Expect more of the faster learners in Reception and Years 1 and 2;
- Make better use of ICT in the classroom to support work in other subjects.

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## Achievement and standards

Pupils achieve exceptionally well during their time in school. With very good teaching, children in the reception class make rapid progress. This continues through Years 1 and 2 and national test results at Year 2 for 2004 were above average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the proportion of pupils attaining Level 3 is not significantly above the national average. The rate of progress between Year 3 and Year 6 speeds up considerably. Test results at Year 6 were exceptionally high in mathematics and science and well above average in English. Excellent provision is made for the higher attaining pupils to enable them to achieve the challenging targets set by the school. A much higher than average proportion of pupils attained Level 5 in all subjects. This was significantly so in science where the proportion was almost twice the national average.

The most recent test results for 2005 show a drop in performance from the high levels of the previous two years. Although at the time of this report there are no national comparisons available, standards in English, mathematics and science were still well above the national averages for the previous year. When compared with their previous attainment, these pupils made exceptional progress between Year 2 and Year 6. This rate of progress is also seen in those pupils who have special educational needs.

**Grade: 1**

## Personal development and well-being

Pupils have sensible attitudes to learning and are keen to produce work of high quality. Pupils are attentive and thoroughly enjoy their lessons. They reflect thoughtfully on their achievements and strive hard to improve. Behaviour is good. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They work and play happily together and have a keen sense of justice and fair play. Pupils report that bullying is extremely rare and is dealt with effectively. Pupils know that a balanced diet and regular exercise helps them to stay healthy. They know about the misuse of drugs and that they should be wary of strangers. They appreciate that they are all valued members of the school community and they take their responsibilities seriously. Pupils' exceptionally well developed basic skills in reading, writing and numeracy provide them with a firm foundation for their future economic well-being. They are confident and have high levels of self-esteem.

**Grade: 1**

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## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teaching for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is excellent and teachers motivate pupils to attain exceptionally high standards. It is good for pupils in Reception and Years 1 and 2 but the level of challenge for the more able pupils is not always sufficiently demanding. Teachers maintain high expectations of pupils' behaviour. This is achieved through the excellent relationships that have been established. Teachers plan work, including homework, in meticulous detail. There is a strong sense of teamwork and teachers support each other well, sharing good practice and constantly striving to improve the quality of their teaching. They use praise and encouragement well and are skilled at managing any instances of unsatisfactory behaviour. Pupils are confident and know that they are effective learners. The excellent leadership and management of the school have contributed strongly to the establishment of an ethos that promotes learning of the highest quality.

The pupils' progress is monitored through outstanding assessment procedures. Teachers track the progress of individuals precisely and set accurate targets. Teachers' marking is excellent. Evaluative comments give the pupils a clear indication of what they need to do to improve.

**Grade: 1**

### Curriculum and other activities

The curriculum is exceptionally broad, balanced and creative. Regular reviews ensure that it is adapted well to meet the changing needs of the pupils in the school and national initiatives. The well-organised and sensitive curriculum for pupils with special educational needs enables these pupils to achieve as well as others in the school. Planning for all subjects is detailed and provides a clear structure for the teaching of the full range of skills. ICT is planned well to develop pupils' skills and good use is made of the technology suite. Planning for the use of this technology in the classroom is less effective and opportunities are missed to make this a more integral part of day-to-day teaching and learning.

Beyond the normal school day a wide range of popular and well-attended extra-curricular activities, including sports and creative activities, enhance pupils' learning. These encourage pupils to be active and healthy and develop an interest in music and the arts.

**Grade: 1**

## Care, guidance and support

Pupils are cared for extremely well. They know that they will be listened to if they are worried or are having problems. Pupils have clear targets that help them to understand how they can improve their work in literacy and numeracy. These are geared to each pupil's particular stage of development and are demanding. They are discussed with pupils and reviewed regularly. The targets help pupils to make excellent progress. Child protection procedures are in place and close attention is paid to ensuring pupils' health and safety. Pupils report that they feel safe and secure in school. Pupils with special educational needs are identified rapidly and very good support is provided. Teachers share information with parents about their children's progress and parents are extremely pleased with the excellent progress that their children make.

**Grade: 1**

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management are outstanding at all levels and have led to consistently high achievement over many years. The acting headteacher, with the support of an effective leadership team, is constantly striving for further improvements. The school's leadership team play a key role in monitoring the school's work, offering advice and identifying priorities for development. Checking of teaching, learning and standards is regular, rigorous and effective. The strong team approach has created a high level of confidence throughout the school. Through astute evaluation and consultation with parents, the school has an excellent understanding of its own strengths and weaknesses. Improvements are driven by a detailed school development plan and clever use of resources. The focus on English since the last inspection has raised standards significantly.

The management of special educational needs ensures that these pupils are well provided for. Effective individual education plans give good focus to their work and with the support of teaching assistants these pupils make exceptional progress. Governors provide extremely good support and direction to the work of the school. They have been very effective in supporting and assisting the school to achieve and maintain high standards over the past few years. They have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the standards pupils attain.

Good financial management enables them to keep a close watch on spending and ensure that resources are used well. The school gives excellent value for money.

**Grade: 1**

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## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	<b>1</b>
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	<b>1</b>
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	<b>2</b>
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	<b>1</b>
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	<b>Yes</b>
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	<b>Yes</b>

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	<b>1</b>
The <i>standards</i> <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	<b>1</b>
How well learners' make <i>progress</i> , taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	<b>1</b>
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	<b>1</b>

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	<b>1</b>
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	<b>1</b>
The behaviour of learners	<b>2</b>
The attendance of learners	<b>3</b>
How well learners enjoy their education	<b>1</b>
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	<b>1</b>
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	<b>1</b>
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	<b>1</b>
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	<b>1</b>

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	<b>1</b>

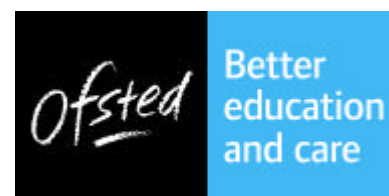
<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	<b>1</b>
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	<b>1</b>
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	<b>1</b>
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	<b>1</b>
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	<b>1</b>
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	<b>1</b>
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	<b>Yes</b>
Does this school require special measures?	<b>No</b>
Does this school require a notice to improve?	<b>No</b>

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners are educated about sexual health.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe.</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements.	<b>Yes</b>
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place.	<b>Yes</b>
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams.	<b>Yes</b>
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in Key Stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form.	<b>NA</b>
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy.	<b>NA</b>

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Robert Drake Primary School

14 October 2005

Dear Pupils,

Thank you for making us welcome in your school. We enjoyed meeting you and speaking with you about your work. We were pleased that you shared your ideas about your school with us.

**What we liked about your school:**

- Your good manners and friendly attitudes made it a delight to talk with so many of you.
- You work very hard and reach very high standards in English, mathematics and science, particularly those of you in Year 5 and 6.
- You behave well, listen carefully to your teachers during lessons and are very willing to do all that is asked of you.
- Your teachers give you interesting work.
- Everyone in the school cares for each other and the adults in the school look after you well.
- Your headteacher works very hard to see that you get the best education possible.

**What we have asked the school to do now:**

- Provide harder and more interesting work for those of you in Year 1 and 2 who are particularly good at some subjects.
- Make sure that you have the opportunity to use computers more in your classrooms and not just in the ICT suite.

Keep up your good attitudes to school and continue to enjoy what you do. We know you want to do your best and hope that our visit will help you do even better.

Yours sincerely

Mr Francis and the inspection team