

Romans Field School

Shenley Road, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK3 7AW

Inspection dates

9–10 May 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The executive headteacher and the head of school lead with determination. Together with the staff, they ensure that pupils' success and well-being are central to the school's ethos.
- Leaders and governors know the school well. They evaluate clearly the school's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders use this analysis to make well-judged plans for all pupils to reach their potential.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Staff are supported through good-quality training. Staff would benefit further from sharing the good practice of the strongest teachers.
- Leaders have carefully planned and developed an engaging curriculum that enthuses pupils and meets their social, emotional and academic needs well.
- Pupils' outcomes are good. Most pupils make good progress from their starting points. However, disadvantaged pupils do not make as much progress in writing as their peers.
- Pupils benefit from a wide variety of visits and extra-curricular activities. These enhance pupils' educational experience and help pupils to develop their social skills.
- The pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils are polite and welcoming.
- Pupils' attendance has risen so that it is above the national average for special schools. However, a few pupils do not attend school regularly enough.
- Leaders place a high priority on pupils' safety, welfare and care. The school works closely with families and external organisations to make sure that pupils are kept safe.
- Parents and carers are positive about the school. One parent commented: 'Due to the fantastic staff and management, my son has made lots of progress both emotionally and academically.'

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning by sharing the good practice across the school.
- Raise achievement in writing so that a higher proportion of pupils reach age-related expectations, particularly disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve the attendance of the few pupils who are persistently absent.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The executive headteacher, supported by the head of school and senior leaders, is passionate in her determination to ensure that all pupils achieve the best possible outcomes. Increased leadership capacity since January is ensuring that the school is on an upward trajectory.
- Senior and subject leaders' effective monitoring provides useful information about the strengths and areas for further development in teaching. Leaders use this information to plan tailored training and support to address any areas which individual staff need to refine. As a result, the quality of teaching is good and constantly improving. Leaders recognise that teaching can be further enhanced by sharing good practice.
- Additionally, leaders use their analysis of teaching and learning to devise whole-school training, working with staff to develop whole-school approaches. For example, together they have researched ways of increasing pupils' confidence when attempting more challenging tasks, thereby increasing their progress. Staff appreciate the collaborative nature of this training.
- The local authority improvement partner has contributed effectively to the development of the school since the last inspection. She agrees that the school's self-evaluation is accurate and that the information on pupils' progress is based on sound judgements.
- The broad and balanced curriculum contributes successfully to pupils' motivation and engagement. All staff embrace the themes in the curriculum and plan creative activities that hold high appeal for pupils. For example, pupils enthusiastically made shields and crowns when learning about the Saxons. Pupils gain much enjoyment from such rich and varied learning opportunities.
- Pupils' learning is further enhanced by the variety of clubs and activities that take place daily. These activities range from sports clubs to activities such as knitting and board games. Leaders make sure that pupils are able to access these by tailoring pupils' transport arrangements to allow them to participate.
- Additional funding to enable disadvantaged pupils to make good progress is used well. Learning mentors provide additional bespoke support so that these pupils are able to access the curriculum.
- Leaders use extra funding for sports effectively. Funding is used to purchase equipment, employ specialist staff and enable pupils to take part in a number of different sports, including riding bicycles.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum helps pupils to learn about British values and develop a strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. For example, pupils visit local churches, join community Remembrance Day services and support events such as World Book Day. Pupils on the school council actively work with leaders to make improvements to the school. They are currently developing a programme of interesting lunchtime activities and helping to interview new staff.

Governance of the school

- Governors provide effective support to leaders. They meet regularly with senior and middle leaders to fully scrutinise all aspects of pupils' education. Governors challenge leaders to constantly reflect on the work of the school and to produce plans to move the school forward.
- Governors visit the school regularly. This helps them to have a thorough understanding of the impact of leaders' actions and to see how the school may be further improved. Governors successfully hold leaders to account for the use of additional funding. As a result, they know that disadvantaged pupils make better progress than their peers in most areas.
- The school federated with Bradwell Village School in September 2017. The federation is in an early stage but there is a clear vision for the future. Plans for more rigorous monitoring across the federation are being developed.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the arrangements for checking the suitability of staff and volunteers are carried out thoroughly and accurately.
- Safeguarding training for all staff is comprehensive and up to date. Staff have a very clear understanding of how to keep pupils safe from harm. They know what signs to look for which may indicate that a pupil is at risk. Leaders liaise effectively with outside agencies to ensure that pupils and their families get the support they need.
- Pupils confirm that they feel safe in school. They know who to go to in school if they need help. All parents who spoke to inspectors or who completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, agreed that pupils are safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Systems to assess pupils' progress are well developed. Leaders accurately assess pupils' starting points when they join the school and use this assessment information to set challenging targets for pupils' progress. Throughout pupils' time in school, leaders ensure that assessment information is robust by moderating pupils' work, both internally and externally with other schools in the federation. As a result of these rigorous systems, leaders know that pupils make strong progress and they can target support and interventions where achievement is lower.
- Where teaching is highly effective, pupils make strong progress. Teachers use their excellent understanding of pupils' multiple and differing needs to plan a wide variety of activities that capture pupils' interests successfully. Teachers skilfully address any misconceptions pupils may have, for example through asking questions which help clarify pupils' thinking. As a result, pupils enjoy their lessons and make strong progress. Where teaching is not as strong, teachers do not adapt their lessons quickly enough to meet the pupils' changing needs.
- Positive relationships in classrooms ensure that staff manage pupils' behaviour

successfully. Teaching assistants and learning mentors help pupils to learn effectively and encourage pupils to work independently. Adults skilfully ensure that pupils refocus on activities should their attention wander. Consequently, any incidents of poor behaviour do not disrupt learning.

- In English, teachers model reading skills very effectively. They help pupils to analyse words so that they understand the meaning of the texts they read. For example, in one lesson, pupils were able to understand the word 'dishevelled' when it appeared as part of a description of the similarity between a castle's turrets and a hat.
- Teachers use a range of increasingly successful strategies to encourage pupils to write more descriptively. Some pupils' work shows that they are starting to develop these skills but this is not yet consistent throughout the school. Consequently, leaders have rightly prioritised writing as an area for further improvement.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders make sure that pupils are able to develop their social skills. For example, pupils benefit from visiting places of interest such as local farms and from joining in events with the other school in the federation, such as the recent theme day about space. For many, this may be the first time they have been able to participate in such activities.
- The specific and complex needs of pupils mean that they may have had limited chances to take part in trips prior to starting at the school. Parents are hugely appreciative of such opportunities. One commented that they use the strategies the school has developed when planning their own family outings.
- Pupils' physical and emotional well-being is cared for effectively. For example, pupils participate in a wide variety of physical activities which promote healthy lifestyles, such as football, badminton and swimming. In addition, learning mentors deliver therapeutic support which provides pupils with strategies that improve their social interaction and communication skills.
- Pupils are safe and well looked after in school. They learn how to keep themselves safe in their community and online. Pupils say that bullying is rare but that teachers deal with it effectively when it does occur. Parents and staff agree.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Extremely positive relationships between pupils and staff ensure that any challenging behaviour is resolved calmly and effectively.
- The special educational needs of some pupils mean that they can struggle to control their emotions. Staff know pupils very well. They use this knowledge to help pupils to develop strategies to manage their own behaviour. For example, pupils learn to recognise the circumstances which trigger poor behaviour and when best to leave a situation for a short time to help themselves calm down.

- Leaders, learning mentors and staff have established clear routines and procedures which ensure that any behavioural incidents are managed using a consistent approach. As a result, the number of exclusions and incidents of poor behaviour have reduced substantially.
- Leaders work hard to increase the attendance of those pupils who do not attend regularly enough. For example, they work with parents to establish regular morning routines at home so that their child is ready for the transport when it arrives. As a result, fewer pupils are persistently absent. Leaders, rightly, are focused on reducing absence further.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils join the school with knowledge and skills well below those found nationally. Detailed assessment information is used to plan individual pupils' learning and to ensure that any gaps in education are addressed. Strong teaching ensures that outcomes are good and most pupils make good progress from their different starting points.
- Nearly three quarters of all the pupils at Romans Field School make good or better progress in spoken language, reading, writing and mathematics. There is no difference between the progress of disadvantaged pupils, including children looked after, and their peers in reading, spoken language and mathematics. However, for disadvantaged pupils, achievement in writing is slightly lower than their peers. For all pupils who are not progressing rapidly, staff provide additional, appropriately personalised interventions.
- Learning mentors provide additional therapeutic interventions such as for communication, as well as academic interventions, which help pupils to develop their social skills and increase their engagement and academic progress. As a result, pupils make good progress towards the outcomes specified in their education, health and care plans.
- Leaders make sure that pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education. Together with parents, they make sure that pupils' next schools meet their needs very well. For some, this means progression on to another special school. Leaders are rightly proud that a few pupils are able to transition into mainstream schools.

School details

Unique reference number	110580
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10046309

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	49
Appropriate authority	The governing board
Chair	Amanda Farr and Paul Hussey
Executive headteacher	Dr Diane Elleman
Telephone number	01908 376 011
Website	www.romansfieldschool.org
Email address	diane.elleman@romansfieldschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	June 2015

Information about this school

- Romans Field is a small special school for pupils aged five to 11 who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Many of the pupils have additional needs, including learning difficulties and autism spectrum disorder.
- Since the previous inspection, Romans Field School now caters for pupils in key stages 1 and 2 but not key stage 3.
- In September 2017, the school federated with Bradwell Village School, a mainstream junior school. The headteacher of Romans Field is now the executive headteacher of both schools.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is higher than average. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- There are more boys than girls at the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 13 lessons, covering all key stages and year groups. All lessons were visited jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors carried out scrutiny of pupils' work across year groups and subjects.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, senior leaders, governors and representatives from the local authority. Meetings were also held with senior and middle leaders to talk about their areas of responsibility.
- Inspectors took account of seven responses recorded on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including free-text responses. An inspector also spoke to three parents at the start of the school day and the lead inspector spoke to two parents on the telephone.
- The views of staff were considered by meeting groups of staff and by taking account of the 24 responses to the online staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils in lessons and around the school. They listened to pupils read and talked to them about their reading. Inspectors also met with the school council.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including: the school's self-evaluation; the school improvement plan; analysis of the school's performance data; information relating to the attendance and behaviour of pupils; safeguarding and child protection records; the curriculum; external visitors' evaluations about the quality of teaching over time; and minutes from governing board meetings.

Inspection team

Susan Conway, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Barney Geen

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2018