

The Romsey School

Greatbridge Road, Romsey, Hampshire SO51 8ZB

Inspection dates

14–15 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
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, headteacher and senior leadership team have a compelling vision for the school, which is well understood and shared by staff, pupils and parents.
- Leaders provide teachers with exceptionally high-quality challenge and support. Teachers benefit from very effective training and coaching. At the same time, teachers are held to account rigorously for the progress that their pupils make.
- Some of the teaching in the school is inspirational. Teachers give pupils demanding work to do and ask them probing questions that require pupils to work hard and think deeply.
- Pupils achieve outcomes that are above national averages overall because teaching, particularly at key stage 4, enables pupils to consolidate and extend their skills and understanding.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, or those who need to catch up, make strong progress because leaders make highly effective use of additional funding.
- Leaders make well-informed decisions on the use of the pupil premium grant. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils make the same overall rates of progress as other pupils nationally.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well overall. They are polite to their teachers, considerate of each other and welcoming to visitors. They look after the fabric of the school, are proud of their work and wear their uniforms smartly. They are safe and know how to keep themselves safe.
- Leaders make sure that pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum that prepares pupils well for their next steps. All pupils who left the school in 2016 went on to appropriate further education or training.
- Pupils are tolerant of people, groups and cultures that are different from their own. They value diversity and are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Governors provide very strong strategic leadership. They are ambitious for the school and hold leaders to account firmly.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment, particularly in key stage 3, is not yet consistently outstanding. As a result, pupils' outcomes in English, science and languages are good.
- Leaders' actions to address the inconsistencies in teaching are robust, and the proportion of pupils achieving outstanding outcomes is increasing, particularly in English.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that all pupils achieve outstanding outcomes across the curriculum by eliminating any remaining variability in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, in particular in key stage 3.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The executive headteacher, headteacher and deputy headteachers provide highly effective leadership. They have a compelling vision for the school, which is shared by the whole school community. This vision draws on the school's motto and is rooted in the principle that learning is 'Your Gateway to Success'.
- Leaders have a sharp understanding of the school's priorities for improvement. They meticulously collect detailed information about every aspect of the school's work. They use this information, along with research evidence from wider afield, to create straightforward plans, which they drive through with determination. As a result, pupils achieve overall outcomes that are above national averages.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive. Of those parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 90% would recommend the school. One parent wrote, 'This is an excellent and very supportive school with good communication that has thoroughly met my child's learning needs.'
- Leaders make sure that teaching is effective. They have developed clear guidance to teachers, and they check that teachers follow it. Teachers benefit from regular training, which they said helps them to improve their skills, and lead practitioners provide them with high-quality coaching. Teachers carry out research into aspects of their practice, the outcomes of which they discuss and share with each other. Staff morale is high. A member of staff who responded to Ofsted's survey wrote, 'I feel really fortunate to work at this school with such a dedicated group of colleagues.'
- Leaders acknowledge that teaching quality sometimes falls below the very high standard they expect, in particular in key stage 3. When this happens, they are robust in holding teachers to account for the necessary improvements. Consequently, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good overall, and, because of the actions leaders are taking, it is improving rapidly towards outstanding.
- The school has not been immune to difficulties in the recruitment of teachers, particularly in science. However, leaders are taking effective action to improve teacher recruitment, for example, by taking a greater role in training new teachers who then go on to take up posts as newly qualified teachers.
- Leaders at all levels in the school have extremely high expectations, and believe passionately that all pupils can and should succeed. Leaders make rigorous checks on how well pupils across the school are doing. Leaders waste no time in putting in place effective interventions to enable any pupil who has fallen behind to catch up and to stretch the most able. As a result, outcomes are good overall and improving.
- Leaders are painstaking in ensuring that the pupil premium grant has a direct impact on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders use detailed assessment information to provide tailored support for these pupils. They are rigorous in checking the impact of this support.
- Leaders have been successful in securing exceptionally strong outcomes for pupils with low prior attainment. For example, leaders make skilful use of the Year 7 literacy and

numeracy premium to enable those pupils who enter the school with low scores in English or mathematics to catch up swiftly with their peers.

- Leaders also make highly effective use of additional funding they receive to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are highly complimentary about the school's work in this area. For example, a parent who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, wrote: 'The special educational needs team is excellent. They fully understand the needs of my son and provide great help and support to ensure he reaches his full potential.'
- Pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum. The proportion of pupils entered for the English Baccalaureate is similar to that found nationally. Vocational qualifications are offered to a small number of pupils for whom leaders rightly believe that these courses are appropriate. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of clubs, trips and visits, some of which are run by older pupils. Pupils greatly value these opportunities to extend their skills and talents and to try new activities.
- Leaders make very strong provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development, both through the curriculum and through extra-curricular activities. For example, pupils researched and took part in a moving tribute to local residents who had fought in the First World War. In religious education, assemblies and form time, pupils discuss and learn to respect other religions, cultures and ways of life. Pupils also learn about democracy and the rule of law, including by participating in 'mock' European and general elections. Leaders take seriously their responsibilities under the 2010 Equalities Act. As a result, the school is a caring, tolerant community in which pupils are prepared exceptionally well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders are keenly aware that, while overall outcomes were above national averages in 2016, progress in some subjects, notably English, science and languages, were in line with national averages. Leaders' analysis of these outcomes was searching and honest. They rightly identified that variability in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment led to outcomes in some subjects that were less than outstanding. They are taking highly effective action this year to eliminate any remaining variability in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, to help to ensure that outcomes across the curriculum and for all pupils are outstanding.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. Governors are highly ambitious for the school. They have a deep and detailed knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They ask consistently challenging questions of leaders to ensure that any weaknesses are addressed swiftly. Governors do not take at face value what leaders tell them. They visit the school regularly to gather first-hand evidence and they take account of external consultants' reports on the impact of leaders' actions.
- They carry out all their statutory duties diligently. A safeguarding governor makes rigorous and regular checks on the school's vetting procedures for staff and volunteers, and checks that measures in place to keep children safe are implemented in full.
- Governors exercise wise financial stewardship of the school. They know what additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs and/or

disabilities and those who need to catch up is spent on. They hold leaders to account rigorously for the impact of this funding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders make outstanding provision to protect vulnerable pupils. For example, a group was set up to cater for the needs of pupils suffering from anxiety. All staff recognise and welcome their role in ensuring pupils' welfare and well-being.
- Leaders make sure that appropriate checks are carried out on the suitability of all who work or volunteer in the school. All staff have received up-to-date training on safeguarding, including on radicalisation, child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation. Staff are confident that they know what to do should they have any concerns about a pupil's welfare.
- Leaders responsible for safeguarding are appropriately trained. They follow up all and any concerns that staff refer to them. Leaders willingly seek advice from social services and other agencies. There are robust procedures in place for making and storing confidential records. Having made a child protection referral, leaders are tenacious in ensuring that pupils who may be at risk of harm get the support they need.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The majority of teachers have very high expectations of their pupils. They set demanding work, which requires pupils to think deeply and work problems out for themselves. In lessons, well-established routines mean that little learning time is lost as pupils change from one activity to another. Teachers build positive relationships with their pupils. In turn, pupils like and respect their teachers and know that only their best work will do.
- Most teachers use their strong subject knowledge to ask questions that probe pupils' thinking and lead them to a deeper understanding of topics studied. Teachers also plan interesting activities that help pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. For example, in science, a well-designed experiment enabled pupils to discover for themselves the differences between parallel and series circuits.
- Pupils, particularly those in key stage 4, make effective use of the verbal and written feedback that their teachers give them to correct misconceptions and improve their work. For example, in art and drama, teachers' precise advice enables pupils to achieve outcomes that exceed expectations.
- Pupils are, for the most part, engrossed in their work. In most classrooms, there is a studious atmosphere. The majority of pupils relish the opportunity to develop their 'habits of mind' and willingly take on new learning challenges. Pupils talk about their learning confidently, and most pupils are able to talk about the progress they have made this year. Pupils are also willing to challenge one another to explain their thinking, using phrases such as, 'How do you know that?' when working together on a task.

- Teaching assistants are deployed well. They give tailored support to pupils, but they are careful not simply to give pupils the answers. Instead, they use clear explanations and well-chosen questions to draw out pupils' answers.
- Homework is set regularly. Almost 90% of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, believe that their children receive appropriate homework for their age.
- Leaders make sure that parents have opportunities to find out how well their children are doing in written reports and face-to-face meetings. Almost 90% of parents believe that they receive valuable information about their children's progress, while 90% said that their children are making good progress.
- Teaching over time is particularly strong in mathematics, history, religious education, art and drama. In these subject areas, pupils have a thirst for learning. They take pride in their work, and they are motivated to do their best because teaching meets their individual needs. In history, pupils use their analytical skills to evaluate historical sources, which they write about at length. Pupils use a wide vocabulary and check their work to ensure that grammar, spelling and punctuation are accurate. In mathematics, teachers make sure that pupils have mastered the basics before moving on.
- Where teaching over time is less effective, teachers' planning does not take sufficient account of pupils' needs. This is particularly the case in key stage 3 for pupils with average prior attainment. As a result, these pupils do not make the strong progress of which they are capable. Leaders are acutely aware of this. They are taking highly effective action to ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding across the curriculum.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- In all but a few cases, pupils have exemplary attitudes to their learning. Pupils are successful learners because teachers consistently reinforce the 'seven habits of mind' that underpin the school's work on improving learning and developing character.
- Pupils have many opportunities to speak and perform in front of classmates, in assemblies and to wider audiences. Pupils value the annual drama productions, while members of the choir are looking forward to singing in France this summer. Through the enterprise curriculum, which includes events such as a 'Dragon's Den', pupils gain experience of marketing their products. As a result of these and other similar experiences, pupils grow into mature and self-confident young adults during their time at the school.
- Pupils care deeply about other people and the world around them. For example, pupils readily get involved in charity and fundraising, such as the annual Year 11 trip to Kenya, where they support children in local schools.
- Pupils are tolerant of people and cultures that are different from their own. The school helps them to learn about and celebrate diversity. They know about and firmly reject

all forms of bullying, including that of a racist and homophobic nature. Pupils said that bullying is rare and, if it happens, anti-bullying ambassadors and teachers deal with it effectively.

- Pupils seize the opportunities that the school gives them to develop their leadership potential. For example, student leaders have the opportunity to discuss the school's strategic plan with leaders.
- Pupils said that they feel safe in school. Leaders make excellent provision for teaching about risks that pupils may encounter in school, beyond the school gates and online. Pupils understand the importance of knowing how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision also benefit from excellent personal development opportunities, for example, taking part in regular trips and visits linked to their curriculum.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are polite and courteous to one another, to their teachers and to visitors. They are proud of their school, are careful not to drop litter and wear their uniforms smartly.
- Pupils listen attentively in class and contribute to discussions fully when asked to. They move around the building and grounds sensibly. At break and lunchtimes, pupils from all year groups mix together well.
- Very few pupils are excluded for periods of time for poor behaviour. The school runs an inclusion unit in school where pupils who have difficulty managing their behaviour are given very strong support.
- Pupils understand the importance of coming to school every day and overall rates of attendance are similar to those found nationally. Leaders are aware that a small number of pupils do not attend regularly enough. Leaders work closely with these pupils and their families, putting in place individual plans for each pupil. As a result of this carefully tailored and sensitive approach, many pupils who were frequently absent now attend regularly.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Published outcomes for 2016 show that pupils' progress and attainment overall were above national averages. In mathematics, humanities and a range of other subjects, pupils' outcomes were also above those achieved by their peers nationally. Outcomes in English, science and modern foreign languages were lower, though they were similar to those achieved by pupils nationally.
- Pupils with low and average prior attainment achieved particularly strong outcomes in most areas of the curriculum. The most able pupils made similar rates of progress to other pupils nationally.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including most-able disadvantaged pupils, made progress at least in line with other pupils nationally overall. In mathematics, disadvantaged pupils achieved higher rates of progress than other non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

However, the progress of disadvantaged pupils with average prior attainment in English and high prior attainment in science was well below national averages.

- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was above that found nationally overall. Rates of progress of these pupils were lower in English, mathematics, humanities and science because they were similar to national averages.
- Current pupils in key stage 4 make very rapid progress in mathematics and in a range of subjects, including art and drama. The school's own assessment information suggests that pupils are making stronger progress this year in English than last year. The majority of most-able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, also make strong progress from their starting points. These pupils are performing well because their teachers have high expectations of them. Teachers give pupils demanding work to do and give them precise feedback on how to improve further. As a result, pupils are motivated to work hard and know what they need to do to meet their targets.
- Disadvantaged pupils, and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make consistently good progress from their starting points in most subjects in key stage 4. Leaders make effective use of the pupil premium grant to ensure that any barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils are removed.
- Pupils make good progress overall in science at key stage 4. However, teachers' expectations of their pupils are not as consistently high as they are in mathematics. Consequently, not all pupils are making the progress of which they are capable in science.
- Pupils in key stage 3, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make progress at rates that are similar to other pupils. This is particularly the case for the most able and for pupils with low prior attainment. The progress of pupils in key stage 3 with average prior attainment is more variable. This is because teachers' expectations of these pupils are not as consistently high as they are for the most able pupils and those with low prior attainment.
- Pupils who need to catch up in Year 7 are identified in good time. Leaders make highly effective use of additional funding to provide carefully tailored support to those pupils whose reading, writing and mathematics scores at key stage 2 were low. As a result, these pupils catch up quickly with their peers in English and mathematics.
- The school promotes reading well. The library is welcoming and well stocked. Pupils have opportunities to read for pleasure in form time and in English lessons. They enjoy reading, and they read aloud with fluency and expression. More hesitant readers make good use of their phonics knowledge to sound out unfamiliar words. Leaders have put in place a range of interventions to ensure that all pupils have the reading skills that they need to succeed in school and beyond.
- Pupils who attend the school's specialist resource base make very good progress from their starting points, particularly in mathematics. This is because the work of teachers and teaching assistants is effective in meeting the individual needs of these pupils.

- The very few pupils who attend alternative provision to support them with behaviour and attendance make good progress in their learning and in the development of their social skills.
- Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their next steps in education. Pupils' overall attainment and progress are above national averages, and leaders ensure that all pupils go on to study appropriate courses in further education or training.
- Leaders are aware that pupils' progress is not yet outstanding in all areas of the curriculum. Their analysis of which groups of pupils in which subjects need to make faster progress is accurate. In addition, leaders are taking effective action to accelerate pupils' progress in those areas of the curriculum where it has been slower.

School details

Unique reference number	137239
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10024800

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	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1124
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Judith Houghton
Executive Headteacher	Jonathan de Sausmarez
Headteacher	Colm McKavanagh
Telephone number	01794 512334
Website	http://www.romsey.hants.sch.uk
Email address	admin@romsey.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 January 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The Romsey School is a larger-than-average secondary school.
- The school converted to academy status in 2011.
- Approximately 75% of pupils are of White British heritage, while the remaining 25% of pupils have a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is lower than the national average.
- The school runs a specialist resource base for pupils who have an education, health and care plan or statement for autistic spectrum disorder.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision, for all or part of their week, with a range of providers. These include Andover Education Centre and The Compass School.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 65 lessons, 15 of which were visited with a member of the senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders to discuss various aspects of the school's work.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of governors and three members of the governing body.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents by analysing 179 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 54 free-text responses.
- Inspectors also took into account the views of staff by analysing 93 responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about the school and evaluated 36 responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- The lead inspector spoke by telephone to the headteacher of Andover Education Centre, one of the alternative providers used by the school.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, assessment information, the school's strategic plan and minutes of the governing body.
- A range of pupils' work was looked at.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding procedures at the school.

Inspection team

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Jo McSherrie	Ofsted Inspector
Colin Lankester	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Foster	Ofsted Inspector
Charlotte Wilson	Ofsted Inspector
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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.

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