

# Rackheath Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120843
<b>Local Authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	358855
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 February 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Julie Winyard HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	148
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Emma Whymark
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jacqueline Sinkins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 November 2009
<b>School address</b>	Willoughby Way Rackheath, Norwich NR13 6SL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01603 720098
<b>Fax number</b>	01603 722891
<b>Email address</b>	office@rackheath.norfolk.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Seven lessons were observed and six teachers were seen. Meetings were held with parents and carers, groups of pupils, members of the governing body, staff and representatives from the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school development plan, tracking data, teachers' lesson plans, pupils' work and 94 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The current attainment and progress of all pupils in writing.
- The degree to which teaching is consistently good through the school.
- How effectively leaders and managers are driving improvement, especially in addressing the issues from the previous inspection.

## Information about the school

Rackheath is smaller than the average primary school. Fewer pupils than average are known to be eligible for free school meals. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic groups or speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, but a higher than average proportion have a statement of special educational needs.

An after-school club, 'Xtra Time' is run on site and managed by the governing body. This was included in the inspection. The school has the Active Mark award and National Healthy Schools Status.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Rackheath is now a satisfactory and rapidly improving school with many good features. It has made good progress with all the issues identified at the previous inspection. Both the headteacher and the governing body describe this as 'a wake up call' and have worked extremely hard, with good support from the local authority, to make the required improvements. They have a good awareness of its strengths and weaknesses, and a good capacity for sustained further improvements.

Leadership at all levels has improved significantly. The headteacher provides good leadership and is supported by good middle leaders who have a clear understanding of how to improve pupils' attainment and progress in their subjects. The governing body has radically changed its structure and is fully committed to supporting the school while maintaining a good level of challenge to the headteacher regarding the quality of education the school offers. It has also ensured that all safeguarding policies and procedures meet requirements and are robust. The quality of teaching is now good in most lessons and because of this, pupils' attainment has improved. Pupils' attainment in mathematics and reading at the end of Year 6 in 2010 was significantly above national averages, reflecting good progress in these subject areas. However, pupils underachieved in writing. Teachers' assessment of learning has improved and now informs the activities they plan for all ability groups within their classes. However, there is no consistent approach to verbal or written feedback to show pupils how to improve their writing. The quality of handwriting is also variable across the school; sometimes letters are badly formed and written work is untidy. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress because of focused support during lessons from well-briefed teaching assistants, and because of the good range of additional support programmes they receive.

The very large majority of parents and carers are pleased with the education their children receive. They are particularly pleased that teaching has improved and like the new text messaging service which has sharpened communication between school and home. However, a very small minority are still concerned about a range of issues, and the school is aware that it has not yet done enough to allay their concerns and involve all parents and carers in their children's learning.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle, and say they feel safe at school and that there is no bullying. Behaviour is good in lessons because pupils enjoy the activities they are given, which are well matched to their learning needs. They also behave well around the school, at break times and at the 'Xtra Time' club. Pupils are polite and respectful, and work collaboratively with each other in lessons as well as at break

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times. Through class and school councils, pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community. Pupils really enjoy their lessons and work hard. They like coming to school because it is orderly and interesting and they feel valued. Because of this attendance is above average.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve the rate of progress in writing by:
  - ensuring all verbal and written feedback to pupils about their work is precise and sharply focused, so that they know exactly what to do next to improve and are given time in lessons to do this.
- Improve handwriting throughout the school by:
  - ensuring key skills are carefully taught and monitored so that pupils are able to communicate clearly and neatly.
- Improve partnerships with parents and carers by:
  - increasing their involvement in their children's education.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Pupils join the school with skills and understanding that are below the levels expected nationally, and make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Their progress across Key Stages 1 and 2 reflects a legacy of previous underachievement owing to changes in staff and less effective teaching. However, the work seen during the inspection in lessons and pupils' books showed that the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding are rapidly closing due to good teaching, and the quality of learning observed was good for all groups of pupils. Current and accurate teacher assessment indicates that pupils are on track to make even better progress than last year in English and mathematics.

Pupils make healthy food choices at lunchtimes and enjoy the quiet and sociable atmosphere in the dining hall. Pupils have plenty of time to eat their food and enjoy conversation with their friends. They enjoy physical activity and there is a good take-up of after-school sports clubs. Pupils make a good contribution to the school through the suggestion boxes opened and discussed at school council meetings. They are able to select the charities they support and thus make a contribution to the wider community. Pupils say that behaviour 'is really good in this school' and feel confident to share any concerns they have because 'Teachers are very trustworthy. They sort things out.' They feel well prepared to move on to high school and are pleased that their teachers have a good knowledge of all the secondary schools in the area.

There are good opportunities for pupils to reflect in assembly and in lessons, and this contributes to their good spiritual development. For example, in a literacy lesson pupils were amazed by the interesting words their classmates had written to describe their hungry dragon.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers' planning is detailed and shows exactly what learning is expected from different ability groups within the class. For example, in one mixed-age class there were four different groups working at different activities which were carefully designed to offer appropriate challenge so that they all made good progress in their learning. Teachers carefully assess pupils' understanding at the end of each lesson so that the next lesson builds on what pupils have already learnt. The new mathematics targets, 'mathematics mountain', or 'molehill' as it is in one class, have made very clear the small steps pupils need to take to develop their understanding of difficult mathematics skills and concepts. It is because of these and the good teaching that pupils have made such good progress in mathematics. Reading is taught well and while teachers may not read individually with every pupil every week, they do spend quality time with each group ensuring pupils develop reading skills and understand what they are reading about.

The curriculum is now good. Pupils are interested in what they are learning about; for example in the current topic about the 50s, 60s and 70s in Key Stage 2. They are very keen to talk about what they have learnt about fashion and sport and all are looking forward to the next day when they could come to school wearing clothes in the style of the period they are studying. The curriculum is enhanced and enriched by a range of visits that relate to the themes being studied. Visitors are also used very effectively to give pupils a real understanding of important issues, for example how to preserve the

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environment and how building an eco-village could help. Art is a particular strength, evidenced by the attractive range of work around the school inspired by different artists.

Pupils receive good care, guidance and support from all staff. The school ensures that those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable receive the help they need from external agencies. They are swift to identify barriers to learning and to contact the appropriate agency, thus enabling pupils to continue to thrive. The 'Xtra Time' club is well run, and the pupils who attend play happily together and are effectively supervised. Good systems ensure that pupils come into school with confidence and are confident to move on to their next school. The school has been successful in raising attendance above the local authority and national average. The governing body has strict guidelines on holidays taken during school time which are effectively implemented.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Staff at all levels display high expectations for what pupils can achieve. The headteacher has implemented a very robust system for tracking pupils' progress through the school, and this is being used effectively by subject leaders and teachers to rapidly identify any pupils who are not making sufficient progress. Termly pupil progress meetings have provided a good opportunity to ensure that the correct support programmes are put in place so that no pupil falls behind. These good systems ensure that there are no discernible differences in achievement between different groups of pupils and there is no discrimination of any kind at the school. Members of the governing body make regular and carefully planned visits to the school. They observe lessons and give useful feedback that informs the school's effective improvement plan, which also includes contributions from all staff. They also contribute well to ensuring the school is a safe environment and have an associate governor, expert in this aspect, to carry out regular health and safety inspections. The school knows itself well and self-evaluation is accurate although a little cautious about the current quality of teaching. There are good partnerships with local secondary schools and early years providers. For example, the Year 6 teacher regularly visits every secondary school in the area and when a pupil with particular needs lacks confidence in attending an open day, will accompany the pupil to help them settle in. The school has a good understanding of its own community, but recognises that it does not yet give pupils enough opportunities to learn about and understand areas of the United Kingdom that are more diverse. It is appropriately planning to make links with a community in a different part of the world.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with good attitudes to learning and good physical development. However, their skills in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development are below those expected for their age. Because of the good curriculum and good teaching, they make good progress across all the areas of learning. During the inspection the children were learning about the seasons and were able to identify characteristics of each season.

The spacious outdoor area is used very well throughout the day and in all weathers. Children love the opportunity to be in the fresh air and to explore the excellent range of equipment and activities. For example, one group were making very realistic birds' nests and one girl was determined to attract a bird into her nest so that it could lay its eggs safely! The classroom and outside area are very safe and children move freely and confidently between one and the other. Teaching assistants and parent helpers make a good contribution to children's learning through the good questions they ask, enabling the children think things out for themselves. The teacher plans exciting and innovative projects which the children thoroughly enjoy. These are kept as flexible as possible so that changes can be made to meet the children's particular interests and aptitudes. The children have a good understanding of being healthy and enjoy their fruit snack routine every day. Basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics are taught systematically every morning. Children are able to use and apply these skills when they choose different activities outside or in the classroom. For example, one boy said whilst constructing a shelter outside, 'We need to measure this now,' and proceeded to use a stick to carefully measure the length and breadth of his construction. Children play and work together very well and behaviour is good. They collaborate well in all tasks and no child is left out.



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The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. The teacher accurately assesses children's learning and carefully plans the next steps to move their learning forward. The teaching assistant and parent helpers are carefully briefed about the purpose of activities so that they know how and when to intervene in a learning activity. There are good links between the school and early years settings because the Early Years Foundation Stage teacher visits each of these and meets the children before they come into school. Good records are kept of children's progress and learning journeys are being developed so that parents and carers will be able to see how their children are progressing. Parents and carers are well informed about how their children learn in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the start-of-year information meeting is well attended.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

There was a high return of questionnaires from parents and carers, and the large majority are happy with the quality of education at the school.

A very small minority of parents raised concerns about the following issues: bullying, the amount of homework, provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, not receiving enough information about their children's progress, lunchtimes being rushed, not being able to approach the headteacher with concerns, and lack of progress since the previous inspection.

The inspection team found that most of these concerns were unfounded, and that the school has made good progress since the previous inspection on all the issues for improvement. There is good provision for pupils with special needs and/or disabilities and there is no evidence of bullying in the school. Lunchtimes are relaxed and pleasant social eating times. Parents and carers on the parents' forum informed the team that parents' evenings are informative and detailed, and that they get good information about how their children are getting on and what they need to work on to improve. The school has clear guidelines about how much homework will be given in each year group and how long children should be expected to spend on this. However, the guidance does not include information about special projects. The members of the parents' forum and the parent teacher association find that they can approach the headteacher, but some parents are less confident about this. Because of these concerns, the school has a key issue for improvement on developing better partnerships with parents.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rackheath Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 94 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 148 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	43	46	38	40	3	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	46	49	36	38	1	1	2	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	24	26	52	55	7	7	3	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	28	48	51	6	6	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	26	28	53	56	2	2	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	28	46	49	9	10	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	28	55	59	4	4	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	21	22	47	50	7	7	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	26	51	54	5	5	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	26	42	45	9	10	7	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	20	47	50	14	15	4	4
The school is led and managed effectively	23	24	43	46	9	10	7	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	32	34	45	52	3	3	4	4

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



18 February 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Rackheath Primary School, Norwich, NR13 6SL**

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school and for giving your time to come and talk to us. My colleague was very impressed with how professional the Year 6 were who showed him around the school. I enjoyed observing you at work in class and was impressed with how hard you work and with your good behaviour. Keep up the good work!

We found that your school has made good improvements since the last inspection. Your headteacher is a good leader and the staff work very well as a team. They are all determined to help you to achieve your best. Teachers are planning more carefully and lessons are more interesting. They are making sure the work you are given has just the right amount of challenge so that it is not too easy or too difficult for you. We liked the maths mountain and molehill and think this approach could help you in other subjects as well.

Your school is now satisfactory, and we have asked the headteacher and governing body to make some further improvements to help you learn even better.

Improve your learning and progress in writing by making sure all the feedback you get about your writing is really clear, so that you know exactly what to do next to improve your work and you are given time in lessons to do this.

Improve your handwriting by more carefully teaching you the key skills and making sure you are able to write neatly so that everyone can read what you have written.

Improve the way the school works with your parents and carers by getting them more involved in your education.

Yours sincerely

Julie Winyard

Her Majesty's Inspector

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