

# East Ruston Area Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121016
<b>Local Authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	358902
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Cheryl Thompson

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

The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	31
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gail Adams
<b>Headteacher</b>	Penny Steward
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 February 2008
<b>School address</b>	School Road East Ruston, Norwich NR12 9JD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01692 650225
<b>Fax number</b>	01692 650225
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<b>Age group</b>	4–7
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 March 2011
<b>Inspection number</b>	358902

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<b>Registered Childcare provision</b>	East Ruston Pre-school
<b>Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision</b>	25
<b>Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision</b>	Not previously inspected

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. Eight lessons were observed both in classes and in the environmental area involving all teachers and teaching assistants. Meetings were held with parents, pupils, staff and governors. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at the school's progress tracking system, policies, safeguarding documentation and improvement plans and analysed 29 parental and 29 pupil questionnaires.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. She looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Why is the school so successful in helping pupils, especially boys, do so well in writing?
- How does the school evaluate its initiatives?
- Why do children do so well in Reception, especially in early numeracy skills?

## Information about the school

This is a much smaller than average primary school serving East Ruston and nearby villages, an area with some social disadvantage. There are two classes. The Early Years Foundation Stage children are taught in the Reception class and Years 1 and 2 are taught in the Key Stage 1 class. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average although the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is much higher than average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage with a small number of Travellers. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average.

The school holds the Eco schools Green Flag award, Woodland Trust Green Tree award, ArtsMark Silver award and Healthy Schools and ActiveMark awards.

Since the last inspection the school has started a pre-school and breakfast club which run each school morning as well as a 'mums and toddlers group' fortnightly. The pre-school provision was inspected in February 2010 and the report can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

**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?**

**1**

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

**1**

## Main findings

This is an outstanding school. The headteacher's, staff's and governing body's uncompromising vision of a school at the heart of its community where all are encouraged and helped to 'do the best you can' is met exceptionally well. Management is outstanding, consequently staff morale is high and all contribute to the ambitious aims for the school's future. Parents have many good things to say about the school such as, 'the education and confidence my child has gained while here is second to none'. Pupils, staff, governors and parents are rightly proud of their school. The outstanding capacity to sustain and build on what the school has already achieved is based on very rigorous monitoring and self-evaluation coupled with extremely high aspirations for providing a high-class education for each individual.

The list of the school's strengths is long and there are no real weaknesses.

From their starting points, pupils' achievement is outstanding. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is always above average and, in some years, high.

Behaviour is good. When working and playing outside, pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Their awareness of keeping themselves and others safe is impressive. Pupils are kind, considerate and supportive, proud of their achievements and those of their many friends.

At the heart of the school's success is its outstanding, innovative curriculum. While ensuring pupils acquire skills in basic subjects such as English and mathematics at an excellent rate, pupils also learn and practise key life skills such as thinking round problems, working together to plan, and perseverance. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their future.

Pupils' enjoyment of school is outstanding. They say they love school and demonstrate this with their high attendance rate. They say that 'everyone is friendly and helpful', 'teachers are nice' and 'outside things are best'. Pupils contribute a great deal to the caring ethos of the school. They are proud to take on the responsibilities of being 'special person' of the day, especially collecting the eggs and taking them to the kitchen for the cook to use. All pupils are members of the school council which meets very regularly.

Teaching is outstanding because it is based on precise assessment of individuals, not only of their academic ability but of how they learn best and what support they will need. Lessons are fun, interesting and packed with activity, which is particularly beneficial to boys. Teachers deploy teaching assistants, who are highly proficient, most effectively to make sure that the work is challenging for each pupil.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet. They take part keenly in the school's good range of sporting activities.

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Children in Reception make outstanding progress, particularly in their independence and enthusiasm for learning.

Parents are impressed with the exceptional care, guidance and support for their children. Pupils are taught and supported as individuals and their work is highly personalised.

There is one area where staff and governors recognise that further improvements can be made.

Pupils' exuberance for learning and taking part in exciting activities in the outdoor environment is managed exceptionally well. When pupils return to the classroom, they do not always settle quickly to their tasks.

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

- Raise standards of behaviour even further by:
  - all staff setting consistent, high expectations for behaviour at the start of indoor lessons
  - encouraging pupils to take more responsibility for their own behaviour in classroom lessons.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**1**

Pupils of all abilities make outstanding progress from the time they start at East Ruston, whether they arrive in Reception or later in their school careers. Achievement for all is outstanding. A significant strength is the way pupils develop very positive attitudes towards learning and personal qualities such as how to work together and respect for others' opinions.

On entry to Reception, attainment varies widely from year to year but is broadly in line with that typical of the age group. There are small groups of children whose attainment is similar to that typically found and small groups who have complex difficulties, especially with communication. Importantly, all groups make outstanding progress from their starting points. Throughout the school, all pupils read at least once daily to an adult, consequently pupils make rapid progress.

Attainment in Year 2 is currently above average, particularly so in writing. There are two main reasons for pupils' high standards in writing. First, basic skills such as pencil grip, correct letter formation and early spelling skills are taught very well and practised daily from the time children start in Reception. Second, pupils have highly relevant topics to write about. For example, in an afternoon 'group' session, Years 1 and 2 looked carefully for mini-beasts and went pond-dipping. In their following literacy session, they used non-fiction books and other resources to categorise the creatures and then itemised similarities and differences.

Enthusiasm and perseverance are key features of pupils' learning, together with their ability to apply skills learned in many subjects to practical situations. For example, to make a hotel for solitary bees, Reception and Year 1 pupils searched for appropriate stems, graded the hole size, then measured and cut the stems to fit the hotel box.

Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress like their peers. Staff are very knowledgeable and quickly spot pupils' difficulties and put

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excellent strategies in place to help individuals. Traveller pupils make good progress when they are in school. The school works very effectively with local authority support to provide appropriate work for them to undertake when they are travelling. Excellent partnerships between school, parents and outside agencies such as speech therapists mean that all work together to ensure progress. As one parent said, 'I couldn't ask for more, my child has made brilliant progress since he has been here'. The more-able, or pupils who are talented or gifted in a particular area, make excellent progress because they have many opportunities to set themselves challenges and have expert help from staff who encourage them to extend their abilities further.

Pupils' excellent understanding of how to stay healthy is reflected in the school's Healthy School Status, and the content of their packed lunch boxes! They can discuss in detail that 'you can have a bit of everything but not too much of anything'. Pupils also have a very good understanding of re-cycling and have won an Eco award. They have an impressive understanding of wider issues such as conservation of habitats and battery farming for eggs compared to the way the school chickens are kept.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

Outstanding teaching in both classes is underpinned by excellent relationships, excellent deployment of highly proficient teaching assistants and the exceptionally favourable adult to pupil ratio of at least one adult to six pupils. One parent summed up the comments of

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many, 'my child is blossoming in this environment'. Each pupil is known exceptionally well so that any unhappiness or difficulty is noted very quickly and something done.

Lessons are planned meticulously to ensure pupils succeed, consolidate learning and build self-confidence. A key strength is the strong teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants. This teamwork is of immense benefit to all but particularly for pupils needing extra help with their learning and ensures they make rapid progress. In classroom teaching, the pace is brisk with a good level of challenge for pupils of all abilities. The balance between lesson introductions and time for work in small groups is excellent. Consequently, pupils of all abilities have time and support to complete good amounts of work. Excellent organisation in both classes for teaching basic literacy and numeracy skills, means that pupils have expert teaching in small groups and lots of opportunities to practise newly-learned skills.

Teaching outside is outstanding. All pupils work in the environmental area for three afternoons per week. Supervision is excellent but not intrusive. All staff strongly encourage independent thinking and 'having a go'. They allow pupils to try out ideas and encourage perseverance when things fail to go to plan, for example when making a trap for large monsters, knots and camouflage were challenges to overcome! A strong feature is the quality of provision for playtimes. The Reception class teacher organises playground equipment, sheds, water play and role play areas for everyone to use. Consequently, pupils of all ages are very involved in their play, develop leadership skills and mix very well.

Marking is exemplary. Pupils know exactly what they can do to improve their work. Their targets for improvement are shared with parents so that they can support their child at home. The outstanding curriculum in both classes is organised to meet pupils' needs and interests extremely well. Meaningful links are made between subjects to make lessons both in and out of the classroom relevant and exciting. As one parent wrote, 'I'm sure great memories of this school will stay with my child for ever'.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher provides inspirational leadership to provide the best possible education tailored to individual needs. She has encouraged and enabled an excellent team where the talents of individual teachers and teaching assistants are used to advantage. There is a very strong commitment to making sure teachers and teaching assistants have good opportunities to extend their skills and knowledge. Consequently, they are confident and always seeking to improve their practice.



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Teachers provide excellent role models through their own teaching, so they are well equipped to monitor teaching throughout the school and support each other and teaching assistants if improvement or help is needed. A key strength of the headteacher and senior teacher is their efficient evaluation of data and their monitoring of the views of pupils, parents, carers and staff. Consequently they have a very clear picture of where improvements are needed and look for creative ways in which they can do this. Recent initiatives such as the pre-school, breakfast club and employing a school cook are very successful. The take-up for the provision continues to grow as does the number of pupils opting for the high quality school dinners. The half-termly community lunches are attended by around 50 people, very much appreciated and a sociable way to encourage members of the community to become involved with the school.

New initiatives are exceptionally well researched in order to promote optimum progress in pupils' academic and personal growth as well as community use. As well as in their very positive involvement in their child's progress in reading, it is in such initiatives as developing the wild flower meadow, orchard and outdoor classroom that the school's excellent links with parents and carers are also evident. High numbers of parents and carers turn up for work parties.

The governing body shares the headteacher's high aspirations for the school. They are very aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. Risk assessments are well-developed and safeguarding systems adopt recommended good practice. Governors evaluate in depth, the impact of the school's new initiatives in terms of parent and pupil satisfaction but have yet to develop their skills in analysing the data provided about the school. Community cohesion is good, very strong within the school and locally, with an understanding that further national and global links need developing.

Equal opportunities are promoted exceptionally well through very close monitoring of the progress of different groups and excellent support where needed.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

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## Early Years Foundation Stage

The small Reception class has 11 children on roll. The excellent links between the class teacher and the pre-school children and their parents and carers ensure a very smooth start to full-time schooling. The class environment is very familiar to the children starting school so they settle quickly and happily into school routines.

Relationships are excellent. Each child is known very well and looked after with great care and attention. Children feel safe. Excellent assessment pinpoints what each child knows and needs to learn next. Consequently, excellent planning identifies activities for each child to undertake to further their knowledge and understanding.

Children make excellent progress across all the areas of learning. They have developed very positive attitudes to learning and behave exceptionally well. In and out of the classroom, children work very well independently and in groups, happily initiating conversations with adults about what they are doing. These qualities, together with the excellent progress they make in learning early literacy and numeracy skills prepare them well for their start in Year 1. Children with high levels of special needs make excellent progress because the teacher and teaching assistant work very well together to plan small manageable steps to develop self-confidence and learning.

Teaching is excellent and children love learning because they are provided with an outstanding range of exciting opportunities to explore and discover for themselves. The three afternoon outside sessions working with the older children promotes their personal and creative skills exceptionally well. Children also develop a very good understanding of the need to respect and care for creatures. They share the responsibility for taking care of the school pets and chickens and are very well aware of the hygiene requirements after handling them and cleaning out their living quarters.

The outstanding teaching of letter sounds and how to use these to read and spell is leading to excellent progress in these areas. For example, almost all children know the sounds of all the alphabet and can use these to make simple words such as 'mat', 'pen' and 'sit'. Attention to detail is a key feature in teaching. Children are taught correct pencil grip, correct letter formation and helped to practise these skills on a daily basis. Such practices ensure children are well equipped for their future learning. Early numeracy skills are also taught in innovative ways and closely related to practical activities which particularly appeals to boys. For example, practical experiences such as counting how many bricks in a bucket can be pulled up the 'building site'.

Parents have many good things to say about the provision for their children. As one parent wrote, 'what a fantastic start to a child's education'. Parents are welcomed warmly into school. They are helped and encouraged to contribute to their children's learning. The leadership of the Reception class is outstanding. The leader has a very positive influence on the quality of provision in the pre-school. There is a very clear understanding of what is working well in Reception and the pre-school and what can be developed further with detailed plans in place to do this.

The facility for pre-school children to join breakfast club and stay for school lunch is very much appreciated by parents and carers. The youngest children thoroughly enjoy playing with their older friends at breakfast club.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

## Views of parents and carers

The return rate of questionnaires was high. All parents and carers agree that their children enjoy school and the vast majority say that they are happy with their children's experience at the school. Parents are immensely proud of the school and its achievements for their children and for the community. A very small minority of parents disagreed that the school was led and managed effectively and that a matter that is not part of the inspection process, is not being dealt with to their satisfaction. The school is following local authorities' guidelines explicitly in this matter.

Parents of 17 children attending pre-school also completed a questionnaire and indicated their overwhelming support for the provision. Many commented on the relationship between the pre-school, school and community, for example, 'the relationship between parents, staff and the community is second to none which I feel creates a fantastic learning experience'.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at East Ruston Area Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carer were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspector received 29 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 31 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	83	5	17	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	76	5	17	1	3	1	3
My school informs me about my child's progress	21	72	6	21	2	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	83	4	14	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	24	83	5	17	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	69	6	21	2	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	69	8	28	1	3	0	0
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	72	6	21	1	3	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	66	7	24	0	0	2	7
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	66	4	14	3	10	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	66	4	14	2	7	2	7
The school is led and managed effectively	19	66	4	14	2	7	4	14
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	76	6	21	1	3	0	0

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.**



21 March 2011

Dear Children

**Inspection of East Ruston Area Infant School, Norwich, NR12 9JD**

Thank you so much for welcoming me to your school. Like you, I think it is a very friendly place to be and you get on very well together. My particular thanks to those of you who shared your lunchtimes with me. I found what you had to say very helpful. In return, I now want to share with you my findings.

This is an outstanding school. You told me that you like school and I could see why, particularly when I saw the interesting lessons you have and the exciting activities you have outside. You told me that the best things in the school are the teachers and the outside things and I think you are right! Teaching is excellent and all the adults care about you a great deal and work hard on your behalf. I could see that attainment is above average and you make excellent progress because teachers and teaching assistants keep a close eye on how well you are getting on. Your headteacher and teachers provide excellent leadership and are always working hard to make your school such an exciting place to be. I have asked them to do one thing to make your school even better:

To encourage you to behave as well in lessons indoors as you do when you are learning outside.

I am sure you can all help to do this by settling quickly and listening carefully to your teachers.

Thank you again for your help and I hope your joke-telling on Red Nose Day has raised lots of money for Comic Relief.

Yours sincerely

Cheryl Thompson

Lead inspector

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