

# Rectory Farm Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121940
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	359125
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Keith Sadler

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>	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>	201
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Hannah Jeffries
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michael Snelson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 November 2007
<b>School address</b>	Olden Road Rectory Farm, Northampton NN3 5DD
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 March 2011
<b>Inspection number</b>	359125

**Number of children on roll in the registered  
childcare provision**

**Date of last inspection of registered  
childcare provision**

Not previously inspected

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 15 lessons led by 10 different teachers. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers, and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation. This included the school's analysis of pupils' progress, teachers' lesson plans, the school improvement plan, leaders' monitoring records and pupils' work. Questionnaires from staff and from 61 parents and carers were analysed and their responses taken into account.

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

- The progress of pupils in Years 3 to 6 in English and mathematics and whether Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve their targets.
- Whether there is a difference in the performance of girls and boys in Years 1 and 2.
- How well teachers ensure that work set is matched to pupils' differing abilities.
- The contribution that subject leaders make to the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures.

## Information about the school

Rectory Farm is an average-sized primary school situated in a residential area on the eastern outskirts of Northampton. Most pupils live close to the school though an increasing number come from the surrounding area. A majority of pupils are of White British heritage and there is a growing number from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. The largest of these is Black or Black British African. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is broadly average as is the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is much above the national average. Most of these pupils have learning difficulties though some have behaviour, emotional and social difficulties. The school has gained a number of awards including 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

Rectory Farm Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It is on an upward trend and has some strengths, for example in pupils' understanding of how to stay healthy and safe. Provision and leadership and management have improved since the previous inspection. The recruitment and retention of teachers has been difficult in the past but now, as the school builds stability in staffing, the impact of its drive to improve outcomes for all pupils is increasingly evident. Standards are rising and pupils' progress is accelerating. Even so, the school recognises that as yet pupils' achievement remains satisfactory.

The school has successfully closed the gap between standards in the school and national standards in English. The gap is also closing in mathematics though at a slower rate. Progress is accelerating for pupils of all backgrounds. The many pupils that have learning disabilities and the comparatively small number at the early stages of speaking English as an additional language make good progress because the provision is tailored well to meet their needs. However, few pupils gain the higher level at the end of Year 6, particularly in mathematics. This is because the pupils' weaker skills in applying their ability to calculate in practical and investigative situations limit overall attainment. In English, although pupils' reading skills are well developed and progress is strong across the school, writing skills are less strong. The school is keenly aware that comparatively few opportunities are provided for pupils to write at length. Extended writing is hampered because even more-able writers in Year 6 do not write with a cursive script and this slows their pace. Work is often also poorly presented.

Most pupils enjoy school and learning and this is reflected in their much improved attendance since the previous inspection. They generally behave well in lessons and around the school. However, the poor behaviour of a few pupils in some classes occasionally slows learning. Nonetheless pupils who have behaviour, emotional and social difficulties are, in the main, managed well and the school's systems to support these pupils are robust. Pupils develop a good understanding of right and wrong and they generally enjoy school and learning. By the time that they reach Year 6 most pupils show responsible and mature attitudes.

Much of the teaching seen during the inspection was of good quality or better and this has been a key feature in the acceleration in pupils' learning. However, there is not yet enough good teaching to fully make up lost ground and secure consistently good progress in learning. In mathematics in particular, a history of underachievement is taking time to overcome and this means that a minority of pupils in each class, particularly in Years 3 and 4, are working at below age-related expectations. There have been significant improvements in teachers' use of assessment since the previous inspection. Pupils' independence in learning is being particularly well developed by the use of their target

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sheets. These enable pupils to be clear about what they need to do to succeed and also what their next steps in learning will be. However, in some lessons where teaching is satisfactory rather than better, work is broadly matched to abilities but not always fine-tuned to challenge everyone particularly the more-able pupils.

Improvements in the curriculum and pupils' care, guidance and support have also been successful in accelerating pupils' learning. Both are of good quality. The curriculum in particular has improved, for example in art, music and information and communication technology (ICT). It is broad and provides a good range of opportunities for pupils.

The school has robust and wide-ranging self-evaluation procedures that ensure that senior staff and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and the impact of improvement initiatives on pupils' progress. The management of teaching and learning is particularly effective because monitoring conducted by the senior leadership team and subject leaders is thorough. Staff have been coached well to improve teaching and professional development initiatives have led to the improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. These improvements indicate the school's good capacity for sustained improvement in the future.

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

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

- Accelerate progress and lift standards at the end of Year 6 by:
  - increasing the proportion of pupils gaining the higher level in mathematics
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their extended writing
  - improving pupils' presentation of their work
  - embed the initiative to provide 'rich' practical mathematical activities in order to extend pupils' mathematical investigation skills.
  - By May 2012, increase the proportion of good quality teaching to at least 70% by:
    - ensuring that work is consistently matched to pupils' abilities
    - having consistently high expectations of what the pupils, particularly the more-able pupils, can achieve
    - ensuring that the few pupils that have behaviour, emotional and social difficulties do not slow the learning in classes.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

<b>3</b>
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On entry to Year 1 pupils' attainment is below average in their communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, though average in other areas. In the past, progress has been patchy in Years 1 to 6, and boys made better progress than girls in Key Stage 1. However, this is not now the case; boys and girls make equal progress. Furthermore, pupils that speak English as an additional language also progress at least as well as their classmates. Evidence from lesson observations, pupils' current work and school tracking information show that current Year 6 pupils are on course to meet their

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ambitious targets. Previous underachievement in mathematics is being overcome in Years 5 and 6 because teaching is strong. In an outstanding Year 5 lesson, for example, pupils were learning how to use written methods when solving problems. The teacher's highly engaging and lively teaching ensured that all the pupils focused and concentrated exceptionally well throughout the lesson as they were successful in solving problems using subtraction of decimal numbers. Progress is slower in Years 3 and 4, where more-able pupils sometimes mark time when they are not fully challenged.

The school's effective programme to support pupils with particular learning needs is successful. For example, pupils who arrive at the school speaking little English are supported well and they say that they enjoy learning and school. They quickly settle and make good progress. Specialist provision, achieved by regular small group work, enables pupils who have behaviour, emotional and social needs to make good progress in their emotional development.

Pupils are confident that they are safe in school. They have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and this is evident in the Healthy Schools status. They make a suitable contribution to the school community by being playground buddies and through the 'class forum' and school council, though the influence of the council is limited. Pupils generally behave well in class, although some are not yet self-regulating when away from the supervision of adults.

*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>3</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>3</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

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## How effective is the provision?

Improving teaching underpins the school's drive to raise standards. Well-focused staff training has proved effective in improving teaching. Teachers generally manage the pupils well and they make good use of the interactive white boards to enliven learning. A recent focus on using drama to extend pupils' writing has been particularly successful in promoting thinking, discussion and written outcomes. This was evident in an excellent Year 2 lesson. The teacher very successfully engaged the pupils by using a 'guided tour' of a party room taken from a 'Horrid Henry' book, in which they visualised the room. This led to lively discussion in pairs and small groups and resulted in good quality written paragraphs. The good assessment practice across the school is underpinned by teacher's good quality marking of pupils' work and also the effective manner in which pupils are involved in the assessment of their own work and checking their target sheets.

Even though much of the teaching is of good quality, there remain some inconsistencies. Work is not always sufficiently demanding particularly for more-able pupils in mathematics. In addition, even though teaching support staff provide valuable support both in classrooms and when withdrawing groups of pupils, some low level disruptive behaviour slows learning. On occasion teachers expect pupils to sit for too long in lesson introductions and this, too, slows the pace of learning.

Initiatives such as the focus on art, expanding the use of ICT and strengthening the focus on social and emotional dimensions of pupils' learning are now embedded in the school's good curriculum. For example, the school has been successful in targeting the ethnic heritage of Black African pupils and the resulting art work is of high quality. There are telling examples of how the school cares for and supports the pupils well. This includes the effective induction procedures for pupils new to the school, the successful strategies to improve attendance and the work of the learning mentor in supporting pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</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?

There have been a number of organisational changes to senior leadership since the previous inspection. The team has been expanded and, as a result of good training and development, they jointly provide good and effective leadership and management. Well-founded and rigorous monitoring of progress and provision, including a revision of the school's use of data to track progress, has been particularly successful. Team work across the school is good and staff morale is high. Leaders at all levels show clear insight and



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their planning is well focused on the school's key priorities. Governance is good. Governors are well informed about the school and because they link closely with staff and regularly visit and monitor teaching and learning, this puts them in a strong position to both support and challenge the school to improve. They ensure that statutory regulations, such as those associated with child protection and health and safety are met though there were a few minor weaknesses in the school's documentation. Requirements for vetting staff are also met.

Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. The school is inclusive and staff ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed. There are good links with local schools and the local community and there are many curricular opportunities to celebrate the communities from across the world represented in the school. The school recognises that pupils' contact with communities not represented in the school is more limited, and has good plans to extend it.

*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>2</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>3</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 Reception class with skills that are well below those expected particularly in their early number and literacy skills. Because the provision is of good quality they make good progress in all areas. Their personal and social skills are particularly well developed because staff place the children's welfare and care at the heart of their provision. This, when linked to the good induction procedures, ensures that children settle quickly and soon become confident in the secure and positive ethos created by the staff. Children concentrate well for long periods of time, enjoy their learning and become absorbed in their play. They are keen to participate, cooperate well with each other and have the confidence to make independent choices. They develop ICT skills and

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were confident using the mouse and changing the colour on a paint-type programme. The outdoor learning space is much improved since the previous inspection and is used well.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led well. The adults work well as a team and they have a secure knowledge of how young children learn. This ensures that children enjoy an imaginative range of interesting, purposeful activities that extend well to the outdoor classroom. Assessments are managed well and because observations are of good quality, an accurate picture of each child's progress is developed. Assessments are used well both to identify any children who may have additional learning needs and also to ensure that activities are matched to the children's learning needs.

*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

Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire or spoke to inspectors are supportive of the school with most saying that, overall, they are happy with their children's experience at the school. They also confirmed that their children enjoy school and most felt that the school keeps their children safe. A few parents and carers expressed some concerns. In particular, a very small minority stated that they felt that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. This was investigated as part of the inspection and it was found that the school's systems for securing good behaviour are satisfactory. There are a number of pupils in the school that have behavioural, emotional and social needs and these are generally handled well; because support is generally good this helps the pupils to improve in their personal development. Nonetheless, some mildly disruptive behaviour does occasionally affect the learning of other pupils and this is highlighted as an area for further improvement. Other concerns raised by parents and carers all reflect that the school, although improving, is satisfactory rather than better. For example, inspection findings confirm that the school does not always meet all the pupils' particular needs, and this is reflected in the very small minority of parents and carers who stated that their children are not making sufficient progress.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rectory Farm 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 61 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 201 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	43	70	15	25	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	32	52	25	41	2	3	2	3
My school informs me about my child's progress	29	48	27	44	2	3	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	36	30	49	6	10	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	25	41	30	49	2	3	2	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	46	25	41	7	11	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	41	35	57	1	2	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)	15	25	34	56	3	5	2	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	28	36	59	4	7	4	7
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	26	33	54	7	11	5	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	23	37	61	3	5	4	7
The school is led and managed effectively	16	26	37	61	2	3	5	8
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	39	32	52	1	2	4	7

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.**



28 March 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Rectory Farm Primary School, Northampton NN3 5DD**

I am writing to thank you for your help when we came to visit your school and also to tell you what we found. We enjoyed our visit and we were pleased to see how you enjoy school. Along with many of your parents and carers I enjoyed watching your assembly and was really pleased to see how much you all celebrated the good things that are going on in your school. I particularly liked the 'Mastermind' chair and music!

Yours is a satisfactory school, which means that some things are done well and other things could be improved. You told us that you feel safe in school. You have positive attitudes that help you in your learning. You have a good understanding about being healthy. Your teachers work hard to make lessons interesting for you, and lots of lessons are good. You are making more progress now although your learning is satisfactory overall. You told us that you enjoy all the trips and visits that the school organises, particularly your residential visits. These things help to make sure that you enjoy learning. The staff look after you well and take good care of you.

We have asked your headteacher and staff to take some action to make sure that improvements continue. We want your progress in learning to be quicker so that you attain higher standards at the end of Year 6 particularly in maths. To do this we have asked that you are given more chances learn to do practical maths problems. We have also asked that you get lots of opportunities do write longer pieces and that your handwriting improves. We would like all your lessons to be as good as the best ones. To do this, your teachers will need to make sure that work is just hard enough for you whether you find learning easy or hard, and have high expectations of what you can do. Finally, we have asked that your staff should find ways to make sure that your learning is not slowed when some of you misbehave in lessons.

We know that almost all of you enjoy school and learning and we hope that all of you will do so for the rest of your school career.

Yours sincerely

Keith Sadler

Lead inspector

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