

Ringstead Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121989
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	380377
Inspection dates	22–23 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Ted Wheatley

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	93
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adrian Brigginsshaw
Headteacher	Annette Ray
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2009
School address	Church Street Ringstead NN14 4DH
Telephone number	01933 622734
Fax number	01933 623481
Email address	head@ringstead.northants-ecl.gov.uk

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, who saw seven lessons taught by four teachers. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and pupils, and inspectors spoke to some parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation about pupils' progress and policies, particularly those for safeguarding, as well as school development planning and evidence of self-evaluation. They considered 21 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- Is the school doing enough to raise levels of attainment, especially in literacy?
- How well is teaching matched to the needs of different groups of pupils?
- How accurate is self-evaluation, and is action taken urgently enough to raise levels of attainment?
- How well do children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make progress?

Information about the school

Ringstead Church of England Primary is a small school. Pupils come mainly from White British heritages and about one fifth come from Traveller families. Nearly all pupils speak English as their first language and a very small number in the Reception class are in the early stages of speaking English as an additional language. The main other language is Malayalam. Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes throughout the school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is close to average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The school has Healthy School Status and the bronze Eco award.

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

3

Main findings

Ringstead CofE Primary is a satisfactory and improving school. The quality of care, support and guidance is good. It is founded on effective relationships with homes and a wide range of links with external agencies that successfully promote pupils' welfare. Past areas of underachievement are being effectively dealt with. Parents and carers are very pleased with the school. One wrote, 'Our child is very happy at the school and is encouraged and supported in everything she does by the staff,' and another, 'My child has become a very caring, kind and thoughtful child, that I believe is down to the school ethos'.

Pupils' attainment is broadly average. Some pupils reach high levels of attainment, especially in mathematics. Most pupils have good mental calculation skills and work logically through mathematical problems. Literacy skills are average and improving. However, pupils' spelling is often inaccurate. They express their understanding and knowledge reasonably well, both in speech and writing, with a wide range of sentence structures and different styles. However, their success is limited by a narrow vocabulary and occasionally untidy and hard to read written work. Pupils' progress is satisfactory and improving, and for some pupils it is already good. Boys, girls and pupils from different home backgrounds make similar progress. Children in the Reception class make good progress, as do pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, thanks to careful planning of activities and focused support that encourage individuals to engage with their learning at just the right level.

Satisfactory and often good teaching is leading to the improvement in pupils' progress. Work is mostly matched to pupils' learning needs, and based on increasingly accurate assessment of their progress. Generally, work is challenging, but occasionally the most able pupils are not stretched enough to produce their best work. Marking is usually informative, and sets pupils targets about what to do next. However, this is not fully established, and pupils do not consistently know what the next steps in their learning are. The curriculum is well organised and includes a wide range of opportunities and activities for pupils to find out about the cultures and backgrounds of all pupils at the school. The curriculum is well supported by trips and visitors, out-of-school activities and an increasing range of literacy and numeracy activities to help support pupils' development of skills in English and mathematics.

Pupils enjoy school. This is reflected in good levels of attendance for most pupils, and improving levels for the small minority who are persistently absent. They feel safe, and report that rare incidents of bullying or harassment are dealt with quickly

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and sympathetically. They support charities, help each other, join in local church activities, and take on responsibilities through the school council and environmental group. They have a good grasp of the importance of healthy eating and physical activity.

Leaders and managers have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and have effectively driven through plans to improve attainment and progress in mathematics. They have comprehensive plans for doing the same in English during the current year. Efforts to improve teaching have had a positive effect, although not all weaknesses have as yet been fully removed. The governing body is well informed. It challenges the school, helps plan improvements and supports the school in its development work. The successful developments so far mean that at this stage, the capacity to sustain further improvement is satisfactory.

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 in literacy by ensuring pupils:
 - spell accurately
 - widen the range of words they use in their speech and writing
 - improve the quality of their writing and how they present their work.
- Improve teaching by ensuring:
 - work is challenging in all classes, especially for the most able pupils
 - pupils are always informed of the next steps in their learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils start Year 1 with broadly average levels of attainment, although some pupils have limited skills, noticeably in literacy. Attainment on entry and leaving varies from year to year, because year groups are small. By Year 6, pupils speak and write confidently. For example, in a guided reading lesson, some pupils extracted information from several historical texts, discussed their answers in detail and then wrote what they understood from the discussion accurately in their own words. However, throughout the school, the range of words pupils use to enrich their language is limited and therefore the natural flow of spoken and written expression is sometimes restricted. Inaccuracies in spelling and untidy writing and presentation of work often spoil their overall performance in literacy. Over time pupils' progress is satisfactory. In lessons it is often good, showing that progress is improving. Progress is improving fastest in mathematics, and this is evident in the way that pupils explain their mathematical understanding. For example, in a lesson where pupils were investigating the patterns of adding odd and odd, odd and even, and even and even numbers, pupils rapidly arrived at the fact that adding two odd numbers always

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results in an even number. They explained this to the teacher and class very well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well by challenging questioning and opportunities for them to work independently. For example, in one lesson, having quickly drawn a picture of an iron man, some lower-attaining pupils independently wrote detailed reasons for him being scary, using a sound range of sentence structures to explain their ideas.

Pupils contribute well to the life of the school. They engage in environmental activities, for example by reducing the numbers of paper towels used and recycling packaging. This has earned the school the Bronze Eco-school award. Pupils recognise the importance of maintaining strong values. They support several charities around the world through book sales and 'shoebox' collections. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a good understanding of the values and traditions of other cultures, and display considerable respect for each other. They are confident in being able to go to any adult for help if they need it, but also in their own ability to help each other when necessary. A small number of pupils are frequently absent, but this is steadily reducing. Most pupils take part in physical activities through after-school activities, and they eat healthily. This has contributed to the school earning Healthy School Status.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are usually interesting and well planned to catch and hold pupils' enthusiasm. Teachers' expectations are mostly high, and work is organised to ensure

¹ 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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all pupils achieve equally well. For example, in a mathematics lesson, questioning about what pupils understood about angles was skilfully worded to make sure pupils of different abilities developed knowledge suitable to their ability. Nevertheless, elsewhere work is sometimes not difficult enough for the most able pupils and occasionally they do not do enough in the time provided. The use of assessment information to plan appropriate learning is often good, and marking tells pupils how well they are doing and how to improve, though pupils are not always clear about how to move on in their learning. Relationships are very good, and this enables pupils to gain confidence in asking questions and expressing their own ideas.

The curriculum is stimulating, and reflects the lifestyles and backgrounds of all pupils. Thematic approaches to learning work well, and improving use of literacy and numeracy activities is helping drive up levels of attainment and, in particular, to improve pupils’ confidence to speak and write. Visits to museums, the seaside and other towns, along with trips to look at different houses and homes in the school’s locality, contribute well to encouraging pupils’ interest in school while widening their experience of the world they live in. Computers are used well to support numeracy with graphs and use of spreadsheets, and to develop pupils’ information and communication technology skills.

Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good, with very good links with parents and carers, and external agencies to plan and monitor pupils’ progress. Support for pupils whose challenging circumstances make them vulnerable is good. The school’s strategies to improve attendance are effective, resulting in steadily improving attendance. Transfer arrangements are good, and individually tailored to pupils’ educational needs and home backgrounds.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a clear view of how the school should improve and this is fully shared by others in leadership positions. The procedures to evaluate the school’s effectiveness are thorough. Leaders have a good view of what the next steps should be and plans to move the school on are carefully thought through and resourced well. Leaders are supported effectively to implement and evaluate the work they do. Work to raise attainment has been effective to this point and the school is poised to make the next step. The governing body is involved effectively in evaluating school improvement and in setting targets for future development. There has been some

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good work to improve the quality of teaching, and this has led to increased expectations of the most able pupils in most lessons, but this improvement has not been consistent. The school engages parents and carers effectively. Parents and carers from the different backgrounds represented in the school help in classrooms and on trips. Activities at school are well supported, and homes that historically have had little communication with school welcome staff readily. Partnerships with other schools to enrich the curriculum, especially in sports activities, are good. Staff benefit well from professional development with other schools and the local authority, and the links with social services and other agencies are used effectively to promote pupils' welfare.

Safeguarding requirements are met well. The school seeks pupils' views about issues to do with safety, and the governing body works effectively to keep the school secure. The impact of work to promote equal opportunities is satisfactory overall, and gaps in progress between different groups of pupils are narrowing. Procedures to eliminate all forms of discrimination are effective. The school promotes community cohesion well, especially within its own community, but also increasingly so in the wider and international contexts.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress, many from low starting points, and especially in literacy. By the time children enter Year 1, a small number still lag behind in literacy skills. Many speak well and form simple words competently. They recognise important words like 'challenge' and know what it means. The small number of children at the early stages of speaking English as an additional language make good progress, because language is modelled well by adults, and children are well

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supported. Children quickly learn social skills. For example, they converse with talk partners when asked, sit still and listen, and follow adults’ instructions correctly. When working freely, they join in activities with adults. After listening to and talking about ‘Kipper’s Birthday’, for example, they readily joined in talking about features of the party and invitation, although a few did not concentrate for very long. Children’s needs are accurately assessed on entry and during their time in Reception. Activities are well suited to children’s needs. Children soon gain confidence in their interactions with each other. Questioning and discussions encourage them to express their ideas with increasing self-assurance. Visits to all children’s homes help them to settle in quickly, especially for those who have not previously attended a nursery setting. Children are well cared for. The outside area is attractive, accessible, inviting to children, and well organised. Leadership is good. Provision is continually evaluated with a view to further improve the pace of progress, especially in developing key literacy skills.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

About one quarter of parents and carers returned the questionnaire, which is a below-average return for a primary school. Virtually all responses were positive. A wide range of parents and carers spoken with in the school grounds before school started in the morning were equally positive, and referred only to past weaknesses. They were unvaryingly positive in their views of the quality of education and care provided for their children.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ringstead Church of England 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 21 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 93 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	10	48	11	52	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	11	52	10	48	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	8	38	12	57	1	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	9	43	12	57	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	10	48	11	52	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	12	57	9	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	48	11	52	0	0	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)	10	48	11	52	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	9	43	12	57	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	38	13	62	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	33	14	67	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	9	43	12	57	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	12	57	9	43	0	0	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 8 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



26 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ringstead CofE Primary School, Kettering, NN14 4DH

Thank you for welcoming us so warmly when we visited your school. We judged your school to be satisfactory and improving. You make satisfactory and improving progress. The following things are particular strengths of the school.

- Teaching is often good. Lessons are interesting and teachers make sure learning is enjoyable.
- The headteacher, staff and governors work hard to make sure improvement continues.
- You feel safe, and know who to go to if you are worried about anything.
- Your behaviour is good. You treat everyone with respect and consideration, whatever their backgrounds.
- Many of you have responsibilities and you carry them out well.
- You know what it means to be healthy and most of you eat sensibly and take part in physical activities.
- The school takes good care, pays attention to your concerns, and ensures you are safe.

In order for the school to be even better, we have asked your teachers to make sure that:

- you do better in literacy by spelling accurately, use a wide range of words in your speech and writing, and, produce neat, readable writing
- work is always challenging, and that you are told what the next steps in your learning are.

You can help by making sure you spell accurately, use as wide a range of words as possible, write neatly, and by making sure you know what your next learning activities should be.

Yours sincerely

Ted Wheatley
Lead inspector

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