

Rockland St Mary Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120846
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	380119
Inspection dates	3–4 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Ronald Hall

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	65
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Pittaccio
Headteacher	Catrin Parry-Jones
Date of previous school inspection	12 December 2006
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Eight lessons were observed taught by three different teachers. Meetings and discussions were held with members of staff, members of the governing body and pupils. Inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including policies, school development plans, self-evaluation documents, assessment data and curriculum plans. They scrutinised responses to questionnaires from 36 parents and carers, 34 pupils and eight staff.

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

- What is the school doing to raise standards in attainment, particularly in mathematics?
- How effective are leaders and managers at bringing about changes to ensure improved outcomes?
- How has the quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum improved in the Early Years Foundation Stage as a result of support provided by the school?

Information about the school

Pupils are taught in three classes in this small village primary school. There are more boys than girls. Nearly all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Pupils' needs are predominantly the result of speech and language difficulties, with some within the autistic spectrum disorder. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught alongside pupils in Year 1. The school is part of a hard federation with Surlingham Community School. The federation is led by an executive headteacher. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status. The school runs a breakfast club.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Rockland St Mary Primary is a good school. The school has made good progress since the previous inspection. This is due to a large extent to being part of a federation with Surlingham Community School. Staff now work within a larger group, sharing ideas and good practice, with the result that teaching and learning have improved and the leadership of the curriculum is more effective. Being part of a federation has assisted the school, but the prime reason for the school's improvement is the inspirational leadership of the headteacher who, in partnership with the governing body, provides the drive and ambition to carry the school forward. A great deal has been achieved in a relatively short time and many aspects of the school's provision and pupils' academic and personal development have been improved. Staff across the federation and in particular within the school work as a strong team. The evaluations made by the headteacher, the governing body and staff are rigorous, comprehensive and accurate so ensuring a good capacity for future improvements.

Teaching and learning are good. This, along with pupils' good behaviour, their eagerness to do well and an interesting curriculum that is well matched to their needs, has resulted in pupils' good overall achievement. Due to inconsistent teaching and provision, children make a satisfactory start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and learning then accelerates through the school. Attainment is above average overall and mathematics has improved consistently over time. Pupils are provided with good feedback from their teachers on how well they are doing. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified effectively and are given good levels of often individual support from experienced staff. Pupils consequently make good progress and in some cases outstanding progress from their low starting points. The most-able pupils also achieve well, with increasing numbers reaching the higher standard of level 5 in both English and mathematics.

Pupils very much enjoy coming to Rockland St Mary Primary. They say it is 'really nice because everyone knows each other, it's like one big family.' Pupils get on extremely well with each other. They told inspectors that there is no bullying and that they feel very safe. Pupils readily take on responsibilities and say they look forward to the wide range of visits, visitors and their residential visits. They also enjoy the many sporting challenges presented by the federation. They enjoy helping to make improvements to the school and to the village working with organisations such as the church and the local gardening society. They raise money for many different charities and make a good contribution to the community. However, their

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experience of pupils from communities and cultures that are different from their own are more limited. Partnerships with a wide range of outside organisations broaden pupils' experiences and enrich their academic and personal development. Pupils consequently become confident and mature young people by the end of Year 6. They use their academic skills well and work together effectively so showing they are well prepared for the next stage in their learning. The pupils' high attendance reflects their positive attitude to learning and great enjoyment of school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2012 improve the quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring a greater match across all areas of learning to the needs and abilities of all the children
 - ensuring that planning takes account of both the indoor and outdoor areas to provide ongoing, practical learning opportunities.
- Consolidate the work to establish links with pupils from different cultures in the United Kingdom and abroad to strengthen community cohesion further.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Children join the Reception class with skills and knowledge that are similar to that expected for their age. Although their rate of progress has increased over the last few years, they are reaching average standards in all areas of learning. An increasing number of children are achieving standards above those expected for their age. Each cohort of pupils is fairly small and the comparative attainment of boys and girls changes according to how many boys or girls there are in the group and the balance of special educational needs and/or disabilities. While there is a relatively small number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, provision for these pupils is good with a high percentage of one-to-one support. Highly qualified teaching assistants deliver specific and well-targeted programmes, which result in these pupils making good and at times better progress. In the last few years boys have not attained as well as the girls but these gaps are rapidly closing. Although mobility is broadly average, those pupils who join the school throughout the year settle quickly.

Pupils have a positive attitude to learning. They try hard, concentrate effectively and are learning to persevere with their tasks. This was very clearly illustrated by the Year 4/5/6 pupils who had been set the task of creating a range of graphs to display their data. Pupils of all abilities shared ideas, challenged each other's thinking, and used their prior knowledge effectively. Their excitement and enthusiasm grew as they generated one type of graph after another. Similarly, pupils in the Year 2/3 class worked well together to develop their understanding of historic text and enjoyed empathising with the characters involved.

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Pupils show consideration towards one another and an interest in the world around them, although their understanding of other cultures is more limited. They show sensitivity to others’ feelings and beliefs and develop a strong moral code that makes them question what they learn about the world. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and how to develop a healthy lifestyle. A number of pupils talked about the wide range of activities they do outside of school and several commented on the fact that they had persuaded their parents and carers to give up smoking. Those who had packed lunches stressed the need for a healthy balance in their diet.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The school is a very pleasant and happy community which supports pupils’ academic and personal development well. The breakfast club is a prime example of this, as those pupils that attend are provided with a nutritious and happy start to the day. Lessons are well structured and pupils know what is expected of them. Experienced teaching assistants support them well and make a significant contribution to their learning. Staff monitor pupils’ attainment and progress effectively and use the information to match activities to pupils’ abilities and needs. The more-able pupils receive appropriate challenge in both mathematics and English. Teachers help pupils to make good progress by giving them regular and informative feedback about their work. They encourage pupils to review their work and to check it to see how well they have met the lesson objective.

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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The curriculum stimulates pupils’ good levels of interest and subjects are effectively linked so that activities are relevant and meaningful for the pupils. Activities are well matched to their different interests and needs. The many displays of pupils’ work around the school celebrate their successes. Strong partnerships within the federation, cluster and with the local secondary school have extended the range of activities and additional opportunities for learning, particularly those in Year 6 and for those who are gifted and talented. The many sporting activities available develop pupils’ social skills successfully and encourage pupils’ awareness of the need to keep fit and healthy.

Pupils feel well cared for and this underpins all their good learning and how they respond to one another. One pupil stated, ‘We listen to the teachers and they listen to us.’ Good levels of support and guidance are provided for all pupils and the work the school carries out with families of pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable is excellent.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
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 clear, shared vision and strong sense of direction provided by the headteacher have ensured good improvement. Leadership at all levels is good and the school runs smoothly. Subject leadership is distributed across the schools in the federation so that staff expertise is shared. Consequently, there is a cohesive and supportive network that ensures that the curriculum is well planned and supported so that pupils achieve well. Staff monitor the pupils’ learning effectively and this is used to develop future learning and set robust targets. Teachers across the schools observe each other teaching, sharing good practice and initiatives with the result that teaching and learning have improved. The good governing body has been influential in the setting up of the federation and in monitoring its development. The organisation of its committees ensures effective monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school and areas for development. The governing body is evaluative of its own work and seeks to utilise its members in the best way through an identification of personal skills. Finances in the school are managed very well and the school provides good value for money.

Safeguarding is robust and the school’s policies and procedures are effective, well understood by staff and carried out rigorously. Staff and governors are trained appropriately in child protection and safer recruitment. The governing body is

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rigorous in tackling any discrimination and pupils of all abilities are enabled to take advantage of what the school offers. The school is very effective in promoting community cohesion in the school and at a local level. However, links are at an early stage of being developed both within the United Kingdom and abroad to extend pupils’ understanding of cultures different from their own.

Partnerships with parents and carers are strong. There are regular and frequent opportunities for parents and carers to learn about how well their children are doing and the staff are always available to listen to concerns or to celebrate events in their children’s lives. Pupils very much enjoy school and parents and carers want them to do well.

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	2
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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle well into school life. Warm and caring relationships between adults and children ensure that they are happy and feel safe. The school has invested in improving Reception facilities and resources. The headteacher also provides strong support for teaching and the curriculum and this is enhanced by visits to other providers and by local authority advice and support. However, recent initiatives are yet to have a full impact.

Teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory, but not better because teaching is inconsistent. For example, children are not routinely involved in choosing their own learning activities and the outdoor facilities are under-used. The purpose of some activities lacks clarity to move children’s learning forwards. As a result, children’s progress and achievement are satisfactory. Nonetheless a few, mainly more-able children, make good progress due to the emphasis given to developing their

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language skills and opportunities for them to talk about their learning. Leaders make increasingly good use of the information they collect about children’s small steps in achievement. They are using this information to make sure activities take account of learning needs. Excellent relationships have been fostered with parents and carers, who say that they feel welcome in the setting. The ongoing improvements in provision reflect the good ambition and drive of leaders and managers.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

An above-average proportion of parents and carers returned the Ofsted questionnaire and the responses were very supportive of the school. All parents and carers who returned the form indicated that they were overall happy with the experiences their children were receiving at Rockland St Mary Primary. Many aspects received equally strong support, with parents and carers showing that they believe all children are kept safe, that teaching is good, and that the leadership and management of the school are strong. This overview is consistent with the views of one parent who wrote, ‘I am delighted with the teaching and progress my children are making. It is an extremely caring school and is very child focused.’ There were very few concerns, the largest of which was that three parents and carers were concerned about behaviour. However, this was related to a particular year group and observations during the inspection found that the school managed behaviour well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rockland St Mary 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 36 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 65 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	81	7	19	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	61	13	36	1	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	18	50	16	44	1	3	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	33	21	58	3	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	13	36	21	58	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	16	44	19	53	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	47	18	50	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)	14	39	21	58	0	0	1	3
The school meets my child’s particular needs	13	36	21	58	2	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	31	19	53	3	8	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	36	22	61	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	42	17	47	3	8	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	19	53	15	42	2	6	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 08 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.

7 November 2011

Dear Pupils,



Inspection of Rockland St Mary Primary School, Norwich NR14 7EU

Thank you for making us so welcome and answering our questions when we visited you recently. You and your parents and carers are correct in thinking that you go to a good school. Here are some of the school's strengths.

- You make good progress through the school to reach standards that are above those of most children of your age.
- Behaviour across the school is good. You told me that you have lots of friends and that Rockland St Mary is like a big family.
- You are polite, friendly and helpful; you enjoy taking responsibility and have done lots of things to help the school and the village be a better place.
- You are taught well and all your teachers make sure that your lessons are interesting.
- The school is led extremely well by your headteacher. There are good links with Surlingham and everyone works together as a strong team.
- The staff look after you well so you feel safe and happy.

Even though Rockland St Mary Primary is a good school, there are two things we have asked your headteacher and staff to do to make it even better.

- We have asked them to improve the learning experiences of the youngest children.
- We have asked them to give you more opportunities to find out about children in other countries.

We wish you well and remember you can all help by continuing to work hard and attending school as regularly as possible.

Yours sincerely

Ronald Hall

Lead inspector

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