

Ringshall School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	124604
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	380932
Inspection dates	21–22 June 2012
Lead inspector	June Woolhouse

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	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nick Banks
Headteacher	Monica Gibbs
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

June Woolhouse

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector visited 11 lessons taught by six teachers as well as observing how well the children in the Nursery class engaged in a range of activities inside and out-of-doors. Five lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. The inspector looked at pupils' books and listened to a number of pupils read who had attended the school since their Reception year. The inspector examined a range of school documents including those relating to its development plan, safeguarding information, self-evaluation, the organisation and planning of the curriculum, attendance data, minutes of the senior leadership team, staff and governing body meetings and correspondence from parents and carers. Several discussions took place with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, middle leaders, five governors, two groups of pupils and a parent. The inspector analysed 26 questionnaires received from parents and carers as well as those completed by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

This school is smaller than average for its type and pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. This organisation will change next year when the number on roll will allow pupils to be taught in single year groups. In 2014 the school will begin its progressive reorganisation into a 3–11 primary school. There are twice as many boys as there are girls. Most pupils are of White British heritage and a few are from minority ethnic groups or speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who leave or join the school partway through their primary education is much higher than in most schools nationally. This is a direct consequence of the school's proximity to a military establishment where parents and carers are on active duty in Afghanistan. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action plus is average. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. There is a recently established nurture class to ease entry into school at different times for those children with social and emotional needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery class each morning and a full-time Reception class, into which children are accepted each September.

There has been a period of staffing turbulence caused by long-term illness and maternity leave. The school leadership team has been in place since the spring term, 2012, alongside a full complement of staff.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Ringshall is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because not enough teaching is outstanding. Since the last inspection there have been noticeable improvements in important areas of its provision. The Early Years Foundation Stage is now good and children thrive in a stimulating and challenging learning environment. The recently established nurture class provides an essential learning climate of stability and support for those pupils whose educational experiences have been severely disrupted. The school has consolidated its links with the military base enhancing its ethos of inclusion and engagement with the community.
- Achievement is good by the time pupils leave school in Year 4. These pupils achieve above the expected levels for their age in reading, writing and mathematics, showing good progress from their broadly average starting points. Pupils' assessments in Key Stage 1 show an improving trend over the past three years.
- Teaching is consistently good and has improved this year as staffing has stabilised. Planning is fit for purpose and takes account of the range of ability although time allotted to the arts is inconsistent. Teaching assistants contribute well in small group work for pupils who have specific learning needs, who join the school later or who speak English as an additional language.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils feel safe and this is confirmed in parental questionnaires. The care and involvement of all staff result in pupils' good personal development and well-being.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is a strong and effective leader who has forged a good team through effective management of teachers' performance. The governing body is both visible and decisive in its involvement. Many middle leaders are new to post and are training to improve their leadership skills.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the roles of middle leaders by:
 - enabling them to attend relevant courses to deepen subject knowledge
 - planning more opportunities to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of subject teaching in promoting good rates of learning
 - involving all leaders in the analysis of performance data and intervening when progress is less than expected
 - setting quantified targets in the school development plan against which subject leaders can gauge the success of their actions.

- Develop provision for the teaching of arts subjects by:
 - auditing the time spent and range of subjects taught
 - identifying the available expertise and other specialist subject knowledge in order to enhance pupils' learning opportunities
 - planning the curriculum to address pupils' pencil control so that they can improve the fundamentals of letter formation, high quality handwriting and presentation.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The skills of children starting in the Nursery class vary from year to year. Those currently in Reception started school with skills below those expected for their age, particularly in their social, emotional and communication skills. Children make good progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage achieving the expected levels by the time they start Year 1 because provision is good and planned for their differing needs. They are interested in exploring and investigating the range of challenging activities planned for each of the six areas of learning in the curriculum.

Key Stage 1 performance is improving. Reading has steadily improved for three years and is now above the national average. Pupils' performance is masked by the entry and exit of pupils throughout the key stage as families are affected by military service. Exceptionally-detailed data show at least satisfactory and often good progress for individual pupils when their particular circumstances regarding entry and exit to the school, and individual need, are taken into account. Boys' attainment is a little lower than that of girls overall. This is explained by the fact that many of the late entrants to the school are boys whose starting points were lower than those of pupils already in the school. Nonetheless, boys make good progress. The rest of the pupils, mainly from the village, achieve well. The most recent results show accelerating progress compared with the previous two years particularly in reading and writing because teaching is consistently good.

This pattern is repeated in Years 3 and 4 where pupils who joined the school in the

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Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress and reach levels above those expected for their ages in reading, writing and mathematics.

The progress of pupils in lessons is consistently good given their starting points. This includes disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, because teaching assistants are deployed well and use initiative in managing small groups to good effect.

Parents and carers are happy with the progress their children are making and inspection evidence corroborates their views. Appropriate emphasis is placed on the important skill of reading. Pupils have home–school diaries to record their reading books and to encourage parents and carers to listen to their children reading at home.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is good and has improved with the appointment of permanent staff. The school's own evaluations indicate that the large majority of observed lessons are good. Most parents and carers agree as do the pupils. Lessons for literacy and mathematics are planned well and activities vary according to pupils' abilities which enables some pupils to tackle more challenging problems independently. Resources are well-prepared, pupils know at the start of a lesson what is expected of them and what they must do to show their knowledge and understanding.

This was the case in a good numeracy lesson where pupils learned how the value and position of two digits changed when they were multiplied by ten. Pupils then set their own multiplication problems using three dice after they had recognised the pattern that emerged. The teaching of phonics, which enables pupils to read words by combining the letter sounds, is consistently good because the same scheme is used in all classes and pupils are grouped according to ability rather than age. Sessions proceed at a brisk pace because there is a tight focus on the different groups of letters and sounds. Groups are small enough to keep a close check on progress. Pupils' understanding is enhanced when the new words are practised in the context of a whole sentence.

National Curriculum subjects are combined into interesting themes but the school recognises that not all classes benefit from skilled teaching of arts subjects, for example art and design, music and drama, because available subject specialists are not yet deployed to address this required development. The school rightly intends to use such teaching to improve pupils' skills in handwriting and presentation of work. Teachers do not make enough use of information and communication technology in their teaching.

The teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is effectively managed in small groups by teaching assistants. Teaching in the nurture class is a strength of the school. Pupils who have attended several schools for short lengths of time benefit enormously from the sensitive approach adults take to enable

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them to settle into their classes and make progress. There is a climate of warmth and support in which pupils respond and thrive. Adults concentrate on practical tasks and the requisite development of language and communication skills. This results in inclusive behaviour and enhanced social and emotional development in a relatively short time.

Teachers' assessments of pupils' progress are increasingly more accurate, targets are set in literacy and numeracy for all pupils and progress is recorded each half term. Marking remains variable as a result of previous instability in staffing. The best marking explains what pupils need to do next, is positive and encouraging. Together these good features contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils typically behave well in lessons and around the school. They are considerate and courteous to adults and each other. Pupils respond positively to the well-established and consistently-applied school behaviour policy. Adults have high expectations of appropriate behaviour in lessons and this means that learning is not interrupted. A small minority of parents and carers believed their children's lessons were occasionally disrupted by bad behaviour but school monitoring indicates that improved teaching and behaviour management have eradicated this behaviour. Pupils know that bullying takes different forms. Although there is no name-calling or racist-bullying younger pupils are occasionally affected by the over-exuberant behaviour of older pupils at playtimes. However, they are confident that adults will intervene quickly to restore a more orderly situation. During the inspection pupils were enthusiastic in lessons, listened well and enjoyed cooperating in groups. They got on well in pairs with girls working equally well with boys or in single gender groups.

Attendance is now above average and parents and carers understand the importance of regular attendance if their children are to make good progress.

Parents and carers agree that their children are very safe in school. Pupils who were interviewed also expressed this view. The school has a systematic approach to teaching safety including how to respond to strangers or inappropriate materials on the internet. The school buildings and grounds are well-cared for and consequently pupils respond well showing respect for each other and their equipment.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, new to her post at the last inspection, was commended at that time for her incisiveness in identifying the school's weaknesses and knowing how to fix them. She has provided the drive and ambition for the rest of the staff and together they have developed a culture of good quality learning and teaching delivered through a practical curriculum, skilfully linking subjects into interesting and relevant themes, such as The Great Fire of London. One Year 2 pupil was so

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enthused by aspects of this theme that he checked whether the inspector also knew about Samuel Pepys. The emphasis on a practical curriculum enriched by visits and role play meets the wide range of pupils' abilities. It contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The key issues from the last inspection have been addressed resulting in higher standards and good progress by the time pupils leave school in Year 4. The school development plan has clear targets for raising attainment and increasing pupils' achievement, though not all targets include measures to gauge success. The senior leadership team accurately evaluates teaching, planning and assessment on a regular basis. The governing body is effective and is fully involved in holding the school to account. Taken together the school has a good capacity to improve further.

At present middle leaders' roles are less well-developed than the school intends because teachers are new to their responsibilities and there has been little opportunity to be involved in monitoring their subjects and pupils' progress. The detailed tracking of progress shows how well all pupils are achieving and highlights who needs extra support, although middle leaders have yet to be included in this process of analysis. Information is monitored regularly to ensure equality of opportunity for all groups of pupils. The school manages well the unequal numbers of boys and girls and the changes to friendship groups as new pupils arrive. The school is a cohesive community and staff continue to involve all parents and carers. There are very effective links with the military base and material support for all families in the school community. Safeguarding policies and procedures are good and appreciated by parents and carers in keeping their children safe. The headteacher trains staff annually in child protection matters which contributes significantly to the speedy identification of vulnerable pupils.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.

25 June 2012

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Ringshall School, Stowmarket, IP14 2JD

Thank you for helping me with the inspection of your school. I enjoyed my visit and being able to talk to you about your work. Most of you like coming to school and learn a lot in lessons. I was impressed with how well you were able to explain what you were doing and your thoughtful views about how important it was to work together rather than have arguments. This is a great attitude to have and will stand you in good stead in your next school and when you are grown up. Thank you to everyone who completed the questionnaires read to me and baked cakes. I particularly liked the smiley face made with chocolate buttons. I was also pleased with the courtesy you showed to visitors by holding open the doors or waiting in the corridors – another important attitude for the future.

You are fortunate to go to Ringshall which continues to improve and is now a good school, not least in that you are making good progress in your learning by Year 4. It is important that you continue to listen carefully to your teachers and complete everything they ask you to do in lessons and at home.

I have asked your headteacher to improve two things which will make your school even better. First that the teachers in charge of all the subjects you learn about have some more training so they can see that you make the progress you are supposed to achieve. Second, that subjects like art and design, dance and drama are led by teachers who know a lot about these subjects. An important extra reason for this is to help you to gain control of your pencils, pens and paint brushes so your handwriting and presentation of work will improve and it will look beautiful.

I hope the rest of the term will be lots of fun and the rain will stop long enough for sports day. Please carry on being on time at the start of the day and attending regularly, unless of course you are ill. Best wishes to those who are leaving for the senior school. You are well-prepared and will soon settle in to your lessons.

Good wishes to everyone.

Yours sincerely

June Woolhouse
Lead inspector