

Rackheath Primary School

Willoughby Way, Rackheath, Norwich, NR13 6SL

Inspection dates 5–6 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Senior leaders direct the school's work very well. They have successfully tackled previous weaknesses in teaching, pupils' achievement and leadership.
- Pupils' attainment has been above average at the end of Year 6 for the last two years. Pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Teaching has improved. Nearly all teaching is good and some lessons are outstanding.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Pupils know they are valued and appreciate the support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants.
- Pupils are extremely friendly and considerate, and feel very happy and safe in school. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding, and this makes a considerable contribution to the good progress they make.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 is not always as high as it could be.
- Pupils' achievement in writing is not as good as that in reading and mathematics.
- Boys do not always reach the same standards as girls, particularly in their writing.
- Teachers' marking in mathematics is not as precise as is it in English.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 14 lessons or parts of lessons, taught by seven teachers and/or teaching assistants. Two of these lessons were seen together with the headteacher.
- Samples of pupils' written work were analysed. An inspector listened to some Year 1 and Year 2 pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with school staff, a group of pupils, governors and a senior area adviser for school improvement from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 36 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the 13 questionnaires completed by staff. They also spoke to several parents informally at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the work in pupils' books; monitoring records; the school's own data on pupils' progress; records of governing body meetings; and policies, procedures and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

David Herd, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Gay Whent

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Rackheath is smaller than the average primary school.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are supported by the 'pupil premium', which provides extra funding to help certain groups. In this school it applies to pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action, and at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs, are below average.
- The interim headteacher has been at the school since September 2012. The governing body has appointed a new permanent headteacher to start in September 2013.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' learning and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, so that both become outstanding, by:
 - raising pupils' attainment in all subjects at Key Stage 1, so that it is consistently above national averages
 - closing the gaps in attainment between boys and girls
 - improving pupils' achievement in writing to the same good levels as in reading and mathematics
 - improving the quality of teachers' marking in mathematics so that it is as good as their marking in English.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Until recent years, children entered the school with skills that were below expected levels, but they now typically enter the school at broadly expected levels. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in their language and communication and in their social development. Children's attainment is at least average, and sometimes it is above average at the end of the Reception year.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils have not always reached the standards of attainment that would normally be expected in their reading, writing and mathematics. Currently, school data shows that pupils are making good progress and will attain above national averages at the end of Year 2.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress in English and mathematics to reach above average standards by the time they leave the school. However, their attainment in writing is not as high as it is in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils read widely and often. They enjoy reading fiction and non-fiction books, finding out about things that interest them, such as, in a Year 1 class, information about pirates. They use their phonics skills (about the sounds that letters make) well to work out what words say, understand what they are reading and can name their favourite authors, even at an early age.
- They also achieve well in mathematics because they learn to calculate accurately and then use these skills in other aspects of their learning. They learn to gather information and use their skills of estimation effectively. For example, in a Year 6 class, pupils used information and communication technology to find out how far certain foods had travelled to reach a local supermarket.
- Pupils' progress in writing has not been as rapid, though it is improving. This is because pupils have not always applied the skills they have learned consistently in their writing. They engage keenly in discussion about topics that interest them, but then have been slower to organise their thoughts in a written form. Pupils' handwriting and presentation have improved and are now good.
- Over time, there have been gaps in attainment between boys and girls, both in Key Stages 1 and 2, and especially in writing. While the school has worked effectively to improve the performance of boys, small gaps still remain. School data currently shows that boys are making better progress, almost as good as that of girls, in all subjects and in all years.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs now make good progress. This is because their needs are identified earlier and they are provided with a carefully chosen range of targeted support. Their progress is checked closely and further support provided if necessary.
- There were not enough pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in 2012 to comment on their attainment without identifying them. However, pupils in the school as a whole for whom the school receives pupil premium funding make good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils develop very good relationships with their teachers and teaching assistants. These helpful relationships create an environment where pupils achieve well. Pupils speak well of the very effective teamwork of teachers and other adults. Staff are very loyal to the school and want to do their best for the pupils.
- Teachers are regularly held to account for the progress their pupils are making through meetings with the headteacher. The performance of every pupil is tracked and any pupil with additional needs is supported effectively, ensuring that all pupils achieve well, especially in reading.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and what their behaviour should be like. They use their questions very well to check pupils' understanding in lessons. Teachers assess pupils' attainment accurately and use this information to plan the next steps in their learning.
- The teaching of reading and phonics is good. Focused guided reading sessions make sure that pupils are able to build on their early reading skills. Features of these sessions are teachers' good use of questions that make pupils think carefully and reflect on their reading.
- The teaching of writing has not been good enough in the past. Teaching has improved, through support from specialist teachers, and is now well planned and modelled. Teaching now gives pupils the tools to become good writers and helps them understand how they can make their writing interesting.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. For example, pupils in Year 1 were taught effectively how to subtract by using an empty number line. Pupils in Year 2 were taught about right angles, and in Year 6 they were taught how to represent data in a table before constructing charts and graphs.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well taught. Teachers and teaching assistants take time to consider the needs of each individual pupil and design programmes to match their ability levels. The teaching of catch-up programmes in reading are effective because they are delivered through short, sharp, highly focused sessions that bring about good progress.
- Pupils' work in English is now well marked, noting what they have done well and what needs to be improved. Pupils are consistently given time to respond to their teachers' helpful comments. This good practice is not as strong in mathematics where pupils are only sometimes given useful tips on how to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are extremely keen to learn in lessons. They participate well and work collaboratively and independently without fuss, with even the youngest maintaining their effort and concentration. Lessons are rarely disrupted due to bad behaviour.
- Behaviour in lessons, around the school and on the playground is outstanding. Pupils, parents and staff agree and are extremely positive regarding pupils' behaviour. One pupil said, 'Behaviour is always good.'
- Pupils say that they feel completely safe in school. They have an outstanding understanding of what constitutes an unsafe situation, including the importance of being safe on the internet. They are aware of bullying but say that it is non-existent. They know who they would go to if

there were any concerns and say that if there were any incidents, they would be dealt with effectively by the school staff.

- Pupils are proud of their school and their sporting and artistic achievements. They say that they are treated fairly and are allowed to have their say, for example, through the very active and effective school council. They say that they are supported well in their learning by their teachers and teaching and learning assistants.
- Pupils appreciate additional opportunities provided by the school and by the parents. For example, they have 'time to talk' with a school adult about how they are feeling. The 'Friends of Rackheath School' (FORS) gave pupils the opportunity to make cards and gifts for fathers' day. In this popular session, pupils' behaviour was exemplary.
- Pupils' use of Language that can upset others is non-existent and bad language is rare. This is because senior leaders and teachers have explained that it is unacceptable.
- Pupils' attendance is above average. Pupils are rarely late for school and there have been no exclusions from school in recent years.

The leadership and management are good

- The interim headteacher has a clear vision for the school's future. He has had a significant impact in bringing about improvement in a relatively short time. His vision is shared by staff and governors. Plans for improvement are correctly focused on bringing about more improvement to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Senior leaders use a range of approaches, including rigorous evaluation of data on pupils' achievements and observing teachers at work, to check on the effectiveness of teaching. This leads to the school having a good understanding of what it does well and what needs to be improved. This information is recorded concisely in its self-evaluation.
- Arrangements for judging teachers' performance are robust. There are links between teachers' performance and pay progression. Senior leaders know where the best teaching is located.
- Pupils' learning, in a range of subjects, is well planned. The school provides a variety of clubs and activities including artistic, sporting and musical experiences. Visits to other locations in Norfolk and visitors to the school further add to pupils' enjoyment of school and develop their confidence.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through interesting lessons, classroom environments, displays and assemblies. Pupils work well together in collaboration and discussion. They learn to listen to each other and respect others' comments. Pupils' understanding of local and global issues is promoted well through, for example, consideration of the distance travelled by food from distant parts of the world and the impact this could have on the environment.
- The school tackles discrimination well and promotes good relationships and equal opportunities for all pupils. As a result, all pupils get on well with each other and make good progress in their learning, helping them to be prepared for life in a modern society.

- Parents are very satisfied with the way the school keeps their children safe, happy and well looked after. They say that the school now provides them with enough information regarding their children's progress. They also say that it helps them to get involved in their children's education through, for example, the 'maths drop-ins' and the 'reading cafes'. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
- The school works effectively with other schools in the area and with the local authority. Teachers and teaching assistants have benefited from advice and guidance that has helped to improve teaching, for instance, through the 'teacher development programmes'. This has led to improved levels of teaching and guidance for the pupils, ensuring that they make good progress.
- The school has received good support from the local authority. Work has included brokering the support of the interim headteacher, helping the governing body to appoint the next headteacher, undertaking a review of data on pupils' achievement and lesson observations. Support has been timely, effective and appreciated by the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors have been well trained in their responsibilities and know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. They are fully involved in checking how well the school improvement plan is being put into practice and understand how well the school is doing compared with similar schools.
 - Governors maintain an overview of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement through reviewing data on pupils' performance and receiving reports from senior staff. They hold senior leaders to account and use thorough systems to make sure the school links staff pay rises and promotion to their performance.
 - The governing body has accurately evaluated the impact of external support and the school's use of the additional funding for specific groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for the pupil premium, and knows how this money is being spent.
 - Governors appointed an interim headteacher for one year and, with the guidance of the local authority, have recently appointed a new headteacher to start at the school from September 2013.
 - Governors make sure that all national requirements for safeguarding are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	120843
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	405968

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	157
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Emma Watts
Headteacher	James Shearly
Date of previous school inspection	16 February 2011
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