

Rodings Primary School

Dunmow Road, Dunmow, CM6 1PZ

Inspection dates 5–6 June 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Attainment of pupils has risen over the past few years and is now above average for reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children join Reception with skills that are broadly at expected levels and they make good progress through the school.
- In 2011 pupils known to be eligible for free school meals made outstanding progress across Key Stage 2 and pupils currently in Year 6 made outstanding progress last year.
- Teachers create a positive climate for learning with lessons that are well structured and matched to pupils' abilities.
- Since the previous inspection, pupils have become more aware of their targets and have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.
- Staff are committed to the school and very supportive of its aims.
- The school is a happy community where pupils and staff work harmoniously and where behaviour and safety are good.
- The school is a model of best practice for its reading programme and younger children have good opportunities to participate in outdoor learning activities through the school's participation in the 'Forest School' programme.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills well through a wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities and through good opportunities for pupils to contribute to school life.
- Senior leaders and governors worked successfully to raise attainment in reading for Year 6 pupils in 2012. Pupils now make good progress in reading across almost all year groups and standards of reading in both Key Stage 1 and 2 are above average.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Adults in the Reception class do not always promote children's communication and thinking skills.
- Pupils are not always given opportunities to respond to marking across subjects.
- The pace of lessons sometimes slackens so that progress is not as rapid as possible.
- Leaders and managers do not use assessment information well enough to accelerate progress of different groups, especially pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and some pupils with special educational needs.
- Some of the targets in the school's action plans are not always easy for leaders to measure.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 19 lessons in all classes. Some of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Two full-time teachers were absent during the inspection.
- Meetings were held with pupils, leaders and managers, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and the school’s external consultant.
- Inspectors held informal discussions with parents and carers. They also took account of 62 responses to the Parent View online survey, and 21 questionnaires from staff.
- They looked at pupils’ work in lessons and also scrutinised pupils’ books with the headteacher. Inspectors heard pupils reading and observed them in class and around the school.
- A wide range of school documentation was considered. This included information relating to the attainment and progress of pupils, and groups of pupils; the performance management of staff; samples of lesson observations; the school’s website; the school’s action plans; minutes from governing body meetings; the school’s self-evaluation; behaviour records and safeguarding information.

Inspection team

Najoud Ensaff, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Rosenthal

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Rodings Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It benefits from an extensive and well-resourced outside area, is oversubscribed and the number of pupils has increased since the last inspection.
- Almost all pupils are White British, with remaining pupils coming from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. There are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is below average, and the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- There are very few pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils eligible for free school meals, in the care of the local authority or with a parent in the armed services).
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to outstanding so that the achievement of all pupils rises to outstanding by making sure that:
 - adults in the Reception class more effectively promote high quality discussion and develop children's understanding better
 - pupils always receive feedback about their work across subjects and they have opportunities to respond to this.
- Raise leadership and management to outstanding by making sure that:
 - leaders and managers analyse and use assessment information more rigorously to eliminate differences in the progress made by different groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and those eligible for free school meals
 - targets in school action plans are always specific, given a deadline and easy to measure.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The trend over recent years has been one of rising attainment at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Attainment in reading in 2011 rose to above average and attainment in writing has improved since the last inspection.
- Children come from a range of pre-school settings and enter Reception classes with a range of skills which are broadly in line with those that are expected for their age.
- Pupils make good progress across the school although progress in some classes and subjects is not as strong as in others because the pace of lessons sometimes slows.
- Although in 2012 a very small number of Year 6 pupils did not make expected progress in reading, current progress information indicates that the proportions making expected and better than expected progress across the school in both English and mathematics are good. This is because the school has put in place a structured literacy programme which is having positive impact on pupils' learning and has rightly identified mathematics as a key priority.
- Progress in reading is consistently strong across the school and this is often the case in writing. Pupils make at least expected and sometimes better progress in mathematics. Progress for children in the Reception class, while good overall, is not as strong as possible because adults are missing opportunities to interact more effectively with children by promoting their thinking and talking skills.
- In 2011, the very few pupils eligible for free school meals made outstanding progress although current school information indicates that these pupils are making less progress than their peers. They currently lag behind their peers by up to two terms.
- Last year, the current Year 6 pupils made outstanding progress in English and mathematics and many of the very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds currently make outstanding progress.
- In 2012, pupils' performance in the Year 1 phonics (linking sounds and letters) screening check was broadly in line with other schools nationally. Current information indicates that pupils in Year 1 have a much better level of phonic knowledge now. The standard of reading in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is good.
- Although last year pupils in Year 6 who had special educational needs did not make as much progress as similar pupils nationally, those currently in the school make at least expected and sometimes good progress. While assessment information is being used to set targets, these are not always challenging enough to accelerate progress for all of these pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- There is a positive climate for learning at the school with pupils' art and other work adorning walls and their achievements celebrated. This, and productive working relationships between pupils and teachers, contributes positively to pupils' progress.
- Good teaching over time ensures that pupils make good progress across the school. Pupils

behave well in almost all lessons. They have positive attitudes to learning and as a result they achieve well.

- Teachers plan lessons well and provide pupils with work that builds on prior learning and matches their abilities. Where teaching is strongest, pupils are given opportunities to respond to feedback from teachers and to shape their own learning. For example in a Year 2 English lesson, pupils generated the way in which they would measure how successful they had been in creating effective descriptions and their books showed that they were very used to evaluating their own learning and responding to marking. As a result, their progress was good.
- Progress in most lessons is good with teachers giving pupils activities that build on their learning well. Occasionally, where teachers do not consider individual pupils' needs carefully enough, or where pupils are left for too long without intervention, they make less progress.
- The best aspects of teaching provide pupils with opportunities to work creatively and actively. For example in a mathematics lesson in Year 2, pupils were encouraged to associate 'Kung Fu' moves with mathematical operations and in a Year 4 French lesson, pupils were actively involved in using their language skills in a role-play based on a French café. As a result, pupils were very well motivated.
- Teachers promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills well across different subjects, with pupils in Year 6, for example, producing some good quality writing in topic books.
- Teachers make good use of the outdoor learning environment with, for instance, children having opportunities to take part in the 'Forest School' programme where they develop good resilience and social skills.
- Occasionally, particularly in Reception classes, adults do not promote children's learning well through high quality discussions and opportunities for children to think more creatively. As a result, progress for some children slows.
- Teachers mark pupils' literacy and numeracy work regularly, often giving pupils praise and a comment which shows them the next steps in their learning. While marking in English and mathematics books is regular and useful, marking across subjects is not always as frequent, and pupils do not always have an opportunity to respond to feedback from teachers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in lessons. They have good attitudes to learning and respond well to instructions from adults.
- School records of behaviour and responses by pupils and parents indicate that this good behaviour is usual for pupils.
- Pupils are positive about their experiences in the school and value their opportunities to shape the behaviour policy at the school. They are welcoming, polite and respectful to adults and to each other.
- Pupils report that they feel safe at school and that they know how to keep themselves safe. They understand about different forms of bullying such as physical, verbal and racist bullying. Although a small number of parents who responded to Parent View indicated that bullying is not always effectively dealt with, all pupils and parents spoken to during the inspection reported

that any rare instances of bullying are well dealt with and that children feel safe at the school.

- Pupils contribute strongly to the school and wider community. They act as special friends to younger children, play leaders and reading partners, as well as regularly raising money for charities.
- Attendance is average. The school is working hard to improve the attendance of the very few pupils who attend less regularly.
- Almost all parents and carers who responded to the online Parent view survey believe that their children are happy at the school and most believe they are well looked after.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and managers have been successful in raising attainment in writing since the previous inspection and in reading since 2011. They have also addressed areas for improvement relating to target setting and marking, so that the good quality of teaching seen in 2008 has been maintained and achievement in the school remains good.
- The school has received light-touch support from the local authority. This alongside the implementation of the reading programme has helped the school to address the dip in Year 6 pupils' attainment in reading in 2011. The school has worked effectively with an external consultant to improve the monitoring of teaching and to raise attainment for low ability pupils across the school.
- Senior leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching and marking. They provide useful feedback to staff, identifying key strengths and areas for development. This, combined with effective performance management targets linked to achievement, and training on whole school areas for development, has helped to ensure that the quality of teaching remains good. Pay progression is linked to performance.
- The head teacher holds formal meetings with teachers to review pupils' progress, and this is helping them to close gaps in the learning and attainment of the vast majority of pupils.
- Assessment information is not always used effectively to speed up learning for all groups of pupils. Consequently, a very small number of pupils who have special educational needs and a very small number known to be eligible for free school meals currently make less progress than they should.
- The school is a very cohesive community with leaders fostering good relations between pupils and promoting equal opportunities. Almost all pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make outstanding progress and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated at the school.
- Subjects are appropriately planned and organised with a wide and rich range of extra-curricular clubs, educational visits, joint activities with local schools and visiting theatre groups to the school, all of which enhance pupils' experience and enjoyment of subjects greatly.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social skills well through a range of art activities, work in lessons, enrichment activities, themed days and whole-school assemblies.
- While school action plans are focused on the right priorities and are helping the school to move forward, targets are not always specific enough or given deadlines. This means that progress

towards these targets is more difficult to measure.

- The school offers a range of ways for parents to access information: the school website, parents' evenings, regular newsletters and progress review meetings. The Friends of Rodings Primary School committee is very active, raising money for the school. While some parents expressed some dissatisfaction with the school in the online Parent View survey all parents spoken to during the inspection were universally positive about their experiences and individual parents wrote effusively about the way in which the school had supported their child, responded to their concerns and kept them well informed.
- The school works with seven other schools in a consortium of local schools that has a commitment to raising attainment across schools by sharing good practice and it has a very strong relationship with Cambridge University Faculty of Education.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body both supports and asks searching questions of the school. Governors have a good understanding of the school's work, including its key priorities. They discuss how well the school is doing in comparison to others in the country, and challenge the school, for example, about the achievement of pupils and whether money is being spent well. The governing body has a clear oversight of performance management. It knows what is being done to tackle any underperformance. It oversees the school's finances well, so that, for example, investment in the reading programme has been worthwhile and pupil premium funding is used appropriately. The governing body sees that child protection policies and safeguarding meet requirements and that staff and pupils work in a safe environment.

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	115266
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	403262

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bernard Lawrence
Headteacher	Christopher Yates
Date of previous school inspection	30 June 2008
Telephone number	01279 876288
Fax number	01279 876001
Email address	admin@rodings.essex.sch.uk

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