

Rattlesden Church of England Primary Academy

School Road, Rattlesden, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP30 0SE

Inspection dates

17–18 October 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since taking on the role, the headteacher, ably supported by the trust, leaders and governors, has taken decisive action to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Pupils' achievements in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 are good. Pupils' progress continues to improve year on year.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about how happy and safe their children are. They praise the care and support that the school provides for their children.
- Leaders and governors are ambitious for the pupils and provide a good quality of education. They have an accurate view of the strengths and a strong strategic vision to support future school improvement.
- The trust provides effective training to improve the quality of teaching over time. This has had considerable impact on improving the progress that pupils make, especially in mathematics.
- Leaders provide pupils with a rich and creative curriculum that underpins teaching and learning. Pupils build their knowledge well across a range of subjects. The quality of pupils' work in art is particularly impressive.
- Leadership of the early years is effective. Adults provide precise teaching so that children make good progress from their individual starting points. They are well prepared for Year 1.
- Rattlesden is an inclusive school which is at the heart of the small, rural village community. Staff develop strong relationships with pupils and their families.
- Staff use their knowledge of pupils effectively when planning learning. As a result, individual pupils' needs are well met.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about learning. They enjoy school and are kind and caring towards each other. Effective transition arrangements prepare pupils well for their next key stage.
- Teachers do not always give enough guidance to pupils on how to improve their writing. Some pupils, particularly the most able, are not making the progress of which they are capable.
- At times, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can do and achieve. More pupils could achieve even better in writing.
- Subject leaders for English and mathematics are new to their role. Their actions have not had time to make a significant impact on pupils' outcomes.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - developing subject leaders' roles in English and mathematics so that their actions improve outcomes for pupils in their subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that teachers guide pupils effectively to improve their writing so that more achieve the standards of which they are capable
 - raising teachers' expectations for the quality of pupils' writing, especially for the most able.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher's determined and relentless efforts to raise standards are coming to fruition. Despite a three-year period of leadership change with some instability in the teaching staff, the headteacher has taken decisive action, which has led to raised standards in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- With a strong team behind the headteacher and a united vision, school staff, governors and the trust have increased the school's capacity to raise standards further and improve pupils' outcomes. All staff who responded to their online questionnaire say that they are proud to work at the school. Staff say that leaders support them well and take account of adults' ongoing workloads when making decisions.
- Leaders have reviewed their monitoring systems and successfully improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. There is a consistent approach to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics across the school.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The school's values of mutual respect are captured in the pupils' thoughtfulness and sensitivity towards each other. They talk about their friends' qualities and are mindful about their classmates' needs. Pupils learn well about a variety of different cultures and religions. They respect people's different religious beliefs and can discuss maturely the similarities between them.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum ignites pupils' love of learning. For example, pupils in key stage 2 are enthusiastic about their current topic and can relay an array of information that they have learned about the rainforest and the animals that live there. Similarly, pupils can recall learning from previous years, especially in history.
- Leaders provide pupils with a vast range of enrichment activities. Examples include visits to local galleries, where pupils meet local artists to gain an insight into experts' work and how different painting techniques are effectively used. The impact of these visits is exemplified through the exceptional quality of art work seen throughout the school.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding well to provide a range of support for disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils so that they make strong progress. Leaders fund school trips and provide small group catch-up programmes for pupils who need extra support in reading, writing and mathematics. In addition, pupils receive their own pack of books and stationery every six months from a national book scheme which encourages them to read outside of school. Governors and school leaders monitor and evaluate the impact of the funding closely.
- Leaders use the primary physical education and sport premium funding well to provide pupils with a variety of sports and competition opportunities. Although a small school, a school team competes in wide range of sporting events, such as tag rugby, dodgeball and football. Skilled sports professionals help teachers to develop their skills further so that pupils receive high-quality physical education.
- The leadership for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities

is effective. These pupils receive appropriate support that is provided in a timely fashion. The special educational needs coordinator has established good links with external agencies and is committed to ensuring that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receive support that is appropriate to their needs. Consequently, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their varying starting points.

- All parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, would recommend the school. The comments that parents made using the free-text service were highly positive. One parent's comment captured the view of many: 'A truly wonderful school. Both of my children have flourished academically, socially and emotionally at Rattlesden Primary School.' All parents who responded would recommend the school to other parents.
- A number of middle leaders are new to their roles. Subject leaders in English and mathematics have received training to further their understanding of how to raise standards in their subjects. Leaders recognise that there is more work to do to ensure that their actions have sufficient impact on improving pupils' progress in their subjects.
- The multi-academy trust has brought the expertise and experience from all four schools in the trust to support leaders with SEN provision and with improving the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics. The new chief executive officer of the trust has a strong vision for raising standards further, particularly in writing, and developing the role of middle leaders.

Governance of the school

- Governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas that need to improve further still. They are committed and support school leaders' vision to drive improvements so that children get the best start from when they start school.
- Governors are regular visitors to the school. They have a good strategic overview. Minutes of governing body meetings demonstrate that governors regularly challenge school leaders about pupils' progress.
- Governors monitor different pupil groups and each governor has appropriate expertise about their specific area of responsibility. For example, the monitoring of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is precise. Governors regularly check the impact of leaders' actions on improving the progress and provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and teachers are committed to ensuring that pupils are safe and attend school regularly.
- The headteacher ensures that there are very strong systems and procedures in place for keeping pupils safe. Records are meticulously kept, and any concerns are recorded in detail, routinely monitored and reviewed. Inspection evidence shows that any concerns are followed up immediately.
- All staff have received mandatory safeguarding training. Other training needs for all staff have been met, including training on protecting pupils from radicalisation and the

latest advice on county lines.

- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe at school. All parents who responded to Parent View agreed that their children are safe and well looked after.
- The school's single central record of employment checks and employee files are well maintained and contain all required statutory information. All adults have undergone the necessary checks to determine their suitability to work with children.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders' work to improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in mathematics, has improved pupils' outcomes across the school. Teachers give many opportunities to pupils to practise their skills and apply them to problem-solving tasks. Currently, pupils in Year 6 are developing into confident mathematicians. They demonstrate strong reasoning skills when discussing different methods that they use to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan well-structured sequences of learning that builds on what pupils already know and can do. In lessons, adults question pupils well in order to check pupils' accurate understanding and extend pupils' thinking.
- Leaders' focus on developing the quality of reading has had a significant impact on improving pupils' progress. Pupils read widely and enjoy the extensive range of books from the school's library. In addition, leaders have invested in a range of high-quality texts to support pupils' topic work in subjects other than English.
- In key stage 1, the quality of teaching of phonics is strong over time. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to routinely practise their sounds. For example, pupils in Year 1 demonstrated their confidence in identifying different sounds and writing words, which were dictated by the teacher. Similarly, in Year 2, pupils recognised silent letters such as 'gn' and 'kn'. They read a range of words with silent beginnings accurately and confidently.
- Pupils' comprehension skills are improving. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 showed an awareness of a writer's choice of language and how it is used to convey meaning. In Year 5, pupils wrote effectively to persuade the audience that they were writing for.
- Teaching assistants are skilled in supporting pupils to either catch up or extend their learning further. They help pupils who have misunderstood the learning in reading, writing and mathematics so that pupils are ready for the next lesson. Reading catch-up programmes have had a positive impact on pupils' progress in reading, with some pupils making substantial progress to reach the expected standard by the end of Year 2.
- Support for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities is highly effective. Staff know the pupils well and meet their needs with care, nurture and support. Teaching assistants liaise closely with the teacher so that learning activities are planned to help pupils make as much progress as possible. Pupils gain confidence and make good progress from their varying starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.

- Teachers implement the school’s rich curriculum well. Pupils particularly enjoy science and enthuse about the many experiments that they have carried out during their time at school.
- The quality of artistic teaching and learning is a strength. Pupils speak highly of music lessons and how they are often inspired to practise independently at home. Art work across the school is impressive. Pupils in key stage 2, for example, have created beautiful paintings of animals and stunning displays, such as the rain forest art work in Year 6 class. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 were proud to show their paper bag puppets, and in Reception class, children eagerly showed their Kandinsky art displays.
- Teachers do not always insist or expect that pupils set out their writing appropriately or use the skills they have been taught consistently. Therefore, pupils’ writing does not always reflect accurately what they are able to do or show their full capabilities.
- In teaching writing, teachers do not always guide pupils well enough or explain clearly how they can improve. Pupils’ learning is not, therefore, moved on quickly and some pupils, especially the most able, do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school’s work to promote pupils’ personal development and welfare is good.
- In lessons, pupils show enthusiasm for learning and engage positively in their tasks.
- Pupils take pride in roles of responsibility. They are proud to be given roles on the school council, and as playground leaders, and they enjoy the status of being head boy or girl. Pupils carry out their additional roles, such as setting up the hall for collective worship, maturely and sensibly. They enjoy helping younger pupils as road safety monitors.
- During assembly, pupils are taught about values such as compassion. They respond well to the messages that they are given, answer questions sensitively and show a secure understanding about the importance of these values.
- Pupils develop confidence and teamwork by exploring the school’s forest school area, woodland walk and wildflower meadow. Pupils in key stage 1 demonstrate that they are confident learners and are extremely supportive of each other’s learning inside and outside of lessons.
- Pupils develop into thoughtful and reflective young people through participating in lessons such as PSHE and philosophy. For example, older pupils demonstrated that they have learned to respect different opinions. They recognise the value in listening to other views and recognise how it provokes their own thinking to help them to become more knowledgeable. This was particularly evident during a discussion with the inspector about religion, where they shared their different beliefs respectfully.
- Pupils and parents say that bullying is rare but, if it happens, they are confident that it will be dealt with quickly and appropriately. Pupils are aware of the dangers when using the internet. They know who they should speak to if they have concerns.

- Transition within year groups and from Year 6 to secondary school are effective. Teachers ensure that information concerning pupils' well-being and progress is transferred to the next teacher so that future teachers know their pupils' starting points. Parents report that pupils are very well prepared for their secondary education.
- Parents value the support and nurture that staff at all levels provide. One parent commented that: 'The school's provision and care for my children, especially for my child with additional needs, is second to none and I'm amazed at how much time, attention and careful planning they are able to give them as individuals.' Others commented on the effective support given by staff to parents during transition into Reception, as well as those who are new to the area who join at different times to the norm.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Parents and staff agree that pupils' behaviour is good and that leaders ensure positive behaviour is the norm. One parent commented that: 'The children are respectful of the teachers and behave with kindness and understanding towards each other.' This was evident throughout the inspection.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and mutual respect between adults and pupils is evident. When, on occasions, some pupils find school challenging, staff support them effectively to make the right choices. The school's behaviour systems are secure, and pupils know the boundaries well.
- Pupils enjoy school and attendance is above the national average. They engage in their learning and work well together. Consequently, disruptions in lessons are rare.
- Pupils play together happily at breaktimes and behave appropriately in the dining hall. They walk around the school building calmly and sensibly.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The number of pupils in each year group is small. One pupil can account for a higher proportion of the published information. Standards are therefore easily above or below the national average.
- Nonetheless, the progress that pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics has continued to improve over the last three years. In 2018, by the end of key stage 2, pupils made progress that was closer to that found nationally when compared with pupils of similar starting points.
- The proportion of pupils who reached the required standard by the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 was broadly in line with that found nationally in reading and mathematics in 2018. This was an improvement on previous years. Current pupils show that this is expected to continue this academic year.
- Although the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check, in 2018, was below the national average, current information and evidence show that the quality of teaching and learning of phonics is good.
- Leaders have successfully ensured that pupils who did not reach the expected standard

in the phonics screening check in 2018 are being supported to make better progress this year. Pupils in all year groups read well, using their phonics knowledge effectively to read unfamiliar words.

- Leaders' work to improve reading has been successful. Year 6 pupils' outcomes improved significantly at the end of 2018. The proportion of most-able pupils who reached the higher standard was significantly above that found nationally.
- In 2018, pupils' outcomes in mathematics have improved. This is because the trust uses teachers' expertise across all its schools to share good practice. This drive by leaders to improve teaching and learning, so that pupils reach the expected standard and beyond, resulted in more Year 6 pupils reaching the higher standard in mathematics by the end of the academic year.
- Pupils' writing is improving over time. The school's curriculum is engaging well both boys and girls who enjoy writing at length. Pupils are articulate, and there are many examples of their writing that show that they can construct sentences and use grammar appropriately when writing for a range of different purposes.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their different starting points. Learning mentors help pupils who need additional support to develop increased confidence and self-esteem. This helps pupils to be ready for their learning so that they are better placed to make the strong progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well cared for and supported very effectively by the adults who work with them. Early identification of needs ensures that pupils get the right support to make good progress from their different starting points.
- Pupils' work on displays and in workbooks shows that they typically make good progress in subjects other than English and mathematics. This is the case in many subjects such as science, geography, and design and technology. Pupils experience enrichment activities, through visits to businesses and the local university, in computing and science. Pupils are being well prepared for the next stage of their education. Improving writing is a priority for leaders. Current pupils demonstrate that they enjoy writing. However, some pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable, particularly at key stage 2.

Early years provision

Good

- The new early years leader ensures that the provision both inside and outside provides well for children's learning and personal development. Children's needs are met effectively.
- Strong assessment systems are in place and used carefully to ensure that children make good progress from their starting points. Through accurate identification of current strengths and weaknesses, leaders are addressing areas of weakness with rigour and determination.
- The early years staff team have high expectations for children to achieve well in all areas of learning, particularly in phonics and writing. They use information carefully to plan opportunities for all children to achieve well. For example, boys' achievement in reading and writing has historically been an area to improve. Evidence seen shows that

boys are achieving as well as girls.

- Leaders have carefully chosen books to support children's phonics development. Leaders also implement inspiring learning activities which are improving outcomes for current children, especially boys.
- The early years leader works closely with the local pre-school and parents so that the team can gain as much information as possible about children before they start the Reception Year. The school's system for sharing information with parents helps keep teachers and parents up to date about what children can do.
- There is a strong focus on developing children's pencil control and writing skills from the moment they enter Reception. Children have regular opportunities to practise forming letters accurately, both inside and outside the classroom. Consequently, many children can write their name quickly and independently. They make good use of the many activities to practise and make good progress with their early writing skills.
- Although the early years setting caters for mixed-aged children of Reception age and Year 1, adults carefully plan activities so that teaching and learning meet the needs of all ages and abilities. Adults know the children well and work closely together to ensure that all are making the progress that they should.
- Teachers' high expectations and clear routines ensure that children know what is expected from them. Children willingly follow the routines and engage in activities purposefully and with enthusiasm. Additional adults closely observe children's learning and skilfully ask questions to extend children's thinking and language skills.
- Teachers plan activities that interest children and encourage imaginative learning. For example, children enjoyed completing number work in the wooden play house that was set up as a veterinary surgery. They were pretending to take telephone calls and using a cash register, whiteboard and pen to add up the cost of medicines. One child was particularly keen to demonstrate his number bonds to 10 that he had completed independently.
- Adults provide a stimulating and safe environment. Children move to and from activities sensibly. They listen to stories appropriately and participate well in whole-class learning. Effective teaching ensures that children know what to do when they begin an activity. Children sustain interest for long periods of time. As a result, they are confident and resilient learners who are ready for key stage 1.
- Leaders acknowledge the important role that parents play in children's early education. Leaders engage parents through phonics workshops and welcome parents into the school to see how their children learn. Open mornings for parents provide regular opportunities for parents to read with their children in school and enable them to see how staff in school teach reading so that parents can support reading at home.

School details

Unique reference number	142554
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10078222

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	111
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Ben Davies
Headteacher	Helen Ballam
Telephone number	01449 736 335
Website	www.rattlesdenprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@rattlesden.suffolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than average in size.
- The school joined with three other similar-sized local schools to form Thedwastre Education Trust in 2016.
- A new chief executive officer was appointed in September 2018.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. Year 6 pupils are taught in a single year group.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning across all year groups, jointly with the headteacher, and in a range of subjects.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, governors, the chief executive officer of the trust, and school staff, including senior and middle leaders.
- The inspector looked at pupils' written work, information on pupils' attainment and progress, curriculum planning and records of behaviour and safety. Minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding documents, including mandatory checks made on the recruitment of new staff, and the school's website were evaluated.
- Discussions were held with pupils in key stage 2 and informal conversations took place during lesson times across all year groups.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and talked to them about the books they enjoy.
- The inspector took account of the 65 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 67 free-text responses. In addition, the inspector spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day and considered the 20 responses to the Ofsted staff survey, along with the eight responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Cindy Impey, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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