

# Rackheath Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120843
<b>Local Authority</b>	NORFOLK
<b>Inspection number</b>	291876
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Roger Fry

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	142
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Emma Whymark
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jacqueline Sinkins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 October 2001
<b>School address</b>	Willoughby Way Rackheath Norwich Norfolk NR13 6SL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01603 720098
<b>Fax number</b>	01603 722891

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector over two days.

## Description of the school

The school serves the village of Rackheath and surrounding area. Virtually all pupils are from White British backgrounds and all speak English. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has a below average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and with statements of their particular needs. Young children's attainment on entry to Reception is typical of children nationally. A small number of pupils come from Exclusive Brethren families.

The school was rebuilt in 2003 on a new site a mile away from the old site. The proportion of pupils joining the school at times other than at the beginning of the year is above average.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Rackheath Primary provides a satisfactory and improving education for its pupils. Pupils' personal development is good because duties and responsibilities, such as membership of the school council bring on pupils' sense of being good citizens. Satisfactory care, guidance and support ensures that the school takes time to ensure pupils are safe, such as in the good provision for water safety.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The provision in the Foundation Stage is good and children reach the expected goals by Year 1 and some exceed them. Staff have a clear understanding of how children learn and expectations of what they can do are high. This year pupils in Year 2 are likely to reach broadly average standards. In Year 6, pupils are on course to exceed the nationally expected standards in mathematics and science. Girls tend to lack confidence in their mathematical abilities and perform less well than boys. Indications are that standards in English are likely to be average, because pupils lack some of the higher order skills in writing.

Pupils' progress in the last three years has accelerated from very low to satisfactory, hence the school now provides satisfactory value money. The improvement is the result of sustained work to improve teachers' capacity to teach literacy and numeracy effectively. Despite many changes to teaching staff the school's non-teaching staff has been stable and teaching assistants have become increasingly good at helping pupils to revise what they have not understood. A further reason for the school's improvement is that pupils are warmly rewarded for good work and deeds, which has improved their attitudes to school. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities have benefited from the wide range of well chosen programmes provided to boost their progress in English and mathematics.

Teaching, learning and curriculum are satisfactory with strengths in behaviour management and the improvement in pupils' progress by the end of Key Stage 2. Teachers include each child in the mixed age classes by teaching a common theme, but at times not enough attention is given to extending the more able pupils.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school's self-evaluation is accurate, which is a good element of its work because the basis for improvement is well founded. There is a sense of teamwork and sensible optimism in the school because the staff have shared responsibilities. However, subject leaders have too few opportunities to make a significant impact on the work of the school in their subjects. Governors have a clear understanding of what the school has achieved so far and of what still needs to be done. Given the improving standards and achievement by Year 6, the school's capacity to improve is good.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English by improving pupils' higher order writing skills.
- Raise standards in mathematics by improving girls' confidence in the subject.
- Develop the role of subject leaders so that they have an impact across the whole school.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage and reach the expected goals by Year 1. Some exceed them and they make particularly good progress. In Year 2, over the last two years pupils have reached broadly average standards in reading,

writing and mathematics. This year pupils are likely to reach similar standards. In Years 3 to 6, pupils have made improving progress for two years. In 2006 standards were above average overall and pupils met their targets. This year pupils have challenging targets to reach. Their current work in mathematics and science indicates that they are on course to reach above average standards. Girls' standards in mathematics across the school are lower than boys' because they lack confidence in their abilities at times. English standards are likely to be broadly average because writing standards are lower than in reading. Many pupils' expression of ideas, spelling, handwriting and punctuation skills are not advanced enough for them to reach higher than the expected standards. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, make similar progress as their peers. Pupils with statements of special educational need make good progress through their individual targets.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' attitudes towards work are positive. Consequently, behaviour is good and there have been very few exclusions. Pupils receive certificates for good work and other contributions to school life. Rewards make them feel very proud. The following is typical of letters from parents, 'My children are settled at school and enjoy their time there.' Attendance is slightly below average because school time is lost when pupils take holidays in term time. Pupils understand the importance of looking after their bodies through eating healthily and exercising frequently. They enjoy the many sporting opportunities they take part in, which shows in their Capoeira exercise routines that reflect the music and culture of Brazil. They feel safe and know that members of staff are ready to listen to any concerns they have. Pupils understand how to cope with many of the main dangers in life, such as crossing roads. They are enthusiastic about contributing to the school's development through the school council, as monitors and helpers. Councillors discussed in an informed way how they should be elected during a meeting, and for whom they might raise money. Pupils join their secondary schools well prepared for taking part in the social aspects of school life and adequately prepared academically.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good features. The teaching at the end of Key Stage 2 is good. Consequently, pupils' rate of progress is improving and standards in mathematics and science are above average. Teachers are aware that pupils' presentation of work, such as their consistent use of joined handwriting and correct punctuation is an important target for improvement. In Reception the teaching shows a deep understanding of young children's needs. Children thrive in an environment where expectations are high. As a result, for example, many children write sentences in advance of the standard expected of Reception children. Teachers plan lessons in logical sequences. They include each child in the mixed age classes by teaching a common theme, and typically each pupil has work set that broadly matches their age. Teachers identify what pupils will learn in each lesson and then evaluate whether their goals have been reached. The pace of the teaching varies between classes. There are times when more able pupils complete too many consolidation activities rather than more challenging work from the outset.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

Education for safety and health is good, such as the provision for swimming. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 receive a course of lessons each year and by the end of Year 6, a very large majority of pupils learn to swim 25 metres or further. Pupils have good opportunities to contribute to the school community through duties, participation in teams and in the school council. In order to boost girls' interest in information and communication technology (ICT), a friend of the school runs a weekly club for girls. The school has correctly identified that more visitors and visits to places of interest would provide a richer pool of ideas for pupils to use in their writing. The school has made many suitable changes to the curriculum which is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy learning when subjects are linked and are taught in topics. Work is practically based and involves enquiring or investigating into things. Teachers plan topics together well, but tend to plan in isolation in subjects such as English and mathematics. Weekly planning is not checked rigorously against the termly and yearly plans by subject leaders, hence any slippage may go unnoticed.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The school has grown steadily since it was rebuilt four years ago. Newcomers settle in well and parents note that the school provides well for their children. Brethren families feel included in the school and comment that staff are sensitive to their needs. Pupils grow in confidence and self esteem because of the good relationships between all. Pupils with special educational needs receive frequent individual support so that they are able to make the progress of which they are capable. Various 'catch up' programmes support pupils well. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust.

The school has a satisfactory system for monitoring pupils' academic progress. There is scope to amalgamate all the school's records of progress so that it is easier to see trends in English, mathematics and science. Pupils receive good oral feedback about their work and how to improve it in class, but there is no formal written marking policy.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher and senior staff have a good ability to take colleagues with them as changes are considered and made. Subject leaders are ready to do more, such as to plan lessons together more frequently so that good ideas can be shared consistently, work further on agreeing what different levels of work in the National Curriculum look like, standardise class assessment records and take opportunities to teach in teams so that teachers can learn from each other. The school improvement plan shows the school knows its strengths and weaknesses well and it is being put into action consistently. Pupils' standards in Year 6 have risen in the last three years, showing that the school's improvement work has been effective. The school has good capacity to improve further.

Governors make a satisfactory contribution to school improvement and are taking an increasingly active part in the school's strategic management. Governors have a clear understanding of what still needs to be done, such as to increase the proportions of pupils who reach higher than average standards. Governors do not see enough of the school's work at first hand.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.



## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

29 March 2007

Dear Children

Members of the School Council, Rackheath primary School, Willoughby Way, Rackheath, Norfolk, NR13 6SL

Please thank everyone for being so helpful during my recent visit. I found that your school has a number of good features. Here are some of them.

- Young children get a good start in Reception.
- You make good progress from Reception to Year 6 in mathematics and science.
- So many of you learn to swim at school.
- The school council is helping you to be good citizens.
- The new building and grounds are very attractive and you all enjoy them.
- You also enjoy school because teachers and other adults care for you and help you to learn.
- You work hard and get on well with one another.

Your teachers and I have noticed that there are three areas where you and the school can improve.

- You need to make sure that by the time you leave the school that you join your handwriting and punctuate your work well, so that standards in English match those in mathematics and science.
- Some girls lack confidence in mathematics lessons, so you need to try extra hard and make sure you ask for help when you need it.
- I am asking teachers to share information a bit more and work together even more closely to help you do even better.

I hope that you will all keep on working hard and doing well.

Roger Fry

Lead inspector