



Rockland St Mary Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120846
Local Authority NORFOLK
Inspection number 291878
Inspection dates 12–13 December 2006
Reporting inspector John Messer

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Lane
School category	Community		Rockland St Mary, Rockland St Mary
Age range of pupils	4–11		Norwich, Norfolk NR14 7EU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01508 538345
Number on roll (school)	82	Fax number	01508 538345
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Tim Beaumont
		Headteacher	Mr Ken Holbeck
Date of previous school inspection	12 June 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 12–13 December 2006	Inspection number 291878
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Children are taught in four classes in this small, village primary school. There are more boys than girls. Nearly all pupils are from white British families. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. Attainment on entry varies widely from year to year and in recent years has been below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils who enter or leave the school part-way through their education 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: 2

This is a good school. It provides a rich curriculum that meets the needs of pupils well. One parent summed this up, 'We are very pleased with the fully rounded education they receive, both academically and socially.' There is a strong emphasis on teaching key skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils are acutely aware of how to conserve energy and recycle materials. Personal development and behaviour are good. Pupils say that they enjoy learning and love the small size of the school because, 'It's like one big family.' Pupils are self-assured and performed their Christmas play with confidence and poise. Care, support and guidance are good. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure in school. They have a good understanding of how to eat sensibly, stay healthy and keep fit. Good foundations are laid for their future learning and working lives.

Teaching and learning are good. Children settle happily in the first class where they achieve well. They make good progress but many start from a low level of attainment and so standards are still slightly below average by the end of the Reception year. Teaching is good in Years 1 to 6 and pupils achieve well. The teaching assistants are highly skilled and take a lead in making sure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. For the past two years national assessments at the end of Year 2 showed that pupils attained standards that were broadly average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The results of national tests for pupils in Year 6 in 2006 showed that results were above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils make particularly good progress in reading. Although standards in writing are above average, progress is uneven. This is because teachers do not always expect enough of the more able pupils in writing.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has worked hard over many years to raise standards. Technology has been introduced to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Each classroom is equipped with an interactive white board. The use of this new technology is still developing and it is not yet used enough to enrich teaching and learning across the curriculum. Parents are very pleased with the education provided for their children. Governors visit frequently and this close contact helps them to monitor the school's performance thoroughly. Finances are managed well and the school provides good value for money. The school is analytical and its self-evaluation is accurate. It has good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the use of ICT so that it is used more effectively to improve teaching and learning across the curriculum.
- Raise teacher's expectations of the quality of writing that the more able pupils are capable of attaining and accelerate their progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve well. Children's achievement in the Foundation Stage is good and many children are on course to meet the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year. However, a significant number start from a low base and standards are slightly below average. Pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is good in Years 1 and 2 and they attain average standards. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 to 6 and by Year 6 standards overall are above average. Progress in reading is good, standards are above average and the proportion of pupils who attain the higher Level 5 standard is well above average. Pupils are interested in literature and read widely. Although progress in writing is mostly good it is uneven and by Year 6 standards are slightly below average. The more able pupils do not attain such high standards in writing as they do in reading. Pupils make good progress in mathematics and science and attain standards that are above average. Pupils develop a good range of skills in ICT and use computers confidently but have too few opportunities to apply their skills in other subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and attendance is good. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Pupils feel comfortable about asking questions, sharing problems or asking for assistance. They are given masses of encouragement and are frequently told how well they are doing. This helps them to become confident learners. They are courteous and converse readily with visitors. Pupils have a very good awareness of how to lead healthy lives. They demonstrate high levels of responsibility as school councillors or playground 'buddies' who sort out arguments at break time and search for any pupils who might be looking sad. Behaviour is good but a very small number of boys can be silly at times. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others and provide financial support to charities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They learn about a wide range of faiths and cultures. An excellent 'Switch Off, Keep Cool' week helped them to recognise how much electricity they could save in school and the impact of this in reducing carbon emissions. They are enthusiastic about recycling and recently won a cash prize in recognition of their work in raising awareness of this important issue. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education and later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan lessons in great detail so that lessons run smoothly and pupils learn effectively. In many lessons the recently installed interactive white boards are already being used well to support learning. However, the potential of this new technology is still at an early stage of development. Much of the teaching is lively and pupils report that lessons are fun. They say that their work 'is not too hard or too easy but just about right.' Teachers assess pupils' work carefully and mark work with helpful comments. They discuss aspects of work with individuals and show them how to improve. A talented team of teaching assistants makes a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support. The more able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently in writing and so do not always achieve as well as they could.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

In the Reception class there is a strong emphasis on teaching literacy and numeracy skills as well as fostering children's personal, social and emotional development. In Years 1 to 6 prominence is given to developing reading, writing, mathematical and scientific skills. Creative and performing arts are well represented, together with sport, French, personal, social and health education and ecology. Well planned visits to places of interest extend learning well. The curriculum is well balanced so that pupils receive a well-rounded education. ICT is another strong feature and pupils develop a good range of skills but they have too few opportunities to apply their skills in other subjects. The school has recognised the need to link subjects together more creatively in order to make learning even more stimulating.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils say that the school is a friendly place where they feel safe and secure. They say that some boys can be annoying at times but that there is no real bullying and that any poor behaviour is dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils' safety is of paramount importance to the school and arrangements for ensuring pupils' health and welfare are effective. Child protection arrangements are in place and are understood by all staff. Teachers offer pupils good guidance about personal development and about how to improve their work. Academic guidance is achieved largely through discussing work with pupils rather than by setting specific targets. Pupils say that there's nothing about the school that they want to change, 'It's pretty much perfect.' Parents wholeheartedly support their children's learning and work closely with the school to help them to make good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher sets high standards. He has devoted many years to building and maintaining a successful school. He keeps detailed records about each pupil's attainment and progress and is acutely aware of every individual's achievements. If any pupil's progress is found to be slowing, good procedures are in place to boost their performance. The school has identified writing as an area for improvement. Good progress has been made since the last inspection and the key issues in the last report have been tackled successfully. Standards in ICT have improved although the pace of technological advances means that the school finds itself entering a new phase of development in ICT. The school maintains an excellent web-site which is updated daily. This is greatly appreciated by parents. The school produces a good annual improvement plan but has recognised that the criteria used to measure the impact of new initiatives on raising standards are not precise enough. Governors are closely associated with the school and are well informed about its strengths and weaknesses. Financial control is good and money is spent wisely. Parents hold the school in high esteem and support it strongly.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
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

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ 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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
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	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

14 December 2006

Dear Children,

Rockland St Mary Primary School, School Lane, Rockland St Mary, Norwich, Norfolk, NR14 7EU

What a lovely school! I thoroughly enjoyed my short visit. Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming. I thoroughly enjoyed watching parts of your great Christmas performances and so did your parents. 'Cinderella' was wonderful.

You all work hard and make good progress. You told me that lessons are fun and that you like learning new things. You love reading and you read a wide range of literature. You are getting good at writing. You like mathematics and science. The 'Switch Off, Stay Cool' week was amazing. Who would have believed that you could save so much energy in just one week? It is great that you are so aware of the need to look after our precious planet Earth more carefully. You are good at sport, singing and acting. You told us that yours is a friendly school and that everybody gets on well together. You are polite, full of fun and most of you are very well-behaved. There are one or two boys who can be a little silly at times. Perhaps you could help them to behave more sensibly? You told me that one of the best things about the school was the teachers. The teachers certainly work hard to help you to learn as much as possible. You told me that you love using computers but don't get enough time to use them as much as you would like to help you with your learning.

I think that are two main things that need to be done to make the school even better. I think that all the new technology that has been introduced, such as the interactive white boards, is great. I think that you should have opportunities in all subjects to use equipment such as computers, interactive white boards and digital cameras even more. We know that most of you make good progress in writing but I think that the faster learners could do even better. So the teachers are going to expect some of you to make even more progress in writing and reach even higher standards.

We know that the school is going to get even better. There are exciting times ahead.

With all best wishes for the future,

Yours sincerely,

John Messer

Lead Inspector