

Risby Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124712
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	328197
Inspection date	15 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Geof Timms

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	137
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ken Shanahan
Headteacher	Mrs Anna Berridge
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Aylmer Close Risby Bury St. Edmunds Suffolk IP28 6RT

Age group	4–9
Inspection date	15 January 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following.

- What is the school doing to raise standards in boys' writing?
- What is the school doing to provide for the most able pupils?
- What is the impact of the school's focus on its international dimension and teaching of philosophy, especially in helping develop community cohesion?
- How well do the target setting and tracking arrangements support learning?

Evidence was gathered from documents, observations of teaching and other aspects of school life, discussions with staff, pupils and school governors and parents' views. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school serving a number of small villages to the north-west of Bury St Edmunds. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are provided for in the 'Robins' Reception class. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups or speak English as an additional language. Pupils' attainment on entry is broadly in line with that expected. A well below average proportion has learning difficulties and/or disabilities; where they occur they mainly concern pupils' academic learning or speech and language skills. The school has achieved an International Schools' award, Activemark and Healthy Schools' award. The school runs a daily breakfast club from 8.05 am.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. The findings of the inspection support the school's view of itself and those of a very large majority of the parents. As one said, 'This is a fantastic school!' Pupils make excellent progress in all areas of learning. In particular, they consistently reach outstanding standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Their art skills are also very well developed, with some work of the highest quality evident.

The success of the school is down to outstanding teamwork from all staff. The headteacher leads the school very effectively. She has built well on the success evident at the previous inspection. Leadership is shared between all staff and they show a willingness to try new ideas and take on new skills. This is particularly evident in the recent introduction of a programme for teaching philosophy, which is already having a very positive impact on pupils' speaking and listening skills and on their relationships with others.

Standards at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 4 are consistently and exceptionally high. A well above average proportion of the pupils reach levels well above those expected. The school has recently recognised that the provision for these most able pupils, and those with specific gifts and talents had not previously been sufficient. A staff member was therefore given the job of auditing and evaluating the provision, identifying the most able pupils and carrying out training, and this provision is now developing well. This is typical of the thorough way the school evaluates and enhances its effectiveness. Whenever its careful and detailed analysis of standards identifies any concerns they are quickly addressed. For example, after boys' writing was found to be weaker than the girls', a wide range of actions were put in place, including the use of different ideas to inspire and encourage boys to write more. For example, poems linked to excellent quality paintings of snow-covered trees were used to encourage a well-developed and mature vocabulary. In Year 1, pupils were able to create a story with toys and then tell the story and begin to write it down. Writing journals have provided boys with more opportunities to write about things of interest to them and the school has invited in a number of male role models, including authors, to encourage boys to see writing as a positive activity.

This significant improvement is due to the school's excellent teaching and learning. Teachers work very hard to plan interesting, appropriate and challenging activities and these lead to effective learning. Relationships are very strong and this supports pupils' excellent behaviour. Teaching assistants offer high quality support and are usually well directed and deployed effectively, especially when supporting the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All staff know the pupils well and provision for them is consistently tailored to meet their needs, for example, in the case of those with speech difficulties. The teachers in turn are supported by the school's excellent curriculum. This is continually being reviewed and developed and new ideas tried out, with effective links between subjects increasingly made to make learning relevant. For example, in Year 4 excellent models were designed and made following a science lesson about circuits. Pupils especially enjoyed seeing the pig whose nose lit up! The school is aware that more can be done to extend subjects links and to make the curriculum even more individual and challenging for all pupils.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding because the school has such a strong focus on developing their spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and they show that they do this by drinking water, eating fruit and

talking about, and participating in, a range of sporting activities. Their excellent attendance shows how much pupils enjoy being at school and they talk very enthusiastically about the things they enjoy doing. They understand how to keep themselves safe and the well developed links outside school and role of the school council and 'buddy and beaver' reading work show they are learning to make an excellent contribution to the community.

These strengths are the result of high quality care and guidance provided for pupils. They are very well looked after and kept safe. Arrangements for ensuring their protection are robust and fully inform the school's day-to-day practice. The 'Early Birds' club offers a good calm start to the day and provision for those with learning needs or difficulties is very effective and helps ensure they make excellent progress. Links with parents are very strong and parents talk positively about the way the school provides support for families that goes beyond that expected. As one said, 'Risby is a family school where children are safe and well cared for by positive role models.'

Academic support is also very strong. The school has excellent tracking and target setting arrangements. This helps teachers communicate with pupils about how well they are doing, and agree future targets that will take their learning still further. In addition, they are used very effectively to identify any pupils whose progress falls below the challenging levels set, or to support those who are exceeding their targets. Recently, for example, the targets for Year 2 were raised following the recognition that they had made progress better than that expected and that therefore the original targets were now too low. This is indicative of the level of challenge to be found at all levels throughout the school.

In the two years she has been in post, the headteacher has built solidly on the excellent practice found at the last inspection. The identification of weaknesses has ensured, for example, that teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 are more accurate and reflect the progress children make more effectively. In addition, new initiatives have been very effectively introduced and happily accepted by the staff, and the leadership throughout the school continues to build on existing strengths. The school has closely audited the way it prepares pupils for their future lives and this has resulted in a range of measures to promote excellent community cohesion. Links with other schools, work in different languages, the story sacks made by teaching assistants with support from parents of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and the introduction into the curriculum of work to develop their global understanding and the new philosophy course are all proving very effective. In particular, the philosophy is having a clear impact on the way pupils relate to each other and on their speaking and listening skills. Over and above provision for basic skills, the school offers pupils excellent opportunities to develop their economic well-being and to become effective and successful in the future. The governing body is very effective in holding the school to account and has an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and appreciation of the new initiatives introduced. Given the currently excellent provision, leadership and standards, it is clear that the school has an outstanding capacity to improve even further in the future.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children in the Reception class make excellent progress due to the outstanding teaching they receive. They also benefit from very effective accommodation, indoors and outside, strong support from teaching assistants and a very effectively planned and delivered curriculum. Arrangements to help children settle into school are very good and they quickly become used to routines because the classroom offers a calm but productive and exciting learning

environment. The teacher makes very effective use of the outdoor facilities and children are able to explore a wide range of activities indoors and out. During the inspection, a lot of the work was based on a theme about bears and in one excellent lesson children compared bears they had brought from home to help extend their understanding of size and comparative language. The planning is based carefully on children's prior learning, as shown in their thinking and learning journals. These offer an excellent method of tracking progress and of capturing children's new learning as it happens. The children are very happy in the class and develop excellent attitudes towards school that other teachers are able to build on in later years.

From their varying levels of attainment on entry, all children make excellent progress. Those who find learning difficult are well supported and those who are more able have a range of opportunities to extend their skills. Data shows that the current children made outstanding progress over the autumn term and if this continues they will reach standards that will be well ahead of those expected.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure more meaningful links are made between subjects to reinforce learning and deepen understanding, and to meet the needs of all learners.

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Annex A

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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

16 January 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Risby CE VC Primary School, Risby, Suffolk, IP28 6RT

I am writing to thank you very much for the way you made us welcome when we visited your school recently. I also want to share with you what we found.

We think you go to an outstanding school. This is because your teachers work so hard to help you learn. You help them by being very well behaved and working very hard. Because of this, you learn many new things and we were very impressed with your work. I think the cats that Year 4 children have drawn are of such excellent quality they should be in an art gallery!

The school is very well led by Mrs Berridge and the staff all make a very strong team. They have shown they can really help you improve when they feel you could do better. They look after you very well and you told us how much you enjoy school and the things you do there. Your parents agree as well.

To help the school keep improving and get even better in the future, we agree with the teachers that they could make links more meaningfully between subjects to deepen your understanding and make topics more personal for you.

Thank you again for your help. Enjoy your time at Risby and keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms

Lead inspector