

# Recreation Road Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	134964
<b>Local Authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	329001
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 May 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joanne Harvey

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	326
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Catriona Milne
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Serena Dixon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Recreation Road Norwich Norfolk NR2 3PA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01603 457120
<b>Fax number</b>	01603 453958

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<b>Age group</b>	4–7
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 May 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a larger-than-average school which opened in September 2007 after the amalgamation of two local first schools. This is the school's first inspection. A smaller-than-average number of pupils are entitled to claim free school meals. Most children are from White British backgrounds, with a slightly smaller than average number from a range of other ethnic groups. Very few are learning English as an additional language. Fewer pupils than usually found have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or a statement of special educational needs. The school serves a catchment area of mixed social and economic circumstances. The school has a Healthy School Award, an Activemark, and Eco-schools Award and is working towards a Sing-up Award and International Schools Status. It offers a wide range of extended services. Breakfast and after-school childcare are offered on site but managed by a private company and therefore are reported on separately.

Provision is offered for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in two Reception only classes and two classes of mixed Reception and Year 1 children.

## 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 outstandingly effective school where pupils make exceptional progress from broadly average starting points. Because provision made for the pupils is outstanding in every way, not only are they on track to attain exceptionally high standards in reading and writing and high standards in mathematics this year, but their personal achievements are also exceptional. There are also outstanding arrangements to ensure that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are appropriately supported and thus make extremely good progress.

The school's success arises from the remarkably clear vision and purpose shared by the headteacher, governors and the caring and committed staff team. This is driven by the exemplary leadership and strong direction given by the headteacher, supported by an outstanding leadership team. The possible challenges presented by the amalgamation of two schools were seen not as barriers but as opportunities to be capitalised upon. The desire to raise aspirations and increase opportunities for success for children, their families and the local, national and indeed the global community lies at the core of the school's work. Improvement planning is underpinned by a determination to research and implement the very best educational practice and to monitor accurately the evidence of its success at Recreation Road. This evidence confirms quickening progress and rising standards across the school and high ambitions for the future. These encompass, for example, ensuring that the already high standards attained in mathematics match the significantly high standards in reading and writing and that pupils are ably prepared to play their part in promoting a harmonious and sustainable world for the future.

The extremely positive ethos and vibrant atmosphere are immediately evident. The environment is challenging and nurturing, so that pupils become well-rounded individuals. Providing outstanding care and guidance is central to the school's ethos and includes systems for ensuring high levels of health, safety and welfare and that everyone is included equally in all that the school has to offer. As a consequence, pupils' personal development, including their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, is outstanding. They show respect and empathy and take pride in helping others and in looking after each other, their school and the environment beyond. Systems to provide academic guidance are outstanding. They are based on regular and rigorous checks on pupil progress, which is carefully tracked and the information collected used to ensure that everyone, whatever their need, does as well as they can. The outstanding curriculum is creative and exciting, with several subjects being taught together through meaningful topic themes or 'imaginative enquiry'. This results in children being highly motivated and engaged with their learning and making rapid progress. The curriculum is delivered by outstanding practitioners who monitor each other's work and ensure that best practice is shared across the school.

It is not surprising that parents are highly appreciative of the school. As one parent wrote, 'People move house to ensure that their children can attend this school but it is not until your child starts that you truly appreciate what an impressive place this is. The boundless enthusiasm of the headteacher infects the whole atmosphere of the school and it certainly feels that anything is possible.' This comment represents the views of many who responded to the inspection questionnaire. Pupils echo this sentiment in their demonstration of exceptional levels of enjoyment and good attendance.

There is no doubt that outstanding and innovative leadership has ensured that the school has gone from strength to strength since it opened and that this evidences excellent value for money and an outstanding capacity to continue to improve.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Children do extremely well in the Early Years Foundation Stage because their welfare and learning and development needs are met exceptionally well. They settle quickly because of the excellent support and knowledge of staff, who get to know them very well and because parents are included in the learning process right from the start. Children feel secure and ready to learn because of the outstanding relationships formed between the staff, the children and their parents and carers. Exciting activities and topic themes are carefully planned, based on an accurate knowledge of children's progress and needs. This is underpinned by outstanding leadership from the deputy headteacher who, along with colleagues, astutely uses professional development opportunities to ensure that there is a shared understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and of how young children learn. Planned activities are delivered in a truly creative and integrated way, with children getting lots of meaningful opportunities to revisit and experiment with their learning. Children's personal development is remarkable, with independence being established and responsibility for resources being taken right from the start. Particularly impressive is how they quickly become equal partners in directing their own learning. Consequently, and in combination with outstanding teaching, children make outstanding progress and exceed the standards expected of them by the time they enter Year 1.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Bring attainment in mathematics up to the exceptionally high levels in reading and writing by more precisely identifying and addressing pupils' misconceptions in calculation.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Children's knowledge and skills are broadly as expected when they join Reception classes, though they are often lower than expected in calculating, in their ability to link sounds and letters and in their writing skills. Outstanding provision across the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that children enter Year 1 having exceeded the levels expected of them. In 2008, after the first year, pupils attained standards which were significantly above those expected in reading and writing and above those expected in mathematics by the time they left Year 2. Detailed analysis and prompt action led to the curriculum being modified and as a result, this year, pupils are on track to achieve standards which are exceptionally high in reading and writing and which are well above average in mathematics. Though this represents outstanding progress across the school, leaders are ambitious that the already high standards attained in mathematics should match the exceptional levels in English. Self-evaluation has identified pupils' calculation skills as a relative weakness. Systems to support and include those pupils who find their learning more difficult and for those in the early stages of learning English have ensured that these pupils also make outstanding progress.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development, including their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is outstanding because they have every opportunity to develop personal responsibility and an understanding of their own and each other's needs. The imaginative curriculum and the expectation that pupils should hypothesise and discover for themselves have resulted in pupils who thoroughly enjoy school and who love to learn. They are extremely knowledgeable about how to stay safe in school, on the roads and at home. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils know what constitutes a healthy diet and their packed lunches reflect this. They have an excellent understanding of eco issues, recycling and composting. Reception children gave a confident and comprehensive account during an assembly of how, and why, to set up a wormery and its impact on plants. Spirituality, empathy and imagination are fired by the 'real' and 'story' worlds they study. The school and eco council have a considerable impact on school life, democratically selecting playground games with an eye on the available budget. This, and projects such as invoicing customers for car washing services, and the very effective application of information and communication technology (ICT) and mathematical skills across the curriculum, generates high levels of skills for their future lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teachers and teaching assistants are excellent role models who forge exemplary relationships with their pupils. Teachers and pupils are truly equal partners in the learning journey and this gives pupils the confidence to think for themselves, direct their own learning, to test their ideas and evaluate their success. Teachers skilfully plan relevant learning activities which enthuse pupils about learning. They base these on a detailed understanding of pupils' needs and an excellent knowledge of how to challenge and extend them. For example, helping a gardener solve a seed distribution problem saw pupils enthusiastically using their skills and knowledge to work together to design and make seed packets whilst others moved on to develop vehicle transportation systems. Teachers are highly reflective and respond enthusiastically to opportunities for continued professional development. Encouraged by school leaders, many are involved in action research in order to improve their practice further, and all are involved in sharing the best practice across school.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The exceptionally well-balanced curriculum is a superb example of how imaginative, well-structured learning opportunities, over which pupils have a significant degree of control, can contribute so much to high achievement. There is an air of expectancy about learning, created by the skilful integration of subjects, especially literacy and ICT, in story form, which appeals so much to the pupils. Drama is central to much learning. For example, the buzz created by the acting out of a historic rail crash caused Year 2 pupils to be immediately engaged in their learning. This buzz is often present at the start of lessons. Underpinning the apparent freedom of open-ended learning is a strong and guiding philosophy reflected in the planning. The accommodation is a secure and safe place of learning which supports pupils personally and stimulates them academically very well. There is excellent curriculum enrichment via links with

the local community, such as involvement in the Cinema City filmmaking project, and with the wider world by visits from international groups such as Grassroots, from Zimbabwe. Links with schools and organisations around the world give the curriculum a truly international dimension. There is also an exciting range of clubs such as gardening, choir, gym and country dancing.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school's ambience is entirely and successfully child-centred because staff skilfully guide pupils in leading their own learning. There is a range of rigorous individualised targets which help pupils to make exceptional progress in their personal and academic development alike. Assessing and recording of groups' achievements provide an extremely accurate record. The changeover from a paper to an electronic system of recording pupil data is taking place seamlessly. The school's policies and practices for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. The premises are secure and safe, with good systems of control over access for visitors. There are no reports of pupil harassment because the caring staff have high expectations of pupil behaviour. Break times are civilised and enjoyable occasions due to the high quality of supervision and care from staff. The school is exceptionally welcoming to new staff and pupils as well as to visitors. A parent support advisor and a plethora of partnerships with specialist outside agencies add considerably to the care provided.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Exemplary leadership from the headteacher has established a crystal clear vision and ethos, firmly underpinned by strong principles, extensive academic research and first-hand experiences from around the world. A strong and effective team, including staff, governors, community partners, parents and the pupils themselves, share this vision and the drive and enthusiasm to achieve it. Leadership has been successfully devolved and systems put in place so that everyone plays their part in checking on the school's work and helping to improve it. Self-evaluation is accurate, being underpinned by solid evidence, and action planning is sharp and effective. The new governing body already offers practical support and challenge to leaders. They are poised to further develop their monitoring and evaluation role. Work to promote community cohesion at all levels is exemplary. Like everything else, provision is based on a careful audit, is naturally interwoven with curriculum planning and the school's strong equal opportunities and sustainability agenda. The outcomes can clearly be seen in pupils' outstanding personal development, their rapid academic progress and extremely high attainment in this school which they help to ensure is truly inclusive.

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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 <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

18 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Recreation Road Infant School, Norwich, NR2 3PA

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. This letter is to tell you what we found out.

There are many outstanding things about your school. Some of them are that:

- you achieve very high standards and make excellent progress
- you behave extremely well and work hard to help others
- your knowledge of how to keep yourselves healthy and safe is outstanding
- you enjoy school a great deal and the school is good at organising interesting things for you to do
- all of the adults in your school make sure that you are extremely well cared for and looked after
- your headteacher and the other people who help run your school are highly effective at making sure that you get an outstanding education.

We agree with your parents that you go to an outstanding school. However, all of the adults in your school want it to be even better. We agree with them that the most important thing for them to do next is:

- make sure you all develop excellent skills in calculation so that the standards you reach in mathematics are as high as those you reach in reading and writing.

We are sure that the headteacher and all the other staff will continue to do everything they can to help you. You can play your part by continuing to behave so well, working really hard and coming to school every day.

We would like to wish you the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Joanne Harvey

Lead inspector