

Raleigh Infant School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120993
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	339824
Inspection dates	17–18 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Jill Bavin

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane James
Headteacher	Daphne Rothwell
Date of previous school inspection	21 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who saw seven teachers in 15 lessons, made a further four visits to lessons to look at opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and five visits to look at pupils' progress in books. Additionally the team met with staff, governors and pupils, both formally and informally. They scrutinised a variety of documentation, including policies and documents related to safeguarding, data for checking pupils' progress and plans for school improvement. Responses to questionnaires from 111 parents, and 30 staff were also analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

the consistency of challenge for the most able pupils

- what the school is doing to raise attainment and achievement in writing, especially for boys
- how effectively the school is supporting those pupils who speak English as an additional language
- how fully the school is evaluating the impact of various curriculum initiatives for different groups of pupils.

Information about the school

Raleigh is a small infant school where there has been a 50% change of staff since the previous inspection. It has a 52 place Nursery which children join when they are three. Most children continue their experience in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the school's Reception classes. Approximately 75% of children move from the Early Years Foundation Stage into Year 1. A higher proportion of pupils joins or leaves the school between Reception and Year 2 than is usual in schools nationally because of their family's pattern of work, which often means moving between countries.

The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups, mostly from Portugal and Eastern Europe, has risen significantly in recent years. The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is now above average. There is a lower percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities than is usually found, although the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The majority of pupils with special educational needs have difficulties related to language, communication and social skills.

The school has achieved Activemark in recognition of its physical education and Healthy Schools status. In 2008 the school attained a Quality Mark Award for its work in developing basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. The school building is physically joined to the Admirals Junior School and the schools provide jointly-managed breakfast and after-school clubs. These did not form part of this inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory and improving school. Its many strengths include good quality care which contributes to good levels of personal development for pupils. Staff share a strong commitment to supporting those pupils who face particular challenges, whether through complex learning needs, or because they join the school with little or no spoken English. Consequently, pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in expressing themselves and there are examples of individual pupils overcoming significant barriers to learning.

Although the abilities of individual children vary, they mostly join the Nursery with fewer social and language skills than is expected for their age. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes because activities are fun, and teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Consequently they join Year 1 closer to expected levels of skill, knowledge and understanding in all areas of learning. Satisfactory teaching in Years 1 and 2 enables pupils to make steady progress and typically pupils leave Year 2 just below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils make slightly less progress in writing than in other key skills.

Senior leaders know the school well and have led several developments since the previous inspection. They have an accurate view of the most successful features of teaching and learning and where teachers need to improve. This is not fully reflected in their feedback to teachers, which focuses more on teaching strategies than their impact on pupils' learning. Opportunities to share the best teaching strategies are missed. Much work has successfully improved the curriculum since the previous inspection. This is now good with key strengths in personal and social education which contributes to pupils' considerate behaviour and their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Links between subjects are well established and add interest for pupils. Occasionally, planning fails to take account of boys' interests as fully as possible and then they are less enthusiastic about writing.

Information about individual pupils' attainment and achievement is shared more comprehensively than previously. This means that teachers are better informed about how well each pupil is doing, but the use of this information to help pupils who find learning difficult is more established than its use to challenge the most able. Teachers have begun to share expectations with pupils and give them opportunities to judge how well they are doing, but this is not yet consistent so its impact on pupils' learning is limited. The analysis of the wealth of data that the school holds is mainly undertaken by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Although this is shared regularly, its usefulness is constrained because it is not used fully by governors and staff.

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Subject leaders are more directly involved in developing their subjects than previously and produce many action plans for improvement. However, the main priorities for whole school development are not clear and plans do not always give a clear indication how the school will measure its success. Nevertheless, recent developments have increased staff accountability with a more shared approach to driving school improvement. The impact is evident in an increasing number of lessons where pupils make good progress. These positive features contribute to the school's sound capacity for further development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment and rates of progress for pupils in Key Stage 1, especially in writing, by:
 - ensuring that all pupils are always challenged effectively
 - during lessons, consistently giving pupils clear and precise expectations that meet their varying needs
 - giving pupils ongoing feedback and opportunities to participate in evaluating their learning more routinely in lessons
 - ensuring that the subject matter is always equally interesting to boys and girls
 - sharing the best teaching practice in the school more systematically.
- Increase the rigour in monitoring and evaluating the school's effectiveness by:
 - ensuring that development plans are more clearly prioritised and always include an unambiguous means of determining the level of success
 - giving teachers more precise feedback on the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning in lessons, and keeping a record of this
 - refining the use of school data so that all staff and governors can analyse pupils' progress more effectively.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

National data for 2009 indicated that more able pupils did less well than their peers nationally. However, lesson observations and work samples showed that all groups of pupils make similar progress because the school works suitably to break down any barriers to learning. In a Year 1 lesson, boys and girls of all abilities made good progress in recording descriptively information about Victorian life. Similarly, skilful questioning helped boys and girls of different abilities in Year 2 to make comparably satisfactory progress in using scientific knowledge and prepare for writing, in a drama session about the 'owl in the dark', although the pace was a little too slow for their progress to be good.

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In lessons, the use of visual aids helps pupils who speak English as an additional language to make similar progress as their peers. In a Year 2 lesson about prayer, the use of artifacts such as a rosary, Bible and statue of the Virgin Mary reinforced key learning about Catholicism for pupils still learning English. Pupils with special educational needs and/ or disabilities usually make similar progress to their peers because of the sensitive support they receive from teaching assistants. On occasion those with complex needs make very good progress in focusing on a book or maintaining eye contact, while working individually with teaching assistants.

Pupils are usually well-behaved, reflecting the school's success in promoting good behaviour. They demonstrate a good understanding of right and wrong by describing occasional 'naughty' behaviour, but explain this does not stop them feeling safe or impede their enjoyment of school. They have a good understanding of personal safety and how to seek help. They voice their opinions thoughtfully: during the inspection one pupil shared the idea that 'you might feel closer to God in an aeroplane.' Pupils enjoy healthy snacks and take responsibilities readily. They are justifiably proud of the school council and everyone's work to keep the school free of litter. Awareness of diversity in Britain is less well developed than the positive attitudes to the diversity within their school. These were exemplified by one pupil who said, 'I speak Polish but I want to speak Portuguese too'.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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How effective is the provision?

Good relationships between adults and pupils contribute to adults managing pupils' behaviour effectively and learning usually proceeding smoothly. Although teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, especially in individual or small group work with pupils facing difficulties, they are not always used as effectively as possible throughout lessons. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure so they introduce new ideas clearly. Learning is good when questions are adjusted to provide more 'clues' for pupils as required, but teachers do not always modify their questions to challenge the most able pupils when addressing the whole class. Similarly, they do not always remind pupils of specific expectations during lessons, which restrict opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own learning.

The curriculum has several strengths. A successful and imaginative development is to use visits strategically to begin each topic. This 'kicks starts' each pupil's interest with a chance to learn through direct, practical experience. This is a key element in helping pupils who speak English as an additional language. Pupils use computer software to produce William Morris style designs in topics such as 'The Victorians', combining technical and artistic skills with historical understanding. Enrichment activities, such as the 'Reading Cafe' and the dual-language book club are well chosen to benefit pupils and involve their families. Activities such as cycling programmes successfully underpin the school's strong messages about healthy lifestyles. Events designed to stretch the most able pupils, such as a museum visit to compare the lives of an Iceni warrior with a Roman soldier, are too recent to have had a full impact on their attainment and progress.

The evidence of the school's commitment to providing good care and guidance is apparent in the good relationships between pupils. Parents' and carers' appreciation of the school, including those whose children are learning English as an additional language, is indicative of the school's success in working with those pupils who face particular challenges. The vast majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires say their children enjoy school and are kept safe. The 'school has done everything possible' is a comment representative of the views of those parents and carers whose children have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and deputy have the confidence and support of their colleagues and have led the school successfully through a period of staff change and gradual improvement. Particular strengths lie in the links the school has with other professionals, which support the work to enrich the curriculum and meet the needs of the most vulnerable pupils effectively. These links are currently being extended to make further provision for pupils with particular talents. Pupils have equal opportunities to learn because the school works carefully to remove any discrimination or obstacles to learning. Within the good arrangements for safeguarding pupils, child protection policies and procedures are of a very high quality, arising from the school's work with outside agencies.

Plans to develop community cohesion are underway. Staff and governors have a thorough understanding of the local community. As a result, pupils are increasingly extending their links locally, from charity fund-raising to mostly environmental projects, such as developing a garden with personnel from the local United States of America Air Force base. Staff use the curriculum to raise pupils' awareness of the wider world and recognise that the next step is to forge links with another school in the United Kingdom. These plans are at an early stage of development.

Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and are visible around school. They have positive and productive relationships with senior staff. They challenge but are not fully effective in driving school improvement. Complex development plans do not give them a clear basis for evaluating the work of the school, including curriculum initiatives, and becoming more strategically involved in its development. While governors receive reports from senior staff about pupil progress, school data is not consistently collated for ready analysis. As a result, governors have yet to become involved in using data about pupil progress to effectively hold the school to account. Although senior staff and governors have a realistic understanding of the school's challenges, strengths and weaknesses, some of their judgements about how well the school is doing reflect aspirations rather than the current picture.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start to their education in the Nursery and Reception classes. Good teamwork between staff means children receive consistent messages about what is expected of them and so they quickly settle, feel secure and are quickly ready to learn. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has a good understanding of the latest national guidance for provision for children at this age. This has led to recent developments in the way the Reception classes are organised, which enriches children's learning by making it easier for them to work independently.

Throughout the provision staff provide good opportunities for children to make choices and to work indoors or outside, which is fostering their independence. They make useful observations of children's achievements, but do not routinely record the 'next steps' to aim for. The extent to which staff modify their comments and questions to suit individual needs while children are working independently is inconsistent. That said, when adults are leading activities, children's learning is often excellent. For example, during the inspection extremely skilful input and questioning from an adult helped children in the Nursery to make outstanding gains in expressing themselves. They enthusiastically used the language of colour, shape and size, while predicting what might be inside a wrapped birthday present. Learning for children in the Reception class was outstanding when adults empowered them to harness their imaginations and develop mathematical skills by counting, calculating and sharing out 'pirate treasure'.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

More parents and carers returned questionnaires than is usual, and the vast majority are highly appreciative of the school's work. A few parents and carers were concerned about

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how the school deals with behaviour. This was not substantiated by what inspectors saw, or by what pupils told inspectors. During the inspection behaviour was mostly good and sometimes impeccable. Pupils said that behaviour was usually good and teachers deal effectively with occasional 'naughtiness'. Several written comments commended the headteacher and staff for being friendly and approachable.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Raleigh Infant School and Nursery to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 111 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 200 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	80	72	30	27	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	82	74	26	23	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	68	61	38	34	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	64	58	45	41	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	68	61	42	38	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	64	58	44	40	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	62	56	48	43	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	59	53	48	43	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	63	57	46	41	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	53	48	45	41	8	7	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	52	47	50	45	3	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	58	52	52	47	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	74	67	36	32	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



21 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Raleigh Infant School and Nursery, Thetford, IP24 2JT

Thank you for all your help when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you, talking with you and seeing your work. A special thank you goes to all the pupils who met with us in the library to share their ideas and show us their work. We are very pleased to see how well children in the Nursery and Reception classes get on. It was good to see that they had plenty of chances to choose what they wanted to do and to work outside. We are also pleased that in Years 1 and 2 you make steady progress in your work. You told us that everyone in your school is friendly and we agree. We are pleased that you are kind to each other and this helps new pupils to settle, especially when they arrive unable to understand what people are saying. These pupils make good progress in learning to speak and understand English. The pupils who find learning very difficult make good progress in fitting in with you all. It was good to hear how safe and happy you feel in school. We agree with you that your teachers care about you a lot and work hard to keep you safe.

To make your school even better, the most important things for the governors, headteacher and staff to do are:

- to make sure the work is always hard enough for you, and always just as interesting for boys and girls, especially with your writing
- to keep reminding you what they expect from you, and then give you a chance to show how well you think you are doing
- to share their best teaching ideas with each other more often.

We have asked the school's leaders to be very clear about what they plan to do to make the school even better, and how they will know when they have done well. We have asked them to make sure that teachers always understand how well they are helping you learn, and that they all understand the information about how well you are doing, and can use it to keep improving the school. You can all help by continuing to behave so well and keep trying hard. Thank you again for being so friendly.

Yours sincerely

Jill Bavin Lead inspector

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