

# Rattlesden Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124711
<b>Local Authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	340632
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Nick Butt

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	92
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr David Gooderham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jane Ash
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	Mill Hill Rattlesden Bury St Edmunds
<b>Telephone number</b>	01449 736335
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<b>Email address</b>	ad.rattlesden.p@talk21.com

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## **Introduction**

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons and observed six teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a selection of documentation, including planning, evidence of monitoring such as lesson observations and analysis of pupils' work, and other assessment information. Inspectors scrutinised inspection questionnaires returned by 50 parents or carers, 35 pupils and eight staff.

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

- what the school is doing to raise standards in mathematics
- the impact of the curriculum on progress and attitudes to learning
- how the school has improved since its last inspection and how well placed it is to sustain and build on its achievements.

## **Information about the school**

This is a smaller-than-average primary school serving a wide rural area. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage, with very few from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Early Years Foundation Stage provision takes place in the 'mornings only' Nursery and a mixed Reception and Year 1 class. Among others, the school has the Healthy Schools and Active Mark awards.

There are plans to create an all-through primary school in the foreseeable future with pupils leaving at the end of Year 6.

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

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Rattlesden provides a good quality of education for all its pupils and has made good progress since its last inspection, when the headteacher had only been in post a week. She has successfully built a strong team of staff who are united in supporting her vision for improving the school. Parents strongly approve of the school's work. One, speaking for many, commented, 'Rattlesden is a lovely friendly school where children are seen as individuals with huge potential.'

Children make good progress from their average starting points in the Nursery and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Standards at the end of Year 2 are consistently above average and pupils continue to achieve well so that by the end of Year 4, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is well above national expectations. The school has worked hard to improve both writing and mathematics in recent years, and the changes have had a beneficial impact on pupils' performance. Teaching is good, with effective use of questioning to extend pupils' learning. Planning ensures tasks are matched to the prior attainment of different pupils'. A new marking policy focuses on how well pupils meet the lesson's objectives. While marking is often positive, it does not always show pupils how they can improve.

The school's road safety officers keep pupils well informed about staying safe and parents warned about inconsiderate parking. Pupils behave well and the older ones look after the younger ones. Pupils excel at sports, having won a county award for their participation and gaining the Active Mark. Four out of five pupils take part in clubs that include karate, cheer leading and tennis. Young leaders organise games in the playground and pupils take responsibility for recycling and energy conservation. The school council is active in improving play equipment and raising funds for good causes. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as they consider a range of concepts in philosophy lessons and form an orderly and harmonious community. Well-established links with a school in Nepal give pupils an understanding of how children live in a different country from their own.

The impact of leadership and management is good, with many aspects that were satisfactory three years ago now being judged as good. The headteacher's collaborative style has won the respect of all sections of the school community and created a happy and purposeful learning environment, where pupils can thrive. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is, thus, good. A well-enriched curriculum offers pupils many opportunities to develop the personal skills they need to grow in confidence and independence. Good pastoral care ensures that potentially vulnerable pupils receive the support they need and that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well. The school tracks the progress of individual pupils carefully, but the

systems in place do not enable information to be accessed easily or give a full overview of performance over time. While the headteacher rightly takes a lead role in evaluating the effectiveness of the school's work, monitoring by other leaders and governors is not so well established. The governing body is relatively inexperienced, but rapidly getting to grips with its roles and responsibilities and very keen to play a key role in the school's development.

## **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure consistent implementation of the new marking policy so that all pupils know what they have to do to improve.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
  - developing the role of all leaders and governors in systematically monitoring the work of the school
  - refining the school's tracking systems to make data clearer and more accessible.

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

2

Children join the school with a wide range of skills and abilities that are broadly in line with national expectations, although not so strong in writing. They achieve well, as the school sets them challenging targets and raises them if pupils attain them early. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, and in lessons show enthusiasm and a desire to be actively involved. They enjoy using the electronic whiteboards and work together cooperatively in groups. During the inspection Reception children combined with Year 1 pupils to form teams to play ball games and were able to follow the rules successfully. Year 1 and 2 pupils took pleasure in using line and shape tools to make Easter egg designs on the laptop computers. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress towards their individual goals because of the effective support they receive. The very few pupils of minority ethnic heritage also make good progress.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe, and learn cycling proficiency. The award of Healthy Schools points to their excellent knowledge of living healthily, as well as their promotion of healthy choices. They have set out what the contents of a healthy lunch box should look like and have designed posters to combat smoking. Pupils have strong links with the Cathedral and the parish church, taking part in services and concerts, and visiting to find out more about their history and heritage. They have hosted lunches for grandparents and taken part in family picnics. They have also given their views on proposals for a new playground. Pupils stage the annual village duck race, when hundreds of plastic ducks float along the river, raising money for charity. Above-average attendance points to pupils' enjoyment of school, as they develop the good skills they need to succeed at middle school.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

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

**How effective is the provision?**

Very good relationships between pupils and staff result in high levels of engagement. Activities are often interesting and relevant, as when Year 1 and 2 pupils worked out how many hot cross buns they would need if each one ate a quarter (and proceeded to do just that). Pupils evaluate the quality of their own and others' work in design and technology, but less so in other subjects. They know what they have to do to improve in mathematics, with targets linked to National Curriculum levels. They are less clear about their writing targets, which are not linked in the same way. Verbal feedback to pupils is good in lessons, but marking is inconsistent in telling them about the next steps in their learning. The curriculum promotes pupils' good attitudes to learning, especially through themed weeks such as 'healthy eating week' and 'science week'. Pupils go on plenty of local trips, but tend not to venture further afield, to the museums of London for example. A weekly enrichment afternoon gives pupils the opportunity to experience different activities such as parachute games and circus skills. Philosophy lessons develop their thinking skills well, as when Year 3 pupils considered the validity of first impressions. One pupil said, 'If you try to tell someone from the outside, you don't know what they're like on the inside.' The curriculum is undergoing a wholesale review to make it even more creative and relevant to pupils.

Staff know the pupils as individuals and ensure that their needs are met well. Most support takes place in the classroom, with teaching assistants playing an important role

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

in enabling pupils to make good progress when working with individuals and groups. The school's welcoming and inclusive environment helps new pupils to settle quickly, and has seen potentially vulnerable pupils overcome barriers to make rapid progress in their personal and academic development.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has brought together an effective team that works well to drive forward improvement. Staff use assessment to plan work that suits the needs of most pupils and follow the progress of individuals in detail, ensuring that any at risk of falling behind are helped swiftly. The school's tracking systems can only show one year's progress at a time, which makes it difficult to see how pupils are doing over a longer period. They do not present information in a particularly accessible way. Clusters of teachers cover different curriculum areas, which ensure that there is useful dialogue among staff and a shared understanding of strengths and areas to develop. Much of the monitoring is conducted by the headteacher, although the school is beginning to involve other leaders in this work. Strategic plans reflect the school's priorities effectively. Many governors are new and are visible in school, learning their roles with enthusiasm. They are developing the tools they need to be an effective critical friend, but are not systematically recording their monitoring visits.

The school promotes equality of opportunity well, welcoming all pupils, whatever their needs or backgrounds. There has been good progress in ensuring pupils do equally well in all subjects, although some variations in the quality of marking remain to be ironed out. Safeguarding procedures are good, with all requirements met, and regular updates for staff in maintaining vigilance. Leaders and governors promote community cohesion well, reaching out to all sections of the local community, and helping pupils to understand about the history and context of the village. The school has strong links with a Nepalese school and is developing links with a school in London to give pupils more of an understanding of the multicultural society of the United Kingdom.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2

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

<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress from a wide range of starting points because of a rich and vibrant curriculum that harnesses their curiosity and because of good teaching. There is a good mix of child-initiated and adult-led activities and not a moment is lost in involving children in positive learning experiences. For example, Nursery children enjoyed exploring the wild area with magnifying glasses to count the different mini-beasts they could find. The good practice in the Nursery is continued in Reception too, so that children develop their early basic skills well and meet or sometimes exceed the expected goals by the time they enter Year 1.

Good use is made of outdoor areas, especially in the Nursery, and staff assess children well to build up a clear picture of their progress. This is presented in 'learning journeys' that can be confusing to follow as different pieces of information are mixed together. Good leadership and management ensure a consistency of approach in the Nursery and Reception classes, as staff ensure all children are happy and secure in a safe and stimulating learning environment.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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 than half the parents or carers returned questionnaires. They are very supportive of the school, strongly agreeing with many of the statements. One commented, 'My son loves coming to school and we are very pleased with the progress he is making and the range of opportunities he is given.' Parents recognise the improvement in the school since the last inspection. A very few feel behaviour could be managed better and that they could be better informed about their child's progress. Inspection findings were that behaviour is good and that the school communicates well with parents about all aspects of the pupils' progress.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rattlesden Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School 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 50 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 92 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	41	82	8	16	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	78	11	22	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	33	66	14	28	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	72	13	26	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	39	78	10	20	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	66	12	24	3	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	68	15	30	1	2	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)	36	72	13	26	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	70	13	26	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	68	13	26	3	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	66	13	26	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	34	68	16	32	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	78	11	22	0	0	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



26 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rattlesden Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Bury St Edmunds, IP30 0SE

We enjoyed visiting your school recently, and found that it gives you a good education. Here are some of its particular strengths.

You make good progress in your learning and are well prepared for middle school.

Your behaviour is good and you enjoy coming to school.

You have an excellent understanding about keeping healthy and take plenty of exercise.

The teaching is good and makes learning enjoyable.

There are plenty of clubs for you to take part in.

The school cares for you well, especially if you are having difficulties.

Children in the Nursery and Reception get off to a good start.

Teachers give you good feedback in lessons about how well you are doing. We have asked them to make sure that marking consistently shows you how to improve. The school has a good idea about how much progress you are making, but we have asked leaders to improve their systems to make it easier for them to get the information they need. We have also asked leaders and governors to check regularly on the work of the school to help them make it even better.

Thank you once again for making us welcome. We wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nick Butt

Lead inspector

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