

Ravenswood Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124650
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	382281
Inspection dates	8–9 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Ian Seath HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	411
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vicky Gibson
Headteacher	Karen Mills
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2010
School address	Ravenswood Avenue Ipswich IP3 9UA
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Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	8–9 November 2011
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. During this inspection, 16 teachers were observed and 18 lessons were visited. Inspectors observed the school's work, met with teachers, leaders and pupils, and scrutinised documentation as well as pupils' work. Inspectors met with representatives of the governing body and the local authority.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at the key areas for improvement that were identified when the school was placed in special measures during the inspection of July 2010.

- Have improving teaching and learning led to improvements in pupils' attainment and progress?
- Has assessment improved so that pupils have a clearer idea of what they need to do to improve?
- To what extent has leadership and management improved?

Information about the school

The school is larger than most primary schools. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and the proportion of ethnic minority heritage is a little lower than the national average. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than the national average, as is the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has Healthy Schools status and the Activemark award. It occupies a relatively new building. The headteacher took up her post in September 2011.

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

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

This is now a satisfactory school that has improved quickly since being placed in special measures. The new headteacher, ably supported by the governing body, has given the school a substantial direction for improvement in the short time that she has been in post, although many of the changes introduced will take time to show in improved performance. Staff morale is high. The school has rightly given priority to the development of teaching and learning, judged inadequate at the last inspection. These are now satisfactory with some aspects that are good. The school has successfully eradicated inadequate teaching. Self-assessment is accurate and improvement plans are sensible. Targets set are challenging but the extent to which progress towards them is monitored is inconsistent across the school because the use of assessment, though improved, is also inconsistent.

Pupils start school with attainment that is well below that expected for their ages. Despite a dip in performance in 2011, the overall picture is one of improving attainment and progress. Attainment remains below average but with clear evidence of improvements. For example, in mathematics, it is approaching the national average. Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, reflecting whole-school improvements. Throughout the school, the legacy of underachievement is being tackled and gaps between the school's performance and national averages are narrowing, although this is less pronounced in the development of pupils' writing skills.

Overall, teaching is now satisfactory and the progress that pupils make is satisfactory. However, this masks the significant number of classes where teaching is good and where teachers' expectations stretch pupils and boost their confidence. Pupils are not always given enough opportunities to learn independently but, where they are, the progress pupils make is good. Poor behaviour is now uncommon and pupils agree that they now have a better understanding of what is acceptable and what the expectations of the school are.

The school has a largely accurate view of teaching and learning and where the very best practice can be seen. However the very best practice is not identified or spread in a systematic way. For example, in some classes, good opportunities are taken to develop literacy and numeracy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics,

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but this is uneven across the school.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the end of the summer term 2013, raise standards to at least national floor levels by:
 - ensuring that assessment is used consistently in class to ensure that all pupils learn to the best of their ability and that those at risk of underachieving are identified early
 - ensuring that lesson planning and practice take advantage of opportunities to develop key skills of literacy and numeracy, especially writing, in all classes
 - devising and implementing ways to foster the development of pupils' skills of independent learning.
- By the end of the summer term 2013, ensure that the school's lesson observation system gives sufficient emphasis to the monitoring of learning and progress within class, and that the very best practice is identified and shared systematically.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, although attainment is below average when they join Key Stage 1. As they move through the school, they make satisfactory progress, though with aspects that are good, for example in mathematics. By the time they leave, many pupils have narrowed the gap with national averages and, in some areas, attainment is close to that expected for pupils' ages. Although achievement has been variable in recent years, the school is demonstrating an improving trend. Differences between the achievement of boys and girls are not significant. The most recent data indicate little difference between the achievement of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their peers.

In class, pupils are keen to contribute and they learn best when they are able to do so. Opportunities for them to practise skills of independent learning are not always taken and sometime pupils become restless when they have to sit and listen for too long. Conduct around the school is good. Pupils are polite, curious and helpful but, in class, they are not skilled at contributing to their own learning. They make faster progress when allowed to work independently and to be creative. Pupils confirmed that behaviour has improved because the school has put much work into making them aware where the limits are and what are the consequences of poor behaviour. Attendance is close to national average and punctuality is good. The proportion of

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persistent absence is low.

Pupils say that they feel safe and know who to turn to if there is a problem: bullying is rare and pupils report that it is dealt with effectively if it happens. They know what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, and demonstrate this, for example, by participating well in sports and extracurricular activities.

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	4
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	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory. The proportion of lessons that are good has improved, however, and this is in part due to the significant amount of professional development that the school has undertaken. Teachers have good relations with pupils, who demonstrate a willingness to learn. However, opportunities for pupils to work independently are often missed. In those classes where such opportunities are planned to stretch pupils, they respond well and learning and progress improve. Assessment, relatively recently introduced into the school, is increasingly being embedded in classroom practice. It is generally accurate so teachers have a good indication of standards reached. However, teachers do not always make use of this information to judge pupils’ progress in class. The extent to which assessment information is used to structure learning is inconsistent across the school. For example, sometimes the level of lessons is pitched at the standards pupils are at rather than stretching them. Pupils report that homework is regular. The marking of exercise books is generally good, with helpful and encouraging comments.

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 school’s curriculum is satisfactory. It has an appropriate focus on the provision of literacy and numeracy within English and mathematics. However, opportunities to further develop these skills, especially writing and speaking, are often missed in other subjects. Some enrichment activities are good, as in the school’s ‘activities week’ at the end of term. The curriculum has a positive impact on pupils’ personal development, particularly through the extensive and well-attended after-school clubs and activities.

The school removes barriers to learning well and can point to striking examples of individuals for whom this has happened. The school knows its pupils well and has good support mechanisms for those with identified learning needs. Transition arrangements into the school and on to secondary school are well managed so that pupils settle in well. Support for vulnerable pupils is very effective and is enhanced by good links with external agencies. As a result, the achievement of these pupils is similar to that of their peers.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school has improved steadily since the last inspection. The new headteacher has further galvanised staff to improve. Many improvements have been made and others are planned. Despite the dip in achievement in 2011, outcomes are improving as is teaching and learning. Although it will be some time before the full effects of changes are apparent in performance data, trends are already clear and substantial. Staff feel well-supported and confident. Classroom observations and the school’s own monitoring data confirm the improving picture. Leaders’ scrutiny of pupils’ work is systematic. Lesson observations give leaders an accurate picture of strengths and weaknesses, but not enough opportunities are taken to share best practice. Lesson observations place too much emphasis on the features of teaching rather than on pupils’ learning and the progress that pupils make.

Improvement plans include challenging targets. The governing body monitors progress towards these but has not always challenged weak performance sufficiently strongly. It has given good support to the school, however, and brings a good range of skills to its role. It has ensured that the school complies with statutory requirements for safeguarding and for the monitoring of equalities, which are satisfactory with no pattern of sustained differences in the achievement of different groups. The school’s contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory and

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partnership working is well-developed. Strong links with support agencies and the sharing of expertise within the local schools cluster have benefitted pupils, particularly in mathematics and in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
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

Most children make good progress towards the early learning goals. Personal skills develop well and children look after themselves and play well together. They enjoy working on independent activities and are keen to discuss them with adults and each other. Children treat each other with respect and behave well. Healthy eating habits are developed through the use of the fruit table.

In this well-run provision, teachers have a good understanding of the early learning goals and what children should be expected to do. The learning environment is stimulating and well-equipped, for example the ‘night sky’ shed and the ‘autumn walk’, which allows children to explore nearby plants and animals including a badger sett. Activities are well planned and purposeful. Accurate assessments are carried out systematically. Adults manage children well and encourage their independence. A common sense of purpose leads to a consistent approach and the children’s ‘next steps’ are always clear. Self-evaluation takes account of children’s views. Staff are vigilant so that children are kept safe. Links with parents and carers are well developed and effective.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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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

The small numbers of parents and carers questioned in this inspection and in previous monitoring visits were mostly positive about their children’s experiences in the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for monitoring inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.

10 November 2011

Dear Pupils,



Inspection of Ravenswood Community Primary School, Ipswich, IP3 9UA

As you may remember, I visited your school recently with two other inspectors. You gave us a warm welcome and you were helpful and courteous at all times. Thank you. We enjoyed our visit to your school and were especially pleased to find a badger sett in the grounds!

Your school is improving, so much so that we have taken it out of 'special measures'. This means that we are sure the school can now continue to improve without our help. The new headteacher is being successful in her drive to make your education better.

We saw many good things in your school. You are always keen to learn and get on well with each other and adults. The support and care that you receive are good, and you told us that you are happy in the school, that you enjoy your time there and feel safe. You told us that there is now very little poor behaviour because you are much clearer about what the school allows and does not allow.

The school knows what it has to do to improve further, and some of the changes are already underway. We have asked the school to do a few things. First, work to make sure that all of you learn as well as possible. This will be done by making assessment the same across the school, and by making sure that you do more reading, writing, speaking and number work in all classes.

Second, we have asked the school to monitor learning in class in a slightly different way. This means more emphasis on what you are learning rather than what the teacher is doing. As part of this, the school will be making sure that teachers share good ideas about how to let you learn better.

Remember, you all have a part to play in this. If you are unsure about something in a lesson, ask about it. If you have not understood something, then tell the teacher.

Enjoy your school and all that it has to offer. Once again, thank you and I wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Ian Seath
Her Majesty's Inspector

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