

Rocklands Community Primary School

74 The Street, Rockland All Saints, Nr Attleborough, NR17 1TP

Inspection dates 14–15 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Teaching is good overall and sometimes outstanding for the youngest and oldest pupils.
- Early reading skills are taught systematically and successfully. The teaching of grammar, spelling and punctuation for older pupils is particularly strong.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well. They get a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and many leave the school with standards that are above or well-above average.
- The progress made by disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is also good because the support they receive is pitched at just the right level for them.
- Pupils show positive attitudes to their learning, listen well in lessons and work well together.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is good and for many pupils it is outstanding. Pupils really enjoy school and feel safe when they are there.
- A strong leadership team working across the federated schools is well-led by the executive headteacher. Senior leaders keep a close eye on how well pupils are progressing and on the quality of teaching they receive.
- There is a strong feeling of teamwork and community among pupils, parents, staff and governors.
- Almost all parents are pleased with what the school provides for their children.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Where teaching is less effective, the checks made on pupils' learning in lessons are not thorough enough, and the marking in pupils' books is not in line with the school's policy.
- Sometimes teaching assistants are not clear about their role in supporting younger pupils when the teacher is leading the whole class.
- Several parents and pupils express concern at the large amounts of homework pupils sometimes receive.
- The amount of absence of a few pupils is bringing down the overall level of attendance.
- The potential for shared leadership of the key curriculum subjects across the federation is not yet fully exploited, particularly in mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in each class and visited eight lessons. Over half the lessons seen were observed jointly with the headteacher. These included the teaching of phonics (how the sounds in words are represented by different letters) for younger pupils and grammar for older pupils.
- The inspector met all Year 6 pupils to discuss their learning and progress, and hear their views about behaviour and safety. He looked at the work in pupils' books and heard pupils read from Years 1 and 2. He also spoke to pupils in lessons and informally at break times.
- The inspector had meetings with staff, including those who also work in the federation partner school. He met six members of the federated governing body, including the chair, and spoke to the local authority about their association with the school.
- The inspector looked at a range of other evidence, including the school's self-evaluation and development plans, attainment and progress information, teachers' planning, leaders' monitoring reports and the school's safeguarding arrangements. He also looked at the school's records of checks made on the quality of teaching.
- The inspector took into account the 34 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the information on the views of parents provided by the school. He also met some parents informally at the end of the first day of the inspection.

Inspection team

Rob McKeown, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This smaller than average-sized primary school has worked in partnership with the nearby Great Ellingham primary since 2007, and in a formal federation since September 2011.
- The federated schools have the same governing body but separate budgets. They share the same executive headteacher. An assistant headteacher takes charge at Rocklands when the headteacher is in the partner school. Staff at both schools come together during the year for training, and joint learning activities are organised for pupils.
- Most pupils at Rocklands are White British and they are taught in three mixed-age classes. The number on roll has increased steadily in the last three years.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (extra funding provided by the government for children in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum levels for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the quality of teaching, so that all lessons are good or outstanding, and pupils get the most from their homework by ensuring teachers:
 - check more frequently on how well pupils are doing in lessons to ensure they are learning quickly and successfully, and not developing misunderstandings or errors in their responses
 - make marking consistently good so it always meets the standard expected by the school
 - help teaching assistants to become more effective at supporting the learning of younger pupils when the teacher is working with the whole class
 - establish a programme of homework assignments that match all pupils' learning needs and is supported by parents and the pupils themselves.
- Extend the links with the federation partner school to:
 - share subject leadership responsibilities more effectively across the federation
 - strengthen the impact leaders have on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, particularly in mathematics.
- Redouble the efforts made to improve the attendance of the small minority of pupils who are absent from school too much.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement is good and occasionally outstanding. This reflects the strong teaching they receive, particularly at the beginning and end of their time at the school.
- Children start school with skills and aptitudes that are broadly typical for their age. The attainment of each new group entering the school can be quite different and reflects the full range of ability. Children make good and sometimes outstanding progress so that a majority reach a good level of development by the end of their Reception year.
- The good start they receive in Reception and Year 1 helps pupils to make good progress in Key Stage 1. In the last two years, all pupils reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2, and several pupils reached above expected standards.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 are typically above average in English and mathematics over time. Individual pupils frequently leave the school with high levels of attainment in writing and mathematics. Last year, pupils did particularly well in the grammar, spelling and punctuation test, reflecting the excellent teaching in this aspect of English.
- Work seen in pupils' books and in lessons confirms the good progress they are making, particularly in writing, although progress is more variable in the middle year groups. Pupils are given good guidance on developing a fluent, cursive handwriting style, which culminates in high standard of presentation in pupils' work at the top of the school.
- The strong emphasis on pupils acquiring effective speaking and listening skills is exemplified in the quality of discussion, articulation and range of vocabulary displayed by the Year 6 pupils spoken to during the inspection.
- The progress made by the small number of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good and often better than comparable pupils nationally. This is because of the high quality support they receive from their teachers and the adults who work with them, which concentrates on the skills they need to improve the most. Most pupils achieve well because they are stretched by teaching that matches their capabilities.
- The very few pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding also make good progress, and reach attainment levels similar to their classmates in English and mathematics. The school uses the funding it receives effectively to provide additional learning support and access to enrichment activities to help ensure these pupils achieve well. There were not enough pupils known to be eligible for the additional funding in 2012 or 2013 to comment on their attainment in the national assessments without identifying individuals.
- Pupils leave the school with above average attainment in reading. The high quality and systematic teaching of phonics (how the sounds in words are represented by different letters) in Reception and Year 1 lay the foundation for the good progress pupils make in reading later on in the school. Results in the Year 1 phonics screening check have been above the national standard for the last two years.
- Pupils enjoy their PE lessons, which are taught effectively by trained specialists within and outside the school federation. These, along with the daily 'wake and shake' sessions, active break-times and sports clubs are helping pupils to develop their fitness and physical skills.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils receive mostly good and sometimes outstanding teaching. The teaching is particularly strong at the top and bottom of the school and this is where the pupils make the most progress and reach the highest standards.
- Most lessons meet pupils' learning needs well and the acquisition of key literacy and numeracy skills is given suitable prominence in all classes. Teachers' high expectations for pupils' good behaviour and engagement make sure that pupils get the most from their lessons.
- Where the teaching is most effective, teachers use their excellent subject knowledge to challenge pupils' thinking and extend their understanding. This was evident in older pupils' learning about the grammatical terms 'comparative' and 'superlative' and the different parts of speech. There were some excellent examples of teachers pinpointing their questioning to find out precisely what pupils know or had learnt.
- This effective teaching ensures most lessons move at a brisk pace and keep pupils engaged and enthused. The phonic teaching for the youngest pupils is a good example of this, with pupils quickly acquiring the important letter sounds to help them become successful readers.
- All teachers use classroom resources well to support pupils' learning. Notebook computers, the interactive whiteboards and hand-held whiteboards are all used to good effect in lessons. The indoor and outdoor learning tasks prepared for Reception children are carefully designed to help them develop their independence and allow them the freedom to be imaginative and creative.
- Teaching helps promotes pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The youngest pupils get the chance to take their learning outdoors with weekly trips to a local wood, where they work together in groups as 'woodland explorers'. Pupils have also made visits to local theatres and have been involved in musical and dramatic productions.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well to give good support to individual pupils and small groups during lessons. They also help a small number of pupils to improve their skills in literacy and numeracy. Sometimes their influence on learning when the teacher is speaking to the whole class is less effective and on these occasions, some are not always clear how they should help younger pupils who might benefit from their intervention.
- Where teaching is less effective, the checks made on how well pupils are doing in lessons when they are working on their own are too infrequent, leading to slower progress and errors sometimes going undetected. There is also some variability in the quality and regularity of marking, which falls below the standard expected by the school and does not always provide sufficient guidance to help pupils improve.
- Pupils' attainment and progress are assessed, recorded and tracked systematically by teachers and senior leaders. Good improvements have been made in the records and evidence kept showing how well Reception children are progressing in all the Early Years Foundation Stage areas of learning.
- Pupils are given regular homework assignments and are expected to read at home each evening. While pupils are benefiting from taking the opportunity to extend their learning at home, several pupils and parents are uncomfortable about the large amount of homework pupils receive.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is good and for some pupils it is outstanding. Pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming to visitors. They speak positively about their enjoyment of school and are proud of their personal achievements. Almost all parents who responded to the on line questionnaire, (Parent View), believe that pupils behave well and that the school manages behaviour effectively.
- Pupils' attitudes in lessons are very positive and most engage in their learning with enthusiasm and sustained interest. Behaviour around the school is good and also outdoors, where children can be active or meet to talk in the 'conversation huts'. The school keeps a suitable log of the very occasional incidents of unacceptable behaviour.
- A behaviour support assistant, who works mainly in the federation partner school, gives good support to any individual pupil who may need help with managing their behaviour and relationships. This has led to noticeable improvements in individual pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning, and brought about clear advances in their learning and progress.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and are rarely troubled by bullying. Some could recall one or two incidents in the past, which they say staff resolved successfully. Year 6 pupils know and understand the different forms of bullying they might encounter, including those that involve prejudice. They also know about the importance of using the internet safely and what to do if they come across anything unsuitable.
- Pupils show good care for each other and benefit socially from being in mixed-age classes, with older pupils given the responsibility for guiding the younger ones. Assemblies contribute well to the 'community feel' and family atmosphere in the school. Here, pupils sing together well and reflect on how they might help others who are in less fortunate circumstances.
- Adults working together with the younger pupils, including children in Reception, provide excellent role models for positive relationships and high levels of care. These give pupils a safe and secure environment in which to develop their personal and social skills.
- Attendance is average and tends to go up and down from year to year. Despite the close checks made on absence and rewards for high attendance, a few pupils who have higher levels of absence, some of which is for holidays in term time, bring down the overall attendance level.

The leadership and management are good

- A strong leadership team that works across the federated schools is ably led by the executive headteacher. She receives good support from the assistant headteacher at Rocklands and the deputy headteacher at the federated partner school. Together they have an accurate view of how well the schools are doing and how they are going to improve them in the future.
- Leaders are firmly focussed on sustaining and improving the above average standards achieved by pupils. The assistant headteacher has a key role in setting expectations and managing the school on a day-to-day basis. Teamwork among staff is good and everyone is determined that all pupils should have an equal chance to succeed. The boundless energy and commitment of the school secretary exemplifies the positive approach adopted by staff to giving their best for the school.
- Leaders keep a close check on how much progress pupils are making each term and meet with teachers to discuss how well pupils are doing in reading, writing and mathematics. Following

these discussions, additional support is provided for any individuals that may not be progressing as fast they should. Analysing the progress of disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium is given suitably high priority.

- Regular checks are made on the quality of teaching and staff receive helpful feedback on how they might improve learning for pupils. These observations form part of the system for managing the performance of teachers and the teaching assistants who work alongside them. Staff training is organised to help strengthen teaching technique and methods, for example in physical education.
- Since the last inspection, the high quality subject leadership provided in English has helped strengthen the teaching of phonics and writing, including handwriting, and this has led to improved standards and achievement. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are also strong and ensure the school meets the needs of its youngest pupils very well.
- There are other members of staff who work effectively across the federated schools, in particular in managing the coordination of the support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, in supporting pupils' behaviour and in teaching PE. There is, however, insufficient coordination in other subjects, particularly in mathematics, to strengthen leadership and extend the influence leaders have on improving teaching and standards.
- Pupils have access to a well-balanced curriculum that includes theme weeks and special days in which pupils from the federated schools learn together, for example in an outdoor learning week involving the youngest pupils. This helps maintain pupils' interest and engagement in their lessons well. Additional government funding for PE and sport is being used appropriately to provide additional teaching and extend pupils' participation in tournaments and competitions. Pupils also enjoy their participation in a number of creative arts activities that include school productions and visits to theatre performances.
- Parents' positive comments about the school reflect the strength of partnership that exists between them. Many parents come into school to help give pupils additional practice with reading and others work alongside staff in escorting pupils on visits locally and further afield. Well attended reading 'cafes', organised for each class, have helped to promote the school's approach to reading and encouraged parents' involvement in their child's reading.
- The local authority gives light touch support to this good school. Staff attend local school cluster meetings and training events, which the local authority promote. Governors have appreciated the help they have received in setting up a joint governing body for the federated schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - A large group of experienced governors with a wide range of skills work together in the best interests of both schools in the federation. They ensure that the checks and records kept for safeguarding pupils meet requirements. An annual governor action plan sets out the changes planned in order to make the governing body more effective. This year, it includes having a sharper focus on seeing the school in action by making visits to classes. Individual governors are linked with subject leaders to keep an eye on the developments introduced in the curriculum. The improvement committee receives regular and detailed information from the headteacher on the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils. However, governors' familiarity with the intricacies of the national attainment and progress data reports requires updating to sharpen their ability to challenge the school to become even better. Governors carry out an annual appraisal of the headteacher's performance and set targets that include

improving pupils' achievement. They oversee the appraisal of all other members of staff, including any changes in salary progression. The school's finances are managed efficiently and good improvements to accommodation have been secured since the last inspection.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	120847
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	425382

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dave Jones
Headteacher	Heather Ware (Executive)
Date of previous school inspection	23 October 2008
Telephone number	01953 483369
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Email address	head@rocklands.norfolk.sch.uk

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