

Ravenswood Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124650
Local Authority	SUFFOLK
Inspection number	293065
Inspection dates	19–20 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Godfrey Bancroft

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	370
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Bill Quinton
Headteacher	Mrs Marilyn J Such
Date of previous school inspection	17 June 2002
School address	Ravenswood Avenue Ipswich Suffolk IP3 9UA
Telephone number	01473 728565
Fax number	01473 721836

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average-sized primary school. The community experiences aspects of both economic and social disadvantage. Children's attainment when they enter the school is below that expected for their age and often well below in personal, social and emotional development and literacy, language and communication. Almost a fifth of pupils comes from minority ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is slightly below average. Close to one third of pupils has learning difficulties or disabilities, which is well above average. The school holds the 'Active Mark' award for its commitment to the provision of sport and exercise activities and 'Healthy Schools' accreditation. The school provides a breakfast and after-school club.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is an improving school in which the hard work of the headteacher and governing body has promoted positive changes. The school's self-evaluation judges its performance to be satisfactory and the inspection supports this view.

The Nursery and Reception classes provide a good start to children's education. As a result, children attain standards that approach those expected for their age and achieve well. Over recent years standards in the main part of the school have been below average and pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 has not been as good as it should have been. The school has responded well to this challenge, to the extent that pupils now achieve satisfactorily, and standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are broadly average. This improvement can be attributed to a more settled teaching force with a better quality of teaching and a continued focus on standards. Even so, standards in English across Key Stage 2, particularly in relation to speaking, listening and writing, still lag behind those in mathematics and science.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. One pupil typified the response of many by saying, 'I like playtimes, but lessons are the best bit'. This response is based on the strong care, support and guidance provided by the school and is underpinned by a very effective programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE). Pupils have a good understanding of the need to maintain a healthy lifestyle, and know how to keep safe. They make a positive contribution to the community and are developing skills adequately which will prepare them for the next step in their education. Teaching, learning and the curriculum are satisfactory. Teachers and teaching assistants have good working relationships with pupils and this is enabling pupils to become increasingly confident learners. However, in some lessons, insufficient attention is given to making the work challenging enough for the most able.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The work of the headteacher and other senior managers is helping to drive up standards and capacity for further improvement is satisfactory. However, the available information about standards is not always used well enough to make comparisons with other schools. Governors are great advocates for the work of the school and represent the interests of their community well. That said, their work in evaluating the quality of provision is not linked closely enough to assessing the success of its priorities for improvement. Improvement since the time of the last inspection is good and the school provides satisfactory value for money. Most parents and carers hold the school in high regard and are pleased with the quality of education it provides. A few express concerns about how the school is run and some are concerned about the quality of pupils' behaviour. However, inspectors do not agree. One parent's comment reflected that of many others when she said, 'The school is excellent at helping new pupils to settle in'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Focus even more closely on the development of pupils' speaking and listening and on their writing, in order to raise standards in English.
- Ensure that teaching, in all lessons, meets the needs of the higher attaining pupils.
- Make full use of the available information about pupils' attainment and progress to compare the performance of the school with that of others.
- Ensure that the role of governors in evaluating the quality of the school's work is linked closely to the areas for development identified in the school improvement plan.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Progress in the Nursery and Reception classes is good and standards are almost at the level expected. Good progress is maintained through Years 1 and 2 and a pattern of steady improvement is evident. Consequently, by the end of Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average. There is a tendency for some year-on-year variations and currently standards in mathematics are not as good as those in reading and writing.

In recent years the rate at which pupils make progress has declined in Years 3 to 6 and, by the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science have been below average. This is no longer the case, to the extent that pupils in the current Year 6 are making good progress and across Key Stage 2 progress is satisfactory overall. Even so, standards in English are not as high as those in mathematics and science. This is mainly because of the low level of some pupils' speaking ability. Pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school does all it can to encourage pupils to attend. Although attendance is below average it is improving steadily. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Occasionally, the pace of learning slows a little when some pupils lose concentration. However, teachers are good at helping pupils to focus on the task in hand. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are enthusiastic in their work. They have good regard to safety and increasingly realise the importance of taking exercise. The good quality of school meals supports them well in making choices about eating wisely. Many pupils contribute willingly to the school community. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as illustrated by their eagerness to participate in artistic and musical activities. Pupils acquire skills satisfactorily that will serve them for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers have established good relations and clearly defined routines with pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together, particularly in support of pupils who find learning difficult and those for whom English is an additional language. Teachers are increasingly using targets for pupils to help them improve their work in mathematics. This is a contributory factor in helping pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work. In a few cases pupils are too reliant on adult support and are not sufficiently independent. Teachers increasingly use the interactive whiteboards to motivate pupils, keep their attention and enrich their learning. However, this is not yet a consistent feature across the school. In most lessons pupils enjoy challenging activities and work at a brisk pace. However, this is not always the case for more able pupils who are capable of working at a higher level.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy a satisfactory range of activities in lessons and in after-school clubs. There are good links with other local schools and agencies to enrich learning opportunities. Special focus

weeks such as Black History and Music weeks allow pupils to gain valuable insights into others' lifestyle, culture and traditions. The school provides a good range of educational trips which, together with an increased focus on the creative elements of the curriculum, inspire and motivate pupils to make the most of the learning opportunities presented to them. Although teachers make increasing use of computers to aid learning across subjects, their use is inconsistent across the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school meets all the current requirements to ensure pupils' health and safety. Pupils are cared for well and they feel safe and secure. They know they can turn to adults in the school if they feel worried. For example, they are confident that, should instances of bullying occur, these will be dealt with promptly by staff. The work of the learning mentor in providing academic and personal guidance is greatly appreciated by pupils. The school's work in supporting pupils' emotional and social development is central to the improved rates of progress which are now evident. The 'Jigsaws' nurture group also makes a significant contribution to these aspects of pupils' learning.

Guidance and support for pupils who find learning difficult are good and there are effective links with outside agencies to help them. Their needs are identified at an early stage and the school provides a good range of additional activities and work which often enable pupils to make good progress and to catch up with their classmates. The school council provides an effective forum for pupils to influence the work of the school and ensure that their views are heard. The school provides parents and carers with very helpful guidance about how to support their children's learning. This is typified by the involvement of parents and carers in the 'Learning Together' part of the PSHE programme.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher sets a clear direction for the school that is focused on raising standards. She shares responsibilities well with a dedicated and hardworking senior leadership team. Staff are enabled to expand their knowledge and skills through good training opportunities. Those with additional responsibilities provide good support for their colleagues. The work of the special educational needs co-ordinator is particularly effective.

The school's arrangements to evaluate its own performance are satisfactory. There are effective procedures to measure pupils' attainment and progress. However, not enough use is made of this information to compare the performance of the school with that of others. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are great advocates for the work of the school and are knowledgeable about what it does well and what needs to be improved. The school improvement plan is rightly focused on raising standards but contains too many initiatives. The evolving work of governors in evaluating how well the school is operating does not focus closely enough on the areas for development identified in the plan.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

20 March 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ravenswood Community Primary School, Ravenswood Avenue, Ipswich, Suffolk IP23 9UA

You may remember that we recently visited to inspect your school. I am writing to thank you for making our visit a very enjoyable experience. We particularly liked seeing how much you enjoy your lessons. We know that you and most of your parents and carers are pleased with the education you receive. Here are some of the things your school does well.

- The staff take good care of you. They make sure you feel safe and can enjoy your lessons and other activities.
- Your teachers and teaching assistants are good at encouraging you to behave well and to be kind and helpful towards each other.
- Staff are good at helping those of you who find learning hard to do well.
- Your school is very good at making sure you to understand the importance of eating healthy foods and taking regular exercise.

To make your learning even better we have asked Mrs Such, the staff and the governors to consider doing the following.

- To give you as much help as they can with your speaking and listening and writing in order to raise standards in English.
- To make sure that the work set for those of you who find learning relatively easy is as demanding as it needs to be.
- To use the information about how well the school is doing to see how you compare with other schools.
- For the governors to make sure that, when they visit, they look closely at the things the school needs to do to make it even better.

For your part you need to make sure that you always work hard in lessons and attend as often as you possibly can. I am sure you will continue to enjoy your learning and to do as well as you can.

Yours sincerely,

Godfrey Bancroft

Lead Inspector, on behalf of the inspection team