

Ranelagh Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124645
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	315002
Inspection dates	4–5 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Glynis Bradley-Peat

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	173
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sue Thomas
Headteacher	Miss Diane Ekins
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2003
School address	Pauls Road Ipswich Suffolk IP2 0AN
Telephone number	01473251608
Fax number	01473221595

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much higher than usually found. The majority of pupils are of White British origin, with just under a third coming from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. Fifteen percent of pupils have English as an additional language, about the same as in most schools. The proportion of pupils identified with learning difficulties is above average and fluctuates greatly between year groups. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the usual times is also higher than in most schools. The school has gained the 'Active Mark' and is working towards gaining 'Healthy Schools' status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ranelagh Primary provides a good standard of education. The school has made good improvement since its last inspection because of the accomplished teamwork between the headteacher and her deputy. They are united in their vision, and in turn share this with all staff and governors. Leadership and management are good. Overwhelmingly, parents praise the school for its work. Many write thanking the school for what it has done for their children. One wrote, 'I am very happy with the school and my children love going.' This agrees with the views expressed by pupils, who spoke excitedly about how much they enjoy school. Their personal development and well-being are good. This is the result of the good care, guidance and support provided by the school. Pupils behave well and are helpful, polite and friendly.

Pupils achieve below average standards, but considering the exceptionally low starting points of many children this represents good progress. There has been improvement in the Year 2 results due to the school's particular focus on speaking and listening. The headteacher's dedication and sensitivity towards her pupils enable those with speech and language difficulties to make good progress. Pupils achieve less well in mathematics because they are not regularly challenged to use their thinking and reasoning skills to investigate mathematically.

Pupils now use their writing skills effectively across the curriculum. This cross-curricular style of working is a particularly effective component of the good curriculum, which also benefits greatly from the strong links the school has forged with other institutions and agencies. There is much evidence of a focus on 'writing for a purpose', such as pupils' letters written in history about evacuation during the war. A real strength is in music and the arts. For example, all pupils in Years 3 to 6 have the chance to learn an instrument free of charge. There are many examples of unusual and complex art work throughout the school.

Teaching is good because teachers work hard and plan their lessons carefully. They provide pupils with a good variety of interesting activities both during lessons and after school. Teachers use technology effectively to make learning more interesting. Pupils are clear about their subject targets and some marking in exercise books demonstrates whether pupils have met them. However, this is inconsistent and some exercise books are not marked regularly. In addition, comments in exercise books do not always say what pupils have done well and what they should do next time to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Attainment on entry to the Nursery is exceptionally low. This is particularly acute in communication, language and literacy and in children's physical development. Over a third have learning difficulties in speech and language, which require specialist support. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage because there is a real focus on providing a rich language environment, which effectively promotes speaking and listening. This is the result of good teaching. Parents are actively involved in their child's education through effective links with the home. The careful induction of children enables most of them to settle quickly. Good organisation of the outdoor area provides a stimulating environment where children learn to play and work together and develop their confidence. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. The Foundation Stage leader ensures that assessment is thorough and accurately identifies the particular needs of each individual child. She has effective links

with outside agencies and systematic procedures for monitoring the progress made by children in each of the areas of learning. By the time children enter Year 1, they have made good progress towards the early learning goals.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics by ensuring that pupils are provided with regular opportunities to develop their thinking, reasoning and investigative skills.
- Ensure work is marked consistently and that comments help pupils know what they have done well and where to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress during their time at Ranelagh and achieve well. Children begin school with exceptionally low levels of skills compared to most children of their age. By the time they begin Year 1, many have made good progress towards expected goals but very few have reached them. Good progress continues to be made, but because of the starting points of most pupils, standards by the end of Year 2 remain significantly below average. Results in national tests at the end of Year 6 show that pupils reach below average standards overall. However, standards are adversely affected by the fact that significant percentages of pupils arrive and leave the school at other than the usual times, particularly in Years 5 and 6. There has been a sustained focus on improving writing, which is paying dividends. Various strategies have been implemented to raise standards, such as using outside visitors. Boys' writing has particularly improved, helped by links with the local football club, who have promoted literacy in their 'Playing for Success' programme. However, standards are lower in mathematics than in English because pupils are not provided with sufficient opportunity to develop their thinking and reasoning skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness are good. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good, and praised by visitors to the school. Attendance is good and pupils are very happy to come to school. They are proud of it and, in the words of one boy, 'don't want to change anything'. They feel safe and say that the teachers listen to their concerns. The pupils have supported the school's anti-bullying policy through their participation in assemblies and through surveys conducted by the school council. Children are aware of racism and a group has participated in the local football club's 'kick racism out of sport' initiative. The extent to which pupils adopt safe and healthy lifestyles is good. Most pupils eat a good variety of fruit and vegetables and the school allotment helps to promote healthy eating. The pupils make a good contribution to the local community and show a mature sense of responsibility towards each other and to the wider world, for example supporting the Seamen's Mission and Shelter. Their basic skills give them a satisfactory foundation for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Typically, teachers plan work carefully to ensure that the needs of all pupils in their class are met. Their subject knowledge is secure and this enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and skills quickly. Teaching is under-pinned by excellent classroom relationships and good humour. Pupils are motivated and interested because teachers engage them well through different approaches to learning. Electronic whiteboards make learning fun and exciting. Specialist music teachers contribute much to pupils' achievement and team teach with class teachers well. Pupils make much progress in a short time and develop confidence through performance. The quality of the singing heard during the inspection was high. Pupils evidently enjoyed participating. Although a wide range of activities is available to pupils in their lessons, they are not always provided with activities which enable them to learn independently in mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their learning because the good curriculum ensures meaningful links are made across subjects. This is a great improvement since the last inspection. Carefully thought out themes and topics celebrate creativity and culture. Information and communication technology contributes well to the high quality displays around the school and to pupils' achievement. This ensures that the learning environment is stimulating. Visits and visitors significantly enhance pupils' understanding of the wider world and have had a good impact on raising standards in writing. However, the curriculum in mathematics does not provide enough opportunity to develop thinking skills through investigative learning. There is an outstanding range of enrichment activities and pupils are inspired to do their best. For example, pupils' artwork is of a high quality and this contributes to the vibrant, welcoming atmosphere. As well as extensive sporting activities, pupils have the opportunity to take part in clubs as diverse as judo, hip hop, cricket, guitar and French for younger pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pupils praise the good care, guidance and support they receive. As a result, they are confident, outgoing and happy with their school. Child protection procedures are in place and rigorous security measures are adopted to ensure that pupils are safe in school. Pupils with particular needs are helped from an early age through links with parent/toddler groups, home visits prior to entry and outside agencies such as speech therapists. The headteacher's care for vulnerable children and their families' needs is exemplary in its attention to detail. Pupils' attainment is carefully tracked and reviewed and this contributes well to their good progress. However, although pupils know their targets they are not always clear about what they should do to ensure that these targets are met. This is because teachers' marking does not consistently inform pupils about what they have done well or what they could have done better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and staff are committed to raising achievement and work effectively as a team. She and her deputy are highly regarded by the pupils and their parents, who have referred to them as 'great' and 'brilliant' and 'very approachable'. The school's self-evaluation is honest and shows a real awareness of what is required to raise standards. The headteacher has a clear understanding of performance data and monitors subject leaders' work to ensure that they respond to any areas for improvement. The subject leaders in turn are beginning to get to grips with monitoring their areas through observing teaching, looking at pupils' work and ensuring that support is provided to help teachers. This, together with expanding children's opportunities for extended writing, is having an impact on standards in English. There is less of an impact as yet in mathematics. Governors are involved in the life of the school and challenge the headteacher and leadership team about pupils' progress and raising standards. The accessibility and dedication of the headteacher, together with the increasingly effective work of the governors, puts the school in a good position to improve.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
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?	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	2
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

6 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ranelagh Primary School, Ipswich, IP2 0AN

As you know, your school was inspected recently. I am writing to you to let you know that we think your school is doing a good job. Your parents agree. I would like to say thank you for making us feel so welcome. You were very helpful, polite and well behaved. We are pleased that you know how to keep safe and what to eat to stay healthy. You have lots of opportunity to take part in sporting and musical activities and the art work around your school is beautiful! You told us about the work of the school council and also about how you raise money for charity. This is highly commendable, well done!

Teaching in your school is good. Teachers use their electronic whiteboards well and this makes lessons interesting and fun for you. You have good opportunities to visit places of interest and participate in clubs and activities. Those of you in Years 3 to 6 have the opportunity to learn an instrument. Your writing has improved and we saw many examples of it displayed around the school. We particularly enjoyed reading the letters you had written in history about being evacuated during the war.

Your headteacher and all her staff want to do their best for you. Your school does many things well, but there are always things that could be better. We have asked your school to make sure that you learn better in mathematics and that teachers give you more chances to think about problems and investigate for yourself. We have also asked that when your teachers mark your books that they let you know what you have done well and what you could have done better.

I am looking forward to reading your results this summer as I hope to see that you have all done well! I wish you every success in Ranelagh Primary School.

Kind Regards

Glyn Bradley-Peat

Lead inspector