

Ravensmere Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124571
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	340603
Inspection dates	7–8 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Alan Jarvis

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	53
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Roger Prime
Headteacher	Mrs Melanie Mills
Date of previous school inspection	21 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors

- observed three teachers in seven lesson visits. Meetings were held with governors, the headteacher and a number of staff responsible for key areas of the school's work. Inspectors looked at planning, minutes of meetings and other documentation, including that relating to safeguarding and pupils' learning and progress. Several informal discussions were held with parents and carers. Questionnaires returned by 24 parents and carers and nine members of staff were analysed.

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

- the reasons why pupils attainment remains high
- how well the school develops pupils' awareness of the cultural and social diversity in our country and further afield
- the impact on the school of it being part of a hard federation
- strengths in provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

This school is smaller than average. It is federated with the Albert Pye Community Primary School. The headteacher and governing body share responsibility for both schools. All pupils are of White British heritage. Around one in ten pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities which is a below average proportion. Most commonly these pupils have support for their specific learning needs or physical disabilities. The school has achieved the Active Playground award with distinction.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Pupils excel both academically and socially in this outstanding school which has sustained its exceptional quality of work over many years. Parents and carers are unanimous in their praise for the school. Typical of their comments were, 'I could not have wished for a better school and teaching is of the very highest quality', and 'Children come first in this excellent school and their energies are channelled in the right direction.'

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Children get off to a flying start in the Reception class where their personal development and self-esteem are boosted considerably. They show high levels of independence, enthusiasm and concentration across all areas of learning because of the very stimulating and individualised curriculum. These are built on extremely well so that by the end of Year 2 attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is high and has been so for many years. This and their above average attendance prepare them extremely well for their futures.

The outstanding academic progress and high standards result from a potent combination of outstanding teaching and a sophisticated curriculum. High quality teaching permeates all classes. This is rooted in teachers' perceptive awareness of each individual pupil's progress and learning needs. These are met through very skilful use of questioning and constantly challenging all groups of pupils to do their very best. The curriculum is finely tailored to pupils' needs. It abounds with innovation and provides many memorable experiences and rich opportunities for learning in depth.

Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are extremely polite and well mannered. They feel extremely safe and secure at school and have a well-tuned perspective on possible dangers that exist at home, at school, on the streets and near 'running water'. Their excellent awareness of how to lead healthy lifestyles is reflected in their enthusiasm for healthy eating and their keenness to participate in physical education lessons and school clubs. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is excellent. Their cultural understanding, while good, is not as highly developed because while pupils learn about a range of faiths and how people live in other countries, they have limited first hand contact with people from different backgrounds and cultures. Good plans are in place to address this but have not been fully implemented.

The school has greatly benefited from being part of the hard federation because it has gained resources and expertise it could not previously have afforded. Pupils' high academic and personal outcomes have been sustained. Innovation has quickened and a cutting edge has been built up through joint working, high quality staff training and sharing of best practice and resources. Transition between the two schools is greatly

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improved because the curriculum has been harmonised in all years while still reflecting individual needs.

The school knows exactly where it is going. Outstanding leadership at all levels is ensuring that there is a very strong drive to keep the school at the forefront of excellence. The governing body makes an exceptional contribution in providing high quality support and challenge to the school. Governors' willingness to grasp new opportunities, such as initiating the hard federation, and adapting to new ideas is especially impressive. School improvement planning is comprehensive and clear and fully involves governors, staff, parents and carers. The many strengths in this school and its excellent track record show it has an outstanding capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the school's approach to community cohesion makes pupils more aware of other national and global communities by implementing the school's plan and evaluating its impact.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and get down to learning from the moment they come each morning. They start each day with concentration, reading independently or with their teacher. By the time they reach Year 2 nearly all read fluently as 'Rainbow Readers' - being able to read at least 300 key words. They comprehend fiction books very well for their age and get great enjoyment from researching new facts and ideas from non-fiction books. In a Year 1 writing lesson many pupils worked for long periods of time writing a letter to 'Sammy Shark'. Their progress was boosted by them focusing on their challenging targets of writing 'super sentences' and making their work 'a little neater'. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson not a moment was wasted when many pupils worked out or devised two-step multiplication and division problems.

The rapid progress seen in lessons by all groups of pupils is reflected in the school's data and levels reached in the national Year 2 assessments. Although attainment fluctuates from year to year, because the cohorts are very small, nearly all reach the expected level by the end of Year 2 and many exceed this. Typically, at least twice as many pupils reach the higher level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics as do so nationally. The gap in attainment between boys and girls, particularly in writing, evident in the Reception class is minimal at the end of Year 2. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities nearly always make very quick progress because of very good support, excellent care and patient guidance provided by teachers and their assistants. Pupils also do extremely well in other subjects, as can be seen, for example, in the splendid artwork which abounds around the school and in their special books.

Attendance has improved and the vast majority of time off school is related to genuine illness. Pupils very willingly act as playground buddies and play leaders. They have a very strong voice in suggesting what they would like to pursue in their learning which is readily facilitated by teachers. They are very proud of their school and visits to local

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senior citizens, fundraising and displays in the local library are highly valued. Pupils are strong ambassadors in promoting good health and know it is good to 'Eat five fruit and vegetables a day, each one a different colour' with one pupil even asking her father to 'stop smoking because it is bad for you.'

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers are expert at making lessons exciting. They talk to pupils extremely skilfully making it clear how well they have done previously, what exactly they are learning in each lesson and how best to go about it. They continually inject challenge and temper this with encouragement by saying, for example, 'Don't worry about it - you can do it!' Every opportunity is taken to listen to what pupils want to learn which gives pupils great ownership of their learning. Very good use is made of the teaching assistants, who very skilfully ensure that all pupils are involved and supported. Pupils understand in detail how to improve their work because work is marked thoroughly. There is a constant dialogue about the simple, achievable next steps each pupil needs to strive for in their learning such as 'Write three digit numbers confidently.'

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 curriculum contributes very strongly to pupils' enthusiasm and learning and often builds on pupils' interests and suggestions. For example, in a themed week pupils of different ages worked together dressing up as pirates and building a pirate ship and used this as a platform for learning across the curriculum. Topic work has a high profile and helps pupils of all abilities develop independence, make choices and capitalise upon their basic skills. Clubs such as those for art, multi-skills, cheerleading and speed stacking are extremely popular and offer something for everyone. Visits out to the theatre and visitors to school such as paramedics and the fire brigade make a very strong contribution to pupils' personal development.

The exemplary pastoral care underpins pupils' academic success and their outstanding happiness, enjoyment and behaviour. Provision for pupils particular requirements, for example specific learning needs or physical disabilities, is excellent. The school looks after any pupils who face challenging circumstances exceptionally well. It draws extremely well on partners outside the school to tailor provision to each individual's needs.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Clear sighted and inspirational leadership and management are at the heart of the school's continuing drive for improvement. Teamwork and morale are of the highest quality and are underpinned by a 'No excuses - we can do it' approach. The impact is seen in pupils' high academic and personal outcomes. Ambitious targets are set for pupils and are consistently met. Strategies for monitoring of teaching have recently been strengthened and ensure teachers are very clear about what they need to focus on to improve further. Following a review senior leaders are honing these systems to gauge the impact that teaching has on the progress of different groups of pupils over time. Performance data is used extremely well and ensures all groups of pupils have the opportunity to make outstanding progress in each year group. The school draws extensively on the skills of parents and carers a range of outside partners who together make a very effective contribution to the provision on offer.

Governors demonstrate great expertise and vision in their role. They are very well informed about what parents and carers would like to see improved. Their knowledge and intimate understanding of the school's performance is used extremely well to identify and implement longer term strategic initiatives and to draw up a powerful

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annual school development plan. Excellent policies, drawing on high quality practice, are in place to underpin the excellent work of the school in safeguarding pupils. As a result safety and safeguarding is understood and acted on by staff at all levels. Governors have a good understanding of community cohesion and fully appreciate the size and location of the school present challenges in developing the pupils' understanding of communities beyond their own. To this end they have produced a detailed action plan to link the school with contrasting communities in the United Kingdom and beyond, which is being pursued with vigour.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding because the excellent teaching, care and curriculum enable children to make very rapid progress. Boys' writing, which has been a weaker element, has improved because of the higher priority given to developing early writing skills. Children show high levels of imagination, independence and enthusiasm in their learning such as when imagining they are a palaeontologist digging for dinosaur bones. They quickly learn to take turns and work together because these experiences are integrated into all their learning activities. Children show great care when using scissors or hot glue guns or when balancing on equipment, and they respond extremely well to the opportunities to practise 'risky freedoms'.

Induction arrangements are excellent and adapted carefully to individual needs. Consequently, children settle quickly and feel safe and happy. Rigorous tracking of each child's progress and subsequent adjustments to provision ensures children are always

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fully challenged. High quality adult/child interactions indoors and outdoors ensure children develop a 'can do' attitude towards learning; the confidence to make choices and the resilience to learn in depth. The indoor environment is extremely stimulating, very well resourced and encourages children to access and organise the resources for themselves. The outdoor area is used extremely creatively, but does not allow lessons to freely flow from indoors to outdoors. Nevertheless teachers do their very best to work around this and plans to further develop the outdoor environment are at advanced stage of being implemented. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are outstanding. Continuous self-review informs development planning. This approach has contributed to the high outcomes being sustained since the last inspection.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and how well their children are getting on. These echo the findings of the inspection. A good number of parents and carers wrote supportive comments which included, 'I like the way the school offers opportunities for pupils of different ages and abilities to learn together in 'Mixed Up Mondays', and 'The school is like an extended family where the individual child is always given top priority.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ravensmere Infant 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 24 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 53 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	92	2	8	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	20	83	4	17	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	71	7	29	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	67	7	29	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	18	75	6	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	79	3	13	2	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	88	3	13	0	0	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)	19	79	5	21	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	75	5	21	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	71	7	29	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	71	5	21	2	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	79	4	17	1	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	79	5	21	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 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. 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">■ 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 pupil's 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.



9 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ravensmere Infant School, Beccles, NR34 9DE

If you remember, I came with my colleague, to inspect the work of the school and to check on how well you are doing. I am very pleased to report that you go to an outstanding school, and indeed, one which has been so for many years. Here are some of things we liked the best.

You are making excellent progress and reaching high standards because your teachers and other adults are exceptionally good at helping you learn.

You play a big part in telling your teachers what you would like to learn and making the school an exciting and friendly place to be.

Your behaviour is impeccable, as are your manners.

You work hard and know a lot about keeping fit and healthy.

You also told us you liked the many clubs on offer, and we like them too.

The young children in the Reception class are doing extremely well.

All the adults keep a careful eye on how well you are doing, and make sure that anyone who needs extra help gets just what they need.

Your headteacher, governing body and teachers have done much to improve the school and are working hard to make it even better.

The links with the Albert Pye School have done much to help the school keep on improving and enable your transfer to be as smooth as possible.

We have agreed with your headteacher and governors that, to help you learn even more, they are going to link up with some different communities outside Beccles and in other countries so that you can see for yourselves how different communities lead their lives.

The school is proud of you all. We hope you carry on enjoying school and making it such a fantastic place to be.

Yours sincerely

Alan Jarvis

Lead inspector

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