

Rushmere Hall Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	124679
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	380955
Inspection dates	3–4 July 2012
Lead inspector	Judith Dawson

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 of pupils on the school roll	494
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Arthur
Headteacher	Jenny Barr
Date of previous school inspection	18 November 2008
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Judith Dawson Additional Inspector

Nick Asker Additional Inspector

Janet Tomkins Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team observed 22 lessons taught by 18 teachers. They held meetings with groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, plans for improvement, the monitoring of teaching and pupils' records of progress. They examined the school's procedures for ensuring pupils' safety and welfare and teachers' planning. The inspection team took account of three responses to the on-line Parent View survey during the inspection and 238 parental questionnaires.

Information about the school

Rushmere Hall is twice the average size for primary schools and serves a mixed community on the outskirts of Ipswich. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, while below average, has risen in recent years, as has the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is similar to most schools. The school has a Nursery and three Reception classes where, for the first time this academic year, parents and carers have the option of entering their children in the September after their fourth birthday. The school has specialist units for hearing-impaired pupils and those with speech and language difficulties. The latter caters for pupils who arrive at various times throughout Key Stage 1 from schools in south Suffolk. Pupils in the hearing-impaired unit usually remain in school until the end of Key Stage 2. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who receive additional support is well above average. The school meets the current floor standards, the minimum standards expected by the government of Year 6 pupils. There is a children's centre on the site and children can attend an independently run after-school club. Both of these are inspected separately. The school holds a range of awards including the Platinum Sing-Up award.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school which is well led and managed and demonstrates sustained improvement. The provision and care for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, for music and for children in the Nursery class is outstanding. The school is not yet outstanding overall because there are weaknesses in the provision for children in Reception. The monitoring of teaching is regular and systematic but does not focus sufficiently on pupils' learning and improving individual teacher's practice. The teaching of phonics (the sounds combinations of letters make) is good, but a few pupils' reading books are too easy for them.
- Pupils achieve well. They make good progress from their generally below-average starting points. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have risen year on year and by the end of Year 6 are in line with the national average.
- Teaching is good and several outstanding lessons were observed. There are good systems for providing pupils with oral and written advice to help them improve their work. Planning in Key Stages 1 and 2 is effective in enabling pupils of all abilities to progress well. In Reception, instances were seen where the planning for learning did not provide children with the learning opportunities they need to make good progress.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy school, treating each other and adults with respect. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good for the vast majority of pupils. There are consistently applied rewards and sanctions and bullying is rare.
- All leaders and managers are fully involved in planning, monitoring and setting targets, as is the governing body. The headteacher has established an effective leadership team that has developed the skills and creativity to ensure the school continues to improve. The management of provision for disabled pupils

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and those with special educational needs is outstanding. There are weaknesses in the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that observations of teaching evaluate how effectively pupils are learning and that points for improvement become the focus of future observations.
- Improve the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage, disseminating the outstanding practice in the Nursery class throughout the Reception classes so that:
 - all teachers plan adult-led and independent activities that extend children's skills, imagination and independence
 - all children have access to a stimulating learning environment.
- Make sure that all pupils' reading books provide them with sufficient challenge to extend their comprehension skills and acquire new vocabulary.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children in the Nursery class make rapid progress because they develop their skills in purposeful, relevant and interesting ways. They learn and play happily alongside each other, rapidly developing good personal and social skills. They know what they are trying to achieve and are excited about their learning. Many more children join the Reception classes from a range of providers. They generally make at least satisfactory progress in their lessons although the environment for learning is less effective than that of the Nursery. In a small number of Reception lessons the planning for independent learning lacks purpose and provides little more than opportunities for play. Children enjoy these activities but gain little new learning from them. Similarly, while most learning from adult-led sessions is effective, there are occasions when it is not: for example, adults attempted to teach phonics while children were having their snacks and were unable to concentrate.

Pupils generally join Year 1 with below average standards for their age. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have risen each year over the last four years and the current cohorts are working at the expected levels for their age. While standards in reading are average in Year 2 and a strong focus on phonics ensures pupils have the skills to decode words, teachers' expectations of their overall reading skills are sometimes too low. Year 6 pupils are reading at appropriate levels for their age.

A few pupils in Year 6 achieve highly in mathematics. In one lesson, for example, pupils were challenged to find a word with a value of a million using letters matched to numbers 1 to 26 and multiplying them together. Pupils developed their own

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strategies for this, the most able swiftly identifying that they needed to start with the factors of a million. They are very eager to continue the investigation.

Most parents and carers, especially those with children of above average abilities or who have disabled children or children with special educational needs, feel their children make good progress. Very effective planning and support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including, but not exclusively, for those in the two special units, ensures that they make good, and sometimes outstanding progress from their starting points. In the speech and language unit, for example, adults have very high expectations of the pupils so individuals make rapid progress with their individually designed programmes. Pupils who speak one of the over 20 different languages in school as their first language make good progress in learning English so that they swiftly progress as well as their peers in all subjects.

Quality of teaching

Teachers use data about pupils' progress to plan lessons and additional support to ensure pupils make good progress. Most lessons have a range of tasks to meet the needs of different groups of pupils or individuals. In most cases a good pace and plenty of challenge ensure pupils enjoy their learning and make good progress. Occasionally the pace of lessons slows and there is insufficient challenge so pupils' learning and sometimes their behaviour is satisfactory rather than good, as seen elsewhere. The specialist teachers of hearing-impaired pupils and those with speech, language and communication difficulties are highly skilled. The teacher of pupils with hearing impairments is particularly effective in ensuring the pupils are included in mainstream lessons at every opportunity, helping class teachers and teaching assistants to meet individual needs. A parent or carer who has children in the speech and language unit highly praises the level of support, teaching and care by all the staff.

Teachers' advice to pupils, including when marking their books, is consistently good throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils respond to this and often evaluate how well they have learnt. Their targets are clear and often referred to. All adults expect work to be well presented and completed. Although a very small minority of parents and carers have some concerns about homework, the inspection found the quality and amount to be appropriate. In one lesson, for example, the teacher used pupils' homework as a starting point for work based on the poem 'The Highwayman': pupils became deeply involved in the tragedy as the teacher encouraged discussion and empathy as well as the use of simile and metaphor.

The teaching of music is exemplary and the specialist teacher works closely with class teachers, not only to develop their music teaching expertise but also to plan her lessons to reflect topics and phonics lessons. In one lesson, for example, the sounds pupils made to illustrate 'hot and cold' echoed the letter sounds they had learnt. Music makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development and the rarely awarded 'Platinum Sing-Up' award is a testament to the schools' achievements.

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Outstanding planning for learning in the Nursery gives children an excellent start to their education. Although much of the learning is initiated by the children, the teacher's questions and the way they are challenged ensure that their activities have purpose, generate enquiry and experimentation and help children towards their next steps in learning. However, although children are well cared for and happy in all classes in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the planning to meet children's learning needs in Reception is inconsistent.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' safety and welfare have a high priority. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and almost all parents and carers echo their view. Safety procedures and systems to promote good behaviour and relationships are consistently applied. Behaviour is almost always good. The school's documentation shows that the very few incidents involving bullying of any type have been dealt with effectively, although a small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns over this issue. Pupils know how to take care of themselves and are clear about the dangers that could confront them, for example, when using the internet. They take a pride in their work and work together well, especially when they are confronted with one of their many challenges or investigations. They respond well to their teachers' advice. The school has robust systems to improve attendance and, this academic year, attendance has been good, above last year's national average. The school generates a happy, orderly and caring environment that makes a good contribution to developing pupils' moral and social skills.

Leadership and management

The school's plans for development focus on raising standards and accelerating progress to good effect. The headteacher has skilfully delegated leadership responsibilities and supported leaders in developing their roles, ensuring the school continues to improve. Subject leaders monitor teaching, planning and progress. They contribute to school improvement and are encouraged to be innovative. The very effective management of provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs ensures equality of opportunity for all pupils. Strong links with external support agencies ensure pupils receive the best possible support and care. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements.

The governing body is well informed and supports and challenges the leadership team effectively. It is active in supporting the school in improving on the already good engagement with parents and carers. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has been effective in terms of organisation and procedures but there has been limited success in ensuring the outstanding curriculum in the Nursery and good and outstanding practice in teaching is disseminated throughout the unit. Performance management is rigorous and teachers' performance is regularly monitored. This informs professional development and whole school priorities.

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The curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2 is good. It is broad and balanced and enriched with many visits, visitors and events. Pupils learn French throughout the school and enjoy using the swimming pool on site. Good use is made of local places of interest such as Southwold, Aldeburgh and Framlingham Castle. Pupils participate in a range of community events and festivals. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. For example, pupils sang a simple song using many of their friends' languages for a local competition. There are strong links with Northgate High School and the consortium of local schools and specialist teaching for sport.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



5 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rushmere Hall Primary School, Ipswich, IP4 3EJ

Thank you all very much for your friendliness and help when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you all, seeing your hard work and how well you all behave. We could see that you enjoy school and appreciate the help and support your teachers give you. We thoroughly enjoyed your fantastic singing and could see that you do as well!

You belong to a good school. You make good progress because your teachers make your lessons interesting and give you plenty of challenge. We were very pleased to see how well most of you listen to their advice and act on the comments that they write when marking your books. Children in the Nursery class have an excellent start to school and learn very quickly. Those of you who need extra help, both in the units or the classroom, have outstanding support and care.

Although teaching is good and you make good progress, there are some things that would help you to learn even more quickly. We have asked teachers to look at how you learn in the best lessons and to share this good practice. We think this is particularly important in the Early Years Foundation Stage. We found that some of your reading books were too easy for you. We saw how much you enjoyed reading harder books and want your teachers to make sure that you have plenty of challenge when you read.

We were pleased that you had a sunny day for your visit to Southwold. I hope those of you visiting Framlingham castle enjoyed yourselves and avoided any fierce knights lurking in the shadows!

We wish you all the very best for the future, especially those moving to new schools.

Yours sincerely
Judith Dawson
Lead inspector

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