

Redcastle Family School

St Martin's Way, Thetford, IP24 3PU

Inspection dates 11–12 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching is not yet good enough to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress across the school.
- In some lessons the work set is not at the right level for pupils, especially the more able.
- The way leaders check pupils' progress does not show precisely how well groups of pupils, such as those of different ability and gender, are doing.
- Although supportive of the school, governors do not have all the skills they need to ask searching questions about its performance.
- The targets set for teachers are not sharp enough and are not related to improving the attainment and progress of pupils.
- Subject and middle leaders do not monitor accurately enough the impact of steps designed to raise standards.

The school has the following strengths

- The nurturing ethos of the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Pupils enjoy school and feel happy, safe and well supported.
- The school has successfully improved behaviour, attendance and the environment for learning.
- Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception where teaching and provision are good.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons taught by nine teachers. Two observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including the school’s data on pupils’ progress, planning, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and senior and middle leaders. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a member of the local authority.
- Inspectors received the views of parents through 11 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and informal meetings with parents at the start and end of school sessions.
- Inspectors received the views of 27 members of staff through the inspection questionnaire and held discussions with teaching, support, administrative and ancillary staff. They received the views of pupils through both informal and pre-arranged discussions

Inspection team

Joan Beale, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christine Mayle

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Redcastle Family Primary School is slightly smaller than the averaged-sized primary school and numbers are increasing.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is slightly above the national average and is increasing.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is broadly in line with that seen nationally.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils leave or join the school outside normal times.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching across the school by ensuring that:
 - all teachers use what they know about pupils' needs and ability levels to set work that is just right for them and sufficiently demanding to move learning forward
 - staff check on pupils' understanding and learning frequently in lessons, to adapt teaching when necessary.
- Improve the achievement of all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics, by:
 - building pupils' writing skills systematically through activities that meet their needs and which interest and motivate them to try hard with their work
 - ensuring pupils are given clear feedback on how to improve their writing in all subject areas, not just English
 - providing pupils with the opportunity to change reading books more frequently
 - developing more opportunities for pupils to use and apply mathematical skills in different subjects.
- Strengthen leadership and management through:
 - developing whole-school tracking systems so that they clearly show the progress of different groups of pupils in different subjects over time
 - ensuring that subject and middle leaders have the time and appropriate training to enable them to both drive and monitor improvement in their areas
 - setting teachers targets to improve their teaching and to increase pupils' progress so that they are fully held to account for their performance
 - providing appropriate training for governors, especially in the use and interpretation of data, so that they are better able to both ask challenging questions and support the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils **requires improvement**

- Children enter the Nursery with skills that are below those expected for their age. They make good progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and enter Key Stage 1 with knowledge, skills and understanding that are broadly average. This good progress is not sustained in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 where pupils make expected progress.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 had been below over time, especially in writing. However, results in 2011 were broadly average and unconfirmed results for 2012 and school records for the progress and attainment of the current Year 6 show that attainment now shows a rising trend, as does the number of pupils making two or more levels of progress. The gap in attainment between writing and mathematics is closing.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates as a result of the effective support they receive both within class and through individual help. This also applies to pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language, who benefit from appropriate support.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium are sensitively supported. Some pupil premium funding has been used to employ additional teaching assistants and part time teachers and as a result pupils make expected progress. Funding has also been used to provide enrichment activities and after-school clubs involving parents which extend the curriculum for these pupils.
- Pupils celebrate their many achievements, including academic and improved attendance, through weekly celebration assemblies led by the headteacher. Pupils show that they are proud of each other's achievements and such activities contribute well to their self-esteem and spiritual, moral, and social development.
- Parents are highly positive about their children's achievements. They are encouraged to be involved with the school from the time their children start school.

The quality of teaching **requires improvement**

- There is variability in the quality of teaching across the school. It is not consistently good enough to ensure that all pupils make good progress in all subjects and achieve well over time.
- In lessons which require improvement, work is not always demanding enough for more able pupils in particular and their progress is too slow. In these lessons the activities do not always reflect the learning objective. Teachers' expectations about what is to be achieved in the lesson are not always made clear and this also slows learning. Teachers do not always check progress closely enough to pick this up quickly.
- In the best lessons seen teaching was characterised by creative planning of stimulating and inspirational lessons that captured pupils' imagination. In such lessons, where pupils are actively engaged in and enjoying their learning, the progress of all groups of learners is rapid and results in high quality work. In one lesson observed the teacher had planned a range of sequences of pictures and film clips which stimulated pupils to respond at a high level. The teacher set effective deadlines and questioning challenged pupils to justify their thinking so that they made good gains in learning.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, activities are well planned and include a range of resources that engage children in their learning. There are a variety of opportunities for children to develop language through their play. Adult-led activity gives all children focused support. Consequently they learn well.
- Other adults generally provide effective support for pupils who need extra help or who are at risk of not doing well. As a result, these pupils make good progress individually and when supported in small groups. However, pupils sometimes miss out on stimulating activities taking place in the classroom whilst they are in these intervention groups and would also benefit from being supported by the classroom teacher on occasion and not always by a teaching assistant.
- Marking gives clear areas for improvement in English and mathematics. However, pupils do not get the same high quality feedback on how to improve their writing when writing in other curriculum areas.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school provides a caring nurturing environment. Pupils show kindness and respect to each other. They are particularly kind to pupils who have difficulties or who are new to the school. Older pupils respond maturely to the additional responsibilities they are given, for example in planning the new adventure playground.
- The mutual respect between pupils and adults contributes to the school's positive ethos and happy atmosphere. Pupils are polite and courteous. Behaviour in lessons is generally good, and where it occasionally requires improvement this is linked to teaching that also requires improvement. Behaviour around the school and in the playground and dinner hall is consistently good.
- Attendance is improving and is now broadly average. The school has implemented a range of positive initiatives including various awards for full attendance.
- There is little bullying of any kind. Pupils are confident that if any does arise it is dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Pupils from different backgrounds get on well together. The school promotes an understanding and tolerance of cultural and other differences through discussions in lessons and assemblies and it has a positive approach to ensuring inclusion and freedom from discrimination.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and have a good awareness of how to keep safe. They enjoy coming to school and particularly enjoy the wide range of after-school clubs and the playground activities available at break and lunchtime.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders at all levels are committed to the school's success. Behaviour and attendance have improved and attainment is starting to rise. However, subject leaders do not do enough to check what is going on in their subjects areas and so have limited impact in raising standards and improving pupils' progress.
- Leaders do not do enough to follow up their priorities for improvement to make sure that things

are improving quickly.

- The school's tracking system is so complicated that pupil progress data cannot be easily analysed to provide an overview for leaders of the progress that different groups are making, or to support the setting of challenging targets to bring about accelerated progress.
- Teachers are not given targets relating to their teaching or to the progress of pupils at an individual or whole-school level and so are not held sufficiently to account for their performance.
- Pupils benefit from a range of specialist facilities including for technology, physical education, art, music, drama and science. The curriculum is well designed to provide them with cultural and religious experiences and opportunities to use information technology, play musical instruments and participate in a range of enrichment activities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted as a result.
- The local authority has provided 'light touch' support to the school having identified it as a 'good' school in the last annual visit. This has neither challenged nor supported the school enough.
- The risk assessments undertaken by staff and governors are rigorous and secure the safety of pupils and staff and the school meets safeguarding requirements
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body requires improvement because governors, while hugely supportive of the school, do not have all the skills required to evaluate critically the range of information available so that they can hold the school to account.
 - Governors need training, particularly in the use of data, so that they can ask searching questions of the school about the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' progress and attainment.

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	120905
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	401980

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	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pat Pearson
Headteacher	Andy Sheppard
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2009
Telephone number	01842 752239
Fax number	01842 752239
Email address	office@rfs.norfolk.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

