

Rackenford Church of England Primary School

Rackenford, Tiverton, Devon, EX16 8DU

Inspection dates 20–21 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The current partnership arrangements provide the school with effective leadership and management. There is a clear and ambitious vision for the school and well-structured plans which ensure this happens.
- Senior leaders have worked effectively to make sure all teachers think about their practice and share ideas about how to improve it.
- There is a strong sense of teamwork among adults and they work hard to give pupils the challenge and support they need.
- Teaching is good. The systems in the school ensure teachers have helpful information about how well pupils are learning. Teachers use this to plan carefully the work pupils are given to do.
- Achievement is good. Pupils make good progress across the school. After a dip in standards in 2013, standards have returned to previous levels, which are above average.
- Pupils are eager to do the tasks teachers give them and enjoy the themes they study. They like helping each other and their behaviour helps them to learn well.
- The school has worked hard to improve attendance, and this is now high because pupils enjoy being at school.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage provides children with a good start to their education because they enjoy their learning; they make good progress.
- Governors know the school well and make sure they understand what the data show about the performance of pupils and teachers. They ensure that the statutory requirements are met, particularly those to keep pupils safe.
- Senior leaders work with other partners and the governors to ensure that they keep up to date with recent developments and that all adults in the school are safe to work with children.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding. While teachers make sure that pupils have high-quality feedback, they do not always insist that pupils' responses are as detailed or effective in bringing about improvements. Pupils do not always make the most of the opportunities to respond to these comments.
- Learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not always of such a high quality when children are following their own interests, particularly outdoors, as when they are led by an adult.
- Boys in Key Stage 1 are not always as determined as the girls to do their very best writing.

Information about this inspection

- One inspector spent two days in the school, looking at pupils' learning in lessons and at their work in their books. He spoke to pupils about their work and listened to them read. Approximately a quarter of the observations of lessons were done alongside senior leaders.
- The inspector reviewed a range of evidence about the performance of the school, including: teachers' records about the progress pupils have made; senior leaders' evaluation of the quality of teaching; external views about the school's performance; and records about support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- The inspector also looked at documents provided by the school, including: records about concerns or accidents; policies and procedures, including those to keep pupils safe; minutes from meetings; and plans to tackle the issues identified by the school.
- The inspector met with groups of pupils, staff and with governors, to gather views of those involved with the school. He reviewed 22 responses to the online survey, Parent View. This is a survey by Ofsted for parents at the school. He also spoke to parents informally, before and after school. The responses to a survey for staff working at the school were also taken into account.
- The inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority, and met with a representative from the diocese of Exeter.

Inspection team

Andrew Saunders, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than average and caters for pupils from the local village and surrounding area.
- There are three classes. One class includes children in Reception and Year 1, other pupils in Years 2 and 3 and some of those in Year 4, and there is a class for those in Years 5 and 6 and the rest of those in Year 4. Differences in the number of pupils in each cohort mean that the arrangement of classes changes each year.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception) attend school full time.
- In some year groups, there are considerably more boys than girls; in other year groups, there are more girls.
- Almost all pupils are White British; there are very few pupils from other ethnicities. No pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below average.
- There are very few disadvantaged pupils, supported by the additional funding known as the pupil premium. These are pupils who have been eligible for free school meals or who are children looked after by the local authority. There are too few disadvantaged pupils in the school to be able to comment anonymously on their performance.
- About 18 months ago, the school became part of a co-operative learning partnership with Tiverton High School and 10 other primary schools. The headteacher of Tiverton High School is currently the executive headteacher of Rackenford Primary School, in a management partnership. There is a head of teaching and learning based at the school full time. Other senior leadership is shared with the high school. There is a separate governing body for the school.
- In 2014 there were too few pupils in Year 6 to comment on whether the school meets the current floor standards. These are the minimum expectations set by the government for the attainment and progress of pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop teaching so that it is outstanding and that the progress of pupils is rapid, by:
 - making sure that pupils show more determination to improve their work for themselves by responding to teachers' comments in their marking with more detail
 - continuing the focus on making sure that boys enjoy writing and develop their skills as much as the girls, particularly in Key Stage 1
 - ensuring that adults expect a quality of learning just as high as that in the Early Years Foundation Stage wherever children are learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher has ensured that the leadership in the school is well developed and able to provide the guidance, support and example to improve teaching. His input has been well structured to develop wider leadership and promote the skills of those in the school. Consequently there is no weak teaching in the school and all teachers understand what is expected of them.
- Senior leaders provide an excellent example of highly effective teaching which sets the benchmark for other staff. Teachers work together to find ways of developing their own practice. Consequently there is an ethos of high expectations and ongoing improvement. Senior leaders have made sure that teachers have opportunities for training and development. All teachers take on various roles of responsibility, so middle leadership is well shared and effective.
- Well-structured approaches to managing behaviour are used consistently across the school. This promotes good behaviour for all pupils.
- The additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils, known as the pupil premium, is used well. For example, it provides individual support for some pupils and resources for others.
- School leaders and teachers work together to make sure all groups of pupils have similar opportunities and support, to promote equality and tackle discrimination. For example, having identified an issue, the school has bought resources to promote boys' reading and writing, and trained teachers to understand how they can help this. Work in boys' books shows that this is having a positive impact, although boys in Key Stage 1 are still more reluctant to write at times.
- The school celebrates a range of festivals, including those of other cultures from around Britain. They make sure that pupils have opportunities for experiences further afield, such as a visit to the LIFE exhibition in Exeter. These enrich pupils' understanding of Britain as a multicultural society.
- Pupils have opportunities to take on responsibilities and to discuss moral and ethical issues. Together with the broad and balanced curriculum, this means they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders have ensured the curriculum makes good use of the local environment, resources in the school and opportunities within the cooperative trust. This means the support for groups of pupils is good, including for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and the most able.
- The school makes good use of the additional funding for physical education. In particular, this currently ensures that pupils benefit from high-quality opportunities to take part in sports and provides resources for pupils. The school has also used it to afford training for teachers so that they are more confident in their skills and knowledge.
- The close links with the secondary school and the good arrangements for pupils to learn more about life and learning in a much bigger school mean that pupils face this change with confidence.
- The local authority has provided the school with particular support in making sure that the new arrangements for leadership have been effective. They now provide the school with support when it is requested, as well as occasional checks about the school's overall performance.
- As part of the cooperative trust, the school works with other schools to check the assessment of pupils' work, so that this is accurate and takes into account the standard of pupils' work more widely.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective because the governors care a great deal about the success and life of the school and share the vision for high-quality education and opportunities for the pupils. They ask challenging questions and keep a close check on how the school is improving, gathering their own views when they visit the school. They make sure that the school considers the progress of pupils when looking at the quality of teaching. Working with senior leaders, this informs their decisions about how any pay is awarded, to encourage and promote the best practice. They support leaders in tackling any weaknesses in teaching.
 - Governors make sure that decisions about how the finances of the school are spent are well focused on providing pupils with the best opportunities they can. In particular, they reflect carefully about the impact of how the pupil premium is used, and how effectively the primary sports funding is proving.
 - School leaders and the governors make sure that all adults understand their role in keeping pupils safe, that statutory requirements are met and that the policies and procedures for this are up to date. They check that any adults who are appointed to the school are safe to work with pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good because pupils are keen to work hard and try to produce their best. They like the themes they study and this gives them an incentive to stay focused on what they are doing.
- When pupils respond to the comments teachers make in their books, they are not always as determined as they could be to make the changes the teacher suggests. At times they are content with acknowledging the comment without doing anything about it. This means they do not always benefit from this help as much as they could and their progress is not as rapid as it might be.
- Pupils are polite and kind to one another. Older pupils, in particular, like helping younger pupils and provide good role models of behaviour in the playground and in their learning. Some older pupils also help others to discuss any issues and to understand one another's views.
- Attendance has been rising because of the school's work to encourage parents and pupils about the importance of being at school regularly. Consequently, attendance is now high. In Year 3 so far this year, average attendance is over 99%, a considerable success.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good because pupils benefit from a range of training about situations they might encounter and learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn how to be careful when cycling around the village and how to take care when using the internet. Leaders think carefully about what pupils need to know about and check that adults are trained to help them.
- Pupils say that any kind of bullying is very rare. They acknowledge that there are a very few occasions when they might fall out with each other, but these are quickly sorted out. Often they resolve this between themselves because they get along so well and each person is valued. However, if they feel they need an adult to help them sort things out, they say there is always someone they can talk to.
- The environment is very well maintained and the arrangements for play time and for the use of the playing field also help pupils to feel secure.
- Parents who responded to the online survey, and who spoke to the inspector, indicate that their children feel safe at school and thoroughly enjoy school.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers work together as a team to plan around themes that pupils find interesting and provide them with a wide range of experiences. For example, the older pupils thoroughly enjoyed using cheese as their inspiration for their mathematics in their topic on 'Wallace and Gromit', or writing descriptions of marvellous contraptions.
- Enthusiastic teaching and fun activities are helping boys to overcome their reluctance to write in Key Stage 1, although this is still at an early stage of development. Consequently, boys' skills in writing are not always as good as those of the girls. This improves as they get older.
- Leaders and teachers have worked together to agree how to make sure marking and feedback are effective. For example, they use different colours to show what pupils have done well or need to think more about. This is now used by all teachers. However, pupils are too easily satisfied with acknowledging the feedback without doing anything substantial about it and teachers do not always insist on more detail. This means pupils do not always make as rapid progress as they could.
- The linking of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) is carefully organised throughout the school. Teachers are well trained in using accurate sounds and helping pupils to listen carefully. This means that pupils quickly become confident readers. From an early age they use their phonics skills to help them spell ambitious words and are willing to have a go.
- Teachers' own attitudes and the school's values help pupils to have a positive approach towards their work. They are willing to try the harder challenges teachers have prepared, some of which require detailed research and complex thinking.
- Pupils readily choose to use computers to find out information or to develop and present their work, which develops their skills of enquiry well. Teachers have made sure pupils are confident to choose appropriate resources to help them in whatever work they are doing.
- Pupils are given lots of opportunities to reflect about how successful they have been in their learning. They also give each other ideas about how to improve their work. They say that the school is, 'Brilliant, because it is very local and the teachers make it very fun to learn.'

The achievement of pupils**is good**

- Pupils reach standards which are above average, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. From their different starting points, this shows that they make good progress. Pupils say that they are expected to work hard and that they make good progress as a result. The work in their books shows that this is typical.
- In 2013, the group of Year 6 pupils included an unusually high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including with statements of special educational needs. This meant that this group did not reach the same standards as previous groups. However, they did make good progress when considered individually. In 2014, standards have returned to those reached previously.
- Standards in Key Stage 1 were not as high in 2014 as previously, but books show that progress has improved and pupils are now working at higher standards. Girls do make slightly better progress and reach higher standards than boys in writing.
- The mixed-age classes mean that pupils aspire to do more challenging work. For example, children in Reception sometimes choose to do the much harder work prepared for pupils in Year 1, and often succeed, so that they develop skills and knowledge which are well above levels which might be expected for their age.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants, who understand each individual pupil's needs well. The plans for this support are carefully put together and regularly checked to ensure that they are overcoming the issues each pupil faces. Consequently, these pupils make good progress and become confident in reading, writing and mathematics.

The early years provision**is good**

- Children enjoy their learning in Reception because the teachers make sure there are lots of interesting things to do. The Year 1 pupils set a good example and help the younger children to settle quickly into the routines.
- Learning is particularly effective inside, where children often join in with older pupils. Outside, learning is not always as effective because there are fewer opportunities to develop their reading and writing skills. Adults do not always expect as much of the children outside.
- Teachers make sure that children get a good range of other experiences, particularly through visits and visitors. These help children to have good ideas to write about and to learn about their community and the world around them.
- Adults ask good questions to get children to think more deeply about what they are doing. This helps children become curious about the world around them. Adults also keep a close check on how well children are learning. They quickly identify any children who may need extra support, and make sure this is rapidly in place.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is led well. Records about children's learning are used well to identify what children need to learn next, and that there are opportunities for them to take these next steps. Children's learning is regularly shared with parents so that they feel well informed.
- Leaders make sure that there are appropriate arrangements to keep children safe, and that the classroom is an inviting place in which to learn. Children's behaviour is good; they are cooperative and kind to one another, and enjoy helping keep their classroom tidy.

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	113495
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	449152

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	81
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Hyland
Headteacher	Andrew Lovett
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 May 2011
Telephone number	01884 881354
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