

Red Row First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122197
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	380421
Inspection dates	21–22 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Derek Neil

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	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Elliott
Headteacher	Linda Brett
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed seven lessons and part-lessons taught by six staff. They held meetings with the headteacher, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and members of staff, as well as speaking with some parents and carers and the School Improvement Partner. They observed various activities throughout the school day and looked at a range of documents including the school development plan and policies related to safeguarding the pupils. Inspectors considered 35 parental questionnaires together with questionnaires completed by pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How sustainable are recent improvements in progress and attainment?
- How successfully is the school improving attendance?
- How much progress has the school made with the recommendations in the previous inspection report?

Information about the school

In this smaller than average primary school almost all pupils are White British and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is about average. The school has Healthy School status and the Activemark.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Parents and carers are happy to send their children there. As one parent rightly commented, 'Staff ensure that each child is an integral part of the school, enabling them to become independent and confident young people who can continue to thrive once their time at Red Row comes to an end.'

When pupils start school their skills are often lower than those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage to reach standards that are slightly below average. Attainment in Key Stage 1 has been below average recently because of disruption caused by staffing problems. However, these issues have been resolved and now pupils make good progress in both key stages to reach broadly average standards at the end of the Year 4. The school's data and inspection evidence indicate that attainment is set to rise further. Pupils' work is neat and well presented but their creative writing is limited in quality and quantity. Some pupils lack confidence and fluency when speaking.

Pupils' personal development is good. They behave well in class and in the playground. They know how to keep healthy and make a good contribution to the school and local communities. Pupils in Year 4, for example, provide valuable support for children in Reception by helping them with their lunch and playing with them at break. They learn a lot about their own culture and enjoy finding out about local history and geography. They have a limited awareness of different communities elsewhere in Britain and in other countries.

These good outcomes are due to the school's many strengths. Most significantly, the pupils are cared for and supported effectively so that they feel safe in school. Staff know the pupils very well and do their utmost to meet their different needs so that they are able to learn. A well-planned curriculum provides a wealth of stimulating experiences that they might not otherwise enjoy at home. Teaching is good and occasionally outstanding. The staff successfully boost pupils' self-esteem with lots of praise and engage their interest in learning with well-designed practical activities.

Attendance is low. However, the school has made considerable progress over the past two years using a variety of approaches to bring about rapid and significant improvements. In particular, school leaders have worked successfully with the small number of families whose children's persistent absences have a disproportionate effect on the school's overall attendance.

The headteacher and the governing body evaluate the school's performance comprehensively and know its strengths and weaknesses very well. They have implemented effective plans that have raised standards, accelerated pupils' progress and increased attendance. They have made good progress with the recommendation in the previous inspection report to develop the leadership of English and mathematics. The school has good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attendance by:
 - raising its profile throughout the school
 - developing the use of incentives and rewards
 - developing further ways of working with parents and carers whose children do not attend frequently enough.
- Improve pupils' creative writing by:
 - providing more planned opportunities for extended writing
 - developing pupils' oral skills
 - enabling the subject leader for English to be more influential in this aspect of the subject.
- Make pupils more aware of the different communities in Britain and in other countries.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy school. They say that they 'like learning new things'. They work hard and make good progress in lessons. They listen to the teacher's explanations and instructions and are often eager to answer questions. They take pride in their written work, which is neat and tidy. Their learning is good because they are given appropriate practical activities to carry out. In one lesson, for example, they enthusiastically folded paper into halves and quarters when learning about fractions. The small size of each year group means there are inevitable fluctuations in attainment and pupils' rate of progress. One year, for example, the boys made more progress than the girls in Reception, but the following year the reverse was true. On the whole, all groups of pupils achieve well during their time in the school, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This latter group benefits greatly from expert support in the classroom and some effective teaching in small groups outside the classroom. Pupils' attainment in writing is slightly below average because they get limited opportunities to write creatively, and some find it difficult to express themselves.

Pupils feel safe in school, and confidently turn to staff if they have a concern. They behave well in class. At playtime they play energetically, and use the space and the equipment provided for them very sensibly. They know what constitutes a healthy diet and understand the importance of physical exercise. They make a positive contribution to the school and wider communities. They have raised funds for a local asthma clinic, for example, and successfully urged the parish council to provide dog bins on a footpath near the school. Most come to school regularly but a small

number do not. The school has improved overall attendance significantly by reducing the number of pupils who are persistently absent. Some pupils with very poor attendance in the past have almost full attendance so far this term.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are characterised by good relationships; an emphasis on praise and encouragement to boost pupils' confidence; clear explanations, often supported by simple but effective visual aids; and the use of practical tasks that ensure pupils are actively participating at all times. Teaching assistants are well briefed on their role in class and make a valuable contribution to the learning. Some teaching is outstanding. In these lessons, the pace is brisk and the teaching lively and enthusiastic. The work is very well organised so that pupils move from one activity to another without loss of momentum. In one session, for example, pupils were riveted by the teacher's rapid questions and explanations about the numbers on a set of giant dominoes, before moving to individual work at their desks. Comprehensive assessment arrangements enable staff to track pupils' progress and to provide suitable support for those at risk of underachieving. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and provide a well-struck balance of praise, encouragement, and guidance on how the work could be improved. Pupils do not always respond to this advice; for example, comments about punctuation or how to set out mathematical calculations sometimes go unheeded. In the best lessons the teacher sensitively corrects errors in pupils' use of Standard English.

The well-planned curriculum gives pupils a wealth of experiences which have a powerful effect on their personal and academic development. For example, visits to the coast and to local museums add to their understanding of their heritage and provide a stimulus for written work. Violin and yoga lessons introduce them to experiences that might not normally be available at home. In planning the curriculum, staff have concentrated on pupils' basic writing skills; they now recognise the need to introduce a more structured approach to extended and creative writing.

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

Staff know pupils extremely well and meet their wide range of complex needs effectively. The school has well-considered plans to create a calm and private space that it can use to support those parents and carers who are reluctant to enter the school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher leads a cohesive staff team that is fully committed to caring for the pupils and to raising standards. They have been inspired by some effective professional development, which has raised their expectations of pupils and improved their teaching. Their determination has led to clear improvements since the previous inspection. Subject leadership is much stronger than at that time, though the school recognises that currently the subject leader for English does not have enough influence on the development of English throughout the school.

The effective governing body is knowledgeable and supportive. It takes a keen interest in ensuring the school has good and comprehensive arrangements for safeguarding the pupils. It is very well informed on this matter. Individual governors make regular visits to the school, are very aware of its strengths, and make an important contribution to identifying priorities for the future. Equality of opportunity is good and the school does not tolerate discrimination of any kind. It carefully analyses the performance of different groups of pupils and makes sure that all are achieving well. Its analysis of participation in extra-curricular clubs indicates that pupils known to be entitled to free school meals play a full part in these activities. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. Its focus so far has been on working with the local community; it has made limited progress with its ambitious plans to make pupils more aware of different religious and ethnic groups in other parts of the world.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3

The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2
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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress and reach broadly average levels in all areas of learning, although some are less secure in their social development and in expressing themselves orally. Induction arrangements, which include sessions at the school in the term before the children are due to start, are very effective; children settle quickly into school life. Each morning, well-established routines ensure that children are happy and developing independence. Parents and carers contribute to their children’s learning and have opportunities to speak with staff. A good variety of activities stimulates the children’s interest and enables them to make progress in all areas of learning. Planning is largely led by the children’s needs and ideas. They get ample opportunity to work and play outdoors, for example when using the wheeled toys or carrying out tasks in the yard designed to develop their understanding of mathematics. Teachers are quick to praise and build up children’s self-esteem. When a parent told staff that her daughter could count to 30, the teacher gave her the opportunity to do so in front of her classmates, who were pleased to applaud her achievement. The success of the Early Years Foundation Stage is due to the energy, experience and enthusiasm of the staff and their determination to provide a high level of care for the children. The team has a good understanding of this area’s strengths but improvement plans lack detail.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

The answers of parents and carers responding to the questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive. A small number wrote comments in praise of the staff’s work. There was no pattern to the very few minor concerns raised. These matters were brought to the attention of the headteacher.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Red Row First 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 inspector received 35 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 105 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	63	13	37	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	77	8	23	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	22	63	13	37	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	74	8	23	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	77	8	23	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	71	10	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	66	12	34	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)	26	74	9	26	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	69	11	31	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	71	9	26	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	66	12	34	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	24	69	11	31	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	74	8	23	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 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



23 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Red Row First School, Morpeth, NE61 5AS

Thank you for welcoming my colleague and me so warmly into your school when we visited recently. We enjoyed watching you in lessons and at play, talking about your school with you and your teachers, and looking at your work. Now I want to share with you what we thought.

You go to a good school. It has many strong points. Staff take good care of you; I understand why you say you feel safe there. The teachers give you interesting activities in lessons. You behave well and take good care of each other. You know how to stay healthy. You make a valuable contribution to the community; for instance, many of the older pupils look after the younger ones at lunch and playtime.

There are a few things that would make the school better. I have asked the staff to help you make more progress with your writing. I have asked the headteacher to give you opportunities to find out about people who live in other parts of the world. Most importantly, I want the school to improve the attendance of those pupils who do not come to school regularly. Most of you know it is important to come to school as often as possible. Those of you who are absent too much are missing out on some exciting experiences and are not learning as well as you could.

Thank you again for helping me so much. It was a pleasure to meet you. I wish all of you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Neil
Lead inspector

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