

# Reid Street Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	136836
<b>Local authority</b>	Not applicable
<b>Inspection number</b>	385554
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Frank Cain

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Academy
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	411
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Carol Saunders
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Rhatigan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Reid Street Darlington DL3 6EX
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Frank Cain  
Kathleen Mullen  
Belita Scott

Additional inspector  
Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors visited twenty-six lessons or parts of lessons taught by sixteen different teachers and they also looked at pupils' work. They listened to pupils read and talked to them about how much reading they do. Discussions took place with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documents, including those relating to safeguarding, the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation records and the school's own assessment data. They analysed questionnaires from pupils and staff, as well as those from 101 parents and carers.

## Information about the school

Reid Street opened as an academy on July 1<sup>st</sup> 2011, which made it independent of local authority control. The school has recently undergone significant improvements to the premises, including refurbishment aimed at improving conditions for learning. It is bigger than most primary schools. The academy has a slightly higher proportion of girls than found nationally. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs at School Action Plus or with statements is average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A small percentage is from minority ethnic groups. The school has the Basic Skills and Artsmark Gold Awards. In 2011, the school met the government floor standards which relate to the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- Reid Street is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because teaching does not consistently drive rapid and sustained progress for pupils.
- Children enter the school with skills at or slightly below national expectations, but by the time they leave in Year 6 they are above the national average. All children, including those who are disabled and those who have special educational needs, make good progress in the school. Much of the pupils' English extended written work, including its presentation, is outstanding.
- Teaching is good across all key stages. It is better in English than in mathematics because of the outstanding quality of marking and guidance given to the pupils in their extended written exercises. In some mathematics lessons too much talking by teachers cuts down the time available for pupils to work independently. Across the curriculum, teachers do not consistently allow enough time for pupils to use mathematical skills or to act on the helpful comments written in their books.
- The behaviour of pupils across the school is outstanding. In the Reception class children's attitudes, manners and maturity are exceptional. All staff have a common approach to behaviour in the classroom and observe the school policy meticulously. One pupil said 'It's easy being good here as it's so calm'.
- The leadership and management of teaching and learning is good. Lesson observations and work scrutinies are strong features of the robust management of performance. Teachers' planning across the school is very thorough. There is now a culture of sharing good practice and helping each other to improve teaching. The school fosters pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development and engages with parents and carers outstandingly well.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching in mathematics to the same high levels as in reading and writing by:
  - giving pupils more tasks to develop their understanding and reducing the amount of time teachers spend talking to the whole class
  - making more opportunities for pupils to build on their basic skills and apply them in problem solving across the curriculum.
- Accelerate pupils' progress by providing more time across the curriculum for them to act on teachers' advice on how to improve their work.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage from their starting points. Historically, progress at Key Stage 1 has been slower but it is now improving. In Key Stage 2, progress accelerates so that, by the time they leave the school, pupils' attainment is above average, putting them about a term ahead of pupils nationally. All pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make good progress, because of good teaching, including planning, and the excellent attitudes pupils show towards their studies. Although progress is good in mathematics, it is weaker than that in English.

Pupils make good progress in lessons. They listen well and respond enthusiastically to questioning. Their written work in English, including their handwriting, is often outstanding. 'My writing is better than my dad's', said one pupil proudly. Some pupils in the Reception class use cursive script in their written work and most pupils are extremely proud of their writing skills. Year 6 pupils use technical language confidently and offer high quality descriptive language to illustrate their writing, for example, about the Victorians.

The most rapid progress is seen in lessons that capture pupils' imagination and where teachers use effective questioning to provoke pupils' thinking. 'I learn something new every day', commented one pupil. Parents and carers are almost unanimous in pointing out that their children are making good progress by being 'stretched and encouraged' by teachers.

By the time pupils reach Year 2, their attainment in reading is broadly average, but by the time they leave it is above average. Pupils generally read confidently with expression and weak readers are quickly identified and helped by talented teaching assistants and well-trained parent helpers. Pupils keep reading logs of which books they have read so staff are able to monitor whether books are suitable for pupils' abilities. Better readers point out that they read at home as well as at school. The standards of reading are good because of the school's emphasis on basic skills, but it also shows the impact of thorough phonics work.

### Quality of teaching

Evidence from the inspection supports the views of the overwhelming majority of parents and carers that teaching is good across all key stages, although it is better in English than in

mathematics. This is partly because of the quality of marking and in the way teachers enthuse and motivate pupils with interesting work. Starter activities in mathematics tend to be longer, leaving less time for pupils to demonstrate what they can do. Marking in books is generally thorough and frequent but there are not always enough opportunities for pupils to respond to teachers' advice.

Teachers' planning is very good across the school, as it not only relates to previous learning, but also plans for the progress of the different groups of pupils in the class. Teachers tailor work to pupils' ability well and the majority of pupils know their individual targets and how well they are progressing towards them. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, regularly checking pupils' learning throughout lessons.

Teaching assistants are well trained and are used effectively to support pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs, either as individuals or in small groups. They are particularly skilful at getting pupils to explain and do things for themselves when undertaking practical tasks, which helps their understanding. They 'don't give you the answers but help you to work things out', said one pupil. There are also lots of parent helpers who are making a significant contribution in ensuring that children in danger of falling behind are given good support in reading.

In the school's 'creative curriculum', drama is used to great effect to stimulate interest and develop excitement. Curriculum topics are used to generate popular tasks and skills for pupils. Year 2 pupils created glove puppets, involving design work as well as construction techniques, giving them much enjoyment as well as a strong sense of accomplishment. There is a strong emphasis on the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils across the curriculum and the walls around the school celebrate this, for example, in artwork on the ancient city of Machu Picchu in Peru.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Behaviour is a significant strength of the school. The vast majority of parents and carers are highly positive about behaviour and safety. Just a very small number raised concerns about the way in which the school deals with bullying. Pupils endorse the fact that behaviour is exceptionally good and point out that any inconsiderate behaviour is dealt with very quickly, 'in a nice calm way'. The school's data on behavioural issues in the past show that this very positive view is accurate and that bullying is extremely rare.

The school is rightly proud of the way that pupils transferring to Reid Street, including some with particular behavioural difficulties, quickly adapt to the very high standards and expectations of staff. 'We have rules but we know why they are important. We are not just told what to do and what not to do', expressed one pupil. Pupils themselves expect good behaviour and do not tolerate anything less from other pupils. As a result, the behaviour in class is excellent and all staff are very skilled at handling any minor issues in a firm but non-confrontational way.

Pupils' attitudes towards learning are consistently extremely positive. Most pupils love school and some say they hate holidays. On a very wet afternoon, in wellington boots and raincoats the Reception class was not deterred one bit from learning and playing in their outdoor area, developing independence and resilience. Their daily 'shake up, wake up' is 'joyous' for both children and adults. Positive reinforcement of behaviour and pupils' attitudes is systematic and consistent. Each week a pupil in each class is chosen as the 'Star

of the Week', and they wear their badges and star-covered sashes with pride. Children attending the breakfast club are extremely polite, friendly and welcoming. Even the youngest children in the school display amazing self-discipline, for example, when lining up to attend singing practice.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of what constitutes a safe situation and, for example, understand about the dangers associated with giving out personal information when using computers. Attendance has been well above average for a number of years and is still improving.

## **Leadership and management**

There are effective systems for monitoring the school's work, including teaching and learning, and professional development opportunities are targeted closely and effectively to make further improvements. Recent phonics training is clearly impacting positively on teaching and learning. The school's self-evaluation is accurate. Priority targets receive prompt attention to ensure that good progress is made towards achieving them. Since the previous inspection, there is clear evidence of planned actions leading to improvements in, for example, attendance and in promoting pupils' understanding of modern Britain. The tracking of pupils' performance is good; the information is used effectively to inform teachers' planning. Subject leaders play an important role in monitoring the quality of teaching. Phonics teaching, for example, is very well managed in Key Stage 1.

Leaders are successful in promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination, including for pupils with special educational needs. They have robust systems for identifying and helping groups and individuals across the school. The governing body works hard to challenge the principal and the school to make further improvements, and it has shown great resilience itself in taking on board the extra responsibilities that academy status has brought.

The curriculum is good and is planned effectively. The 'creative curriculum' topics are used effectively to harness the enthusiasm of children across all year groups. The social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils is fostered extremely well, partly because the school has audited its provision throughout the school. In a lesson based on the Victorians, pupils reflected on conditions in workhouses and used their understanding to very good effect in their drama and English work. Many opportunities are given for cultural development and each year group adopts a country to study in some depth.

The school engages with parents and carers outstandingly well. Parent helpers are important in boosting the reading of pupils who are falling behind. Parent and carers are particularly grateful for the help they get to support their children's learning and how well the school is doing in promoting learning. Safeguarding requirements are met and the school is very rigorous in ensuring that visitors are meticulously checked.

## 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](http://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 up 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.**



14 May 2012

Dear Pupils,

**Inspection of Reid Street Primary School, Darlington, DL3 6EX**

I want to thank all of you for the extremely friendly welcome that you gave us when we inspected your school recently. We found the time that we spent talking to you, your teachers and other adults extremely enjoyable and rewarding. Here are the main things that we found.

- You go to a good school.
- You make good progress and reach above average standards because you work hard and receive good teaching.
- Your school is led and managed well and all staff, and the governors, are very keen to help you learn.
- Your behaviour is excellent. We found you to be very helpful and polite. You told us that you feel very safe and secure and you think that the teachers and other adults care about you.

In order to help you to do even better and to improve the school further, We have asked the school's leaders, teachers and governors to:

- cut down on the time teachers take to explain things to the whole class, which would give you more time to do your own work and correct your mistakes.

I am sure you will all want to help make your school even better by continuing to work hard and playing together so very well.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Cain  
Lead Inspector

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