

# Acre Rigg Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114154
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	378806
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Lesley Clark

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	287
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Georgina Beckenstall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lynne Laws
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 March 2007
<b>School address</b>	Acre Rigg Road Peterlee SR8 2DU
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Lesley Clark  
Wendy Richardson  
Julie McGrane

Additional inspector  
Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with one day's notice. The inspection team observed 21 lessons or part lessons taught by nine teachers and heard six groups of pupils read. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online Parent View survey in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including: a selection of 'learning journals' (assessments and examples of children's learning and development in the Early Years Foundation Stage); the school improvement plan and self-evaluation; and documentation relating to safeguarding. Questionnaires returned from staff and pupils, and 29 questionnaires from parents and carers were analysed.

## Information about the school

This infant school is larger than the average-sized primary school. The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils who are disabled or who are supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.

The school has Healthy School status. It holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the UNICEF Rights Respecting Award and is an Investor in People and Children.

**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

- This is a good school. It has maintained its good provision over the past 10 years and continues to improve its performance at a good rate. Pupils’ behaviour and safety are outstanding. The school as a whole is not yet outstanding because pupils do not read as well as they write and Reception children and pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not always have enough opportunities to learn independently.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Attainment is broadly in line with that expected nationally by the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics, with pupils performing consistently better in writing than in reading.
- Pupils are well taught throughout their time in the school. Teachers use interactive technology exceptionally well to make learning enjoyable. Sometimes teachers expect pupils to sit and listen for a bit too long. This restricts the time pupils have to learn through finding out for themselves. Nursery children have a good balance of child-led and adult-directed activities but Reception children do not.
- Pupils are eager to learn and try their best in lessons. They are polite and friendly and play constructively at break and lunchtimes. The outstanding breakfast club contributes extremely well to the school’s happy learning environment. Pupils feel completely safe and have an advanced understanding of internet safety.
- The school runs smoothly because it is well led and managed. Members of the governing body are closely supportive. Self-evaluation is accurate and senior leaders know what to do to improve the school further. They lead and manage teaching effectively which ensures good practice across the school. The good curriculum is enhanced by regular enrichment activities that ensure pupils’ good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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

- Raise attainment in reading by:
  - raising achievement in linking sounds to letters (phonics) by the end of the Reception Year
  - systematically use information about pupils' progress in phonics to ensure they are all fluent readers by the end of Key Stage 1
  - increase the level of challenge for more-able readers.
- Increase the opportunities for pupils to learn independently and practise new skills by:
  - adjusting the balance between taught and child-led activities in the Reception classes so that children spend the greater part of each day learning through discovery and investigation
  - keeping teaching sessions short so that pupils in Years 1 and 2 have the maximum time to work on independent tasks and activities and to make decisions for themselves.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Pupils achieve well from starting points that are generally well-below expected levels and attain broadly average standards by the end of Year 2. Parents and carers have an accurate view of their children's progress. Pupils make good progress in reading to reach broadly average levels by the end of Year 2. However, Reception children's progress in understanding how letters and sounds link together to make words is slower than it should be. Attainment in this area of learning is consistently lower than attainment in other areas of learning by the start of Year 1. This means that pupils have some gaps in their knowledge in Years 1 and 2. Consequently, although pupils read familiar words competently they do not know how to sound out unfamiliar or more complex words. For example, average-attaining Year 2 pupils struggled to read 'kite' or to sound out 'wonderful'. More-able pupils read expressively, fluently and with good understanding, guessing by the context the words they are unsure of. They talk enthusiastically about favourite authors but the books they read in school are not especially challenging.

Pupils write neatly and at length. They form their letters clearly. They make good progress over time in sentence construction. They use different words to start sentences, a variety of connectives and interesting vocabulary. More-able pupils use a wide range of punctuation correctly. However, spelling is less secure because of their poor phonic knowledge. In lessons, pupils strive to meet their writing targets. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, pupils checked that they had put capital letters and full stops in the right places. Pupils make good progress in mathematics. They make the best progress in those lessons where they have plenty of time to learn through finding out for themselves. For example, more-able Year 2 pupils quickly grasped the relationship between degrees and quarter, half and three-quarter clockwise and anti-clockwise turns as they practised giving each other instructions using precise mathematical language.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, lower-attaining pupils and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make good progress. Their progress has improved over the past year. The gap between their performance and the consistently good

performance of those with significant special educational needs has been addressed effectively. This is because they receive a similarly high level of effective adult support tailored to their individual needs. Those with significant speech, language and communication difficulties achieve well because they receive timely, carefully tailored coaching and language practice.

## **Quality of teaching**

Parents, carers and pupils have an accurate perception that teaching is good. Pupils say the best things about school are, 'our teachers', and, 'the lessons because we do hard work'. At its best, the teaching is lively, interactive and fun. Teachers use up-to-date interactive technology exceptionally well to make teaching points clear and to develop pupils' communication skills, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. In an information and communication technology lesson, for instance, Year 2 pupils demonstrated excellent skills at inserting text and pictures into booklets, while in the Nursery, children with speech problems used interactive technology to practise different sounds.

Good features of teaching include: well-planned lessons with clear learning objectives; good development of conversation through questioning and paired discussions; and effective strategies to manage behaviour. As a result, pupils discuss sensibly and have good social skills. Good links between subjects stimulate pupils' cultural awareness as when, for example, Year 1 pupils discussed, then wrote about Indian food and how it is eaten. Sometimes, over-long teaching sessions restrict the opportunities that pupils have to learn independently. Adults tend to direct activities and tasks and so pupils miss out on making decisions for themselves. The current balance between adult-led and child-led activities in the Reception classes means that children tend to be over-directed which restricts the opportunities they have to learn through investigation and exploration.

Teachers give pupils regular reading practice but sometimes underestimate the capabilities of more-able readers. 'Story sacks' containing books and games, as well as a 'book swap shop' and regular visits from a resident author motivate pupils well. Those pupils who need the most support receive effective extra help. Teachers do not track pupils' progress in phonics sufficiently systematically or rigorously but they mark writing extremely thoroughly and set pertinent targets. This is why there are more fluent writers than readers in Key Stage 1.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils are extremely attentive in lessons. They listen intently and confidently help each other when they can. Bullying is rare and the school deals with it very effectively and sensitively when it occurs. Enrichment activities such as 'forest school' where pupils learn to build campfires, cook food outdoors and make dens from natural materials develop high levels of confidence and self-esteem. Daily exercise routines mean they return to work with renewed energy and concentration. Pupils follow their class charter to the letter, which declares 'children's right to come to school' and their 'responsibility to tell the truth, help others, be kind and always do their best'. As a result, playtimes and lunchtimes are extremely happy, harmonious occasions with very few bumps and incidents because pupils have a great deal of respect for each other. An outstanding example is the breakfast club where infants and juniors eat, chat and play together quietly, sensibly and sociably without adult intervention. Pupils who struggle to manage aspects of their behaviour show marked improvement over

time because of the school's clear behaviour management systems. The school council takes an active lead, making posters for the school's 'art gallery' or setting up a 'buddy bus stop' so everyone has friends.

Parents and carers agree that their children are very safe in school and behave very well. All groups of pupils feel safe and understand unsafe situations. They are confident that staff members will help them if they have any worries. Pupils have excellent hygiene practices, including dental hygiene. They have an advanced understanding of internet safety, including what to do if images appear on screen that they dislike. Attendance is broadly average and shows sustained and convincing improvement over time.

## **Leadership and management**

Leaders and managers at all levels work together well to sustain pupils' good achievement. They promote equality and tackle discrimination well, as recognised by the 'Respecting Rights' award. Gaps between different groups of learners are closing because the school has effective systems to support the increasing numbers of pupils who have significant speech and language difficulties or special educational needs. The school has identified the difference between attainment in reading and writing and has suitable plans to rectify this. Teaching is checked regularly. Performance management maintains the strengths in teaching and good achievement for all groups of pupils. Members of the governing body are much more proactive than at the last inspection when their role was a concern. They make a significant contribution to curricular provision. They understand the strengths and relative weaknesses of the school well and know the right questions to ask. Leaders, managers and the governing body make very effective arrangements for safeguarding. Child protection is first rate. The school keeps meticulous records and has a good track record for referring children at an early stage for additional support from outside agencies.

The school provides a good, balanced curriculum that is carefully tailored to meet the needs of the different groups of pupils who need special support. Educational visits and visitors to school are carefully chosen to enrich curricular provision and to extend pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. As a result, pupils show a keen interest in different cultures and an equally avid interest in tending the school's allotments or borrowing books from the library. The creative arts permeate the curriculum, with teachers and pupils using rhymes, songs and visual images to ensure happy, productive learning.

## 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 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.**



11 May 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Acre Rigg Infant School, Peterlee, SR8 2DU**

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. A special thank you goes to the many groups of pupils who read to us and talked to us about your school. You go to a good school. Your behaviour and safety are outstanding. You work very hard and you always try to do your best. You are kind to each other and very polite to visitors. When you ride bikes or play ball or when you are skipping in the playground you take great care not to get in anyone's way. Your teachers work hard to make lessons fun and interesting for you. You make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics as a result. Did you know that most of you write better than you read? And did you know that sometimes your teachers talk for so long that there is not much time for you to work on your own? This is what we have asked your school to do next to make it even better.

- Make sure that you really know all your letters and sounds by the end of the Reception Year so that by the end of Year 2 you all read books easily. We have asked your teachers to give those of you who can read well longer and more interesting books to read.
- Give Reception children more time each day to learn through exploring and finding out for themselves and make sure that those of you in Years 1 and 2 have enough time to work on your own and make your own decisions.

We hope you enjoy these changes. You can help by reading as often as you can and learning lots of new words because reading is so much fun, as some of you know!

Yours sincerely

Lesley Clark  
Lead inspector

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