

Rickleton Primary School

Vigo Lane, Washington, Tyne and Wear, NE38 9EZ

Inspection dates 17–18 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
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 school has improved rapidly in a relatively short time because the new headteacher has very substantially raised teachers' and parents' expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Achievement is good. The above average Year 6 national test results in 2014 were much better than in 2013 and pupils' current standards have risen further because teaching has improved.
- There is an excellent atmosphere for learning throughout the school and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- When pupils have not met the challenging targets that the school has set for them, teachers and classroom assistants provide very effective support to enable them to catch up.
- Teaching is good and continually lifts pupils' attainment and rates of progress.
- Pupils are very eager to learn and they behave outstandingly well. They say that there is no bullying and that poor behaviour is rare.
- Since the new headteacher arrived, attendance has improved rapidly to above average levels and persistent absence is now low.
- Arrangements for pupils' health and safety are outstanding.
- The headteacher, governors and managers at all levels are effective in ensuring that teaching and pupils' achievement continue to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress slows on the few occasions when teachers' planning, questioning and organisation do not fully enable pupils to make the rapid progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers do not routinely equip pupils with the skills necessary to evaluate their learning and progress fully.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, including six joint observations with the headteacher and his senior team.
- They looked carefully at a wide range of pupils’ written work, especially in Reception, Year 3, Year 5 and Year 6.
- They held meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle managers, representatives of the governing body, members of staff, groups of pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at many documents, including records of pupils’ attainment and progress throughout the school, development planning, safeguarding procedures, records of lesson observations and the school’s self-evaluation.
- They took account of 69 responses to the on-line (Parent View) questionnaire and a staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

John Paddick, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
John Pattinson	Additional Inspector
Janet Lomas	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Rickleton Primary School is much larger than the average primary school.
- The current headteacher has been at the school since February 2013.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- A smaller than average proportion of pupils is supported through school action, school action plus or a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and are therefore eligible for pupil premium is below average but rising. (The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.)
- A small number of pupils attend Sunderland local authority special provision for speech and language development or for assistance with behavioural issues.
- The headteacher provides support for Waverley Primary School and Newburn Manor Primary School, both in Newcastle upon Tyne.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the rate of learning in more lessons from good to outstanding by:
 - improving the clarity and precision of teachers' questioning to ensure that it makes a difference to the learning of all pupils
 - ensuring that planning caters for pupils of all abilities to enable them all to make at least good progress during lessons
 - routinely equipping pupils with the skills necessary to evaluate their own learning and progress fully
 - reducing the time taken to change from one activity to another.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Since the headteacher's appointment in the Spring of 2013 there has been rapid improvement. He has a very clear vision for the school and has communicated this very effectively to managers at all levels. Development planning focuses strongly on achievement and the quality of teaching, and intended improvements materialise quickly. This means that the quality of education in the school has risen substantially in a relatively short time.
- The school has very effective methods for checking on how it is doing and for setting targets for continuous improvement.
- Management of teaching is effective in improving classroom practice. Senior and middle managers monitor teaching rigorously and provide members of staff with appropriate areas for development. Performance management arrangements are robust and effective so that all teachers, especially the least experienced, know how to improve their work. However, there is still scope to improve the quality of the good teaching to be more consistently outstanding.
- Strong promotion of equal opportunities means that all pupils do well and where gaps in performance become apparent, they close quickly in response to effective intervention. An example of this is the rapidly closing gap between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and others.
- The outstanding provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is skilfully embedded in the curriculum and pupils benefit from a very large number of opportunities to be active in the community. Outstanding utilisation of Primary School Sport and PE funding enables members of staff to improve their own teaching skills as they assist in a wide range of sports activities provided by expert teachers and coaches.
- The school has a very productive relationship with parents, who are very pleased with the quality of education that the school provides for their children. A telling example of the successful relationship lies in the success of the school's contribution to the recent local 50th anniversary celebrations.
- Good quality provision of information and guidance about transfer to secondary school means that the older pupils feel confident to move to the next phase in their education.
- The school enjoys a productive relationship with the local authority officers, who provide effective light-touch advice and guidance, when required.
- Safeguarding meets all requirements. Record keeping and arrangements for checking on the identities of all adults who have access to pupils are of outstanding quality.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a very clear perception of how well the school is doing and know what still needs to be improved. They are delighted that their fairly recent appointment of the new headteacher has changed the culture of the school and improved the quality of education that it provides. They point to the way that he has raised expectations, accelerated rates of learning, improved early years provision and improved teaching by eliminating inadequate practice.
 - As a group they challenge managers when appropriate, ensure that performance management arrangements are effective and that any salary progressions are fully merited.
 - They know how well the school is doing in terms of pupils' attainment and progress and fully understand the way that the use of pupil premium funding is raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils.
 - Many governors visit the school regularly when it is in session and can explain in considerable detail how it prepares pupils successfully for life in modern Britain.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Teachers and their assistants work exceptionally effectively as a team to establish very effective routines and expectations of pupils from the time they join Nursery and Reception. Consequently, pupils conduct themselves impeccably in class, when moving around school, socialising in play areas and having lunch.
- They are exceptionally keen to learn and fully respect the adults who work with them. In class they play their part in ensuring that an outstanding atmosphere for learning prevails. This means that they can listen to teachers' explanations and concentrate on their work without distraction.
- Participation in a very wide range of extra-curricular activities, particularly music and sport, is a strong feature of pupils' personal development. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the trips and visits that the

school provides and the many visitors who help them to understand what happens in the world outside school. Older pupils display considerable maturity and skill when they help younger ones in play areas.

- Pupils' perceptions gained through interviews with inspectors, and the on-line parental survey, confirm that the frequently impeccable conduct observed during the inspection is typical of the school on a day-to-day basis.
- Attendance and punctuality have improved in response to the headteacher's very effective efforts. Overall attendance figures have risen sharply to well above average and lateness is now rare. This is a great improvement over what was found at the time of the previous inspection.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say that they feel perfectly safe in school and that they really enjoy their education. They fully recognise the lengths that members of staff are prepared to go to in providing assistance if they need help or have not met their targets. The school takes effective steps to ensure that the pupils educated off site are also safe and secure in their education.
- Pupils fully understand how to keep safe and understand a wide range of potential risks to their welfare. They confirm that bullying of all types is almost non-existent and that when they do occur, members of staff are skilled and effective in dealing with them. Racist incidents are also exceptionally rare. The school's own records confirm that they are indeed rare and that appropriate action has always been taken.

The quality of teaching

is good

- There have been recent substantial improvements in the quality of teaching, but the 2013 national test results particularly show that it has not been consistently good over time.
- Inspectors found that the improved teaching is having a very positive effect in accelerating rates of pupils' progress, particularly in literacy, numeracy and science. The school's own records of teaching show that it is now almost consistently good and frequently outstanding.
- Inspectors' scrutiny of pupil's books from last year confirms that teaching has now been good for at least the past year. Pupils confirm that teaching is good and that they enjoy their lessons.
- In class, teachers routinely manage their pupils well. They explain tasks clearly so pupils know what is expected of them. Planning to ensure that lessons cater fully for pupils of all abilities is usually a strong feature of teaching, but in some instances tasks set are both too demanding for some pupils and too easy for others, causing the progress of those affected to slow.
- Teachers often inspire pupils to produce work at a high level. For example, when analysing characters from poetic works, higher-ability pupils in Year 6 reached standards far higher than one might expect.
- Teachers use the skills of their classroom assistants well, especially in the provision of effective extra support for lower-ability pupils and pupils with special educational needs.
- Frequently, teachers' questioning of pupils clearly identifies what they have understood and can do, but there are occasions when imprecise questioning does not really move learning forward or check it sufficiently rigorously. Teachers do not routinely equip pupils with the skills necessary to deepen their learning through a full evaluation of their progress. This means that the potential for higher achievement is restricted.
- Marking is outstanding. Teachers all use the same system and give pupils a very clear idea of what they have done well and how they can improve their work. Marking is thorough, accurate and helpful. Teachers routinely provide pupils with development points and give them time in lessons to improve their work or correct it. This means that they continually master topics before they move on.
- Teachers' lesson planning is good and clearly identifies what work each group of pupils is to cover. Consequently, pupils' learning generally moves forward at a good pace. Nevertheless, there are several instances where progress could be accelerated further, if teachers were to eliminate much of the time taken to change from one activity to another.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The above average national test results in Year 6 in 2014 were much better than in 2013 and represented good achievement for pupils who had joined the Nursery and Reception with a typical level of development. Results were above average in reading, writing, spelling, punctuation, grammar and mathematics. All groups of pupils achieved well. This contrasted with 2013 when, although results were above average overall in mathematics, spelling, grammar and punctuation, many middle- and higher-ability pupils underachieved in reading and writing. This contrasted with good results for the lower-ability

pupils.

- Pupils in the current Year 6 also joined the school in the Nursery and Reception with broadly expected stages of development and are achieving well. Their mathematical knowledge and understanding are above average and their literacy standards well above average.
- The school has concentrated strongly on ensuring that the highest achieving pupils reach their potential, particularly after their relatively disappointing test results in 2013. The 2014 results for the most able were much better and standards reached by these pupils have risen further since. For example, in English, the highest set of pupils is working at levels around two years ahead of expectation for their ages.
- In 2013, national test results for Year 6 showed that disadvantaged pupils did less well than other pupils, with an overall average point score deficit of just over one point, covering reading, writing, spelling, punctuation, grammar, and mathematics. This means that they were around four months behind other pupils in the school in terms of their literacy and numeracy. They performed as well as all pupils nationally. The national test results in 2014 showed that the gap closed substantially and in the current Year 6 the gap has fully closed in reading and writing and has largely closed in mathematics.
- In 2014 in the Year 1 national screening test for phonics (letters and the sounds they make) pupils were well above average and this reflects the success of the school's phonics programme.
- The school's very comprehensive and reliable tracking system soon shows up any pupils who are not meeting the challenging targets that the school sets for them. Very effective intervention work usually enables them to catch up. Progress rates in all year groups have risen sharply and pupils' books from last year show that all groups of pupils have progressed well. There is also strong evidence that some classes have made outstanding progress as they have overcome a legacy of previous underachievement. Very effective use of pupil premium funding means that quite large gaps between the performance of some disadvantaged pupils and other pupils, which existed when they were younger, have been virtually closed by the time they reach Years 5 and 6. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are also making good progress throughout the school. An excellent system for tracking their progress triggers extra help if they are merely progressing at an expected rate.
- The quality and quantity of written work that pupils of all ages produce in a wide range of subjects is good. Pupils take a pride in their work and set it out well. Particularly impressive is the way that handwriting develops as pupils become older.
- The small number of pupils who are educated off site at specialist units provided by the local authority are also progressing well overall. The school liaises well with the specialists and keeps comprehensive records of their progress.

The early years provision

is good

- Achievement is good in Nursery and Reception classes for all groups of children, including those with special educational needs or disabilities. Children soon get used to routines in the Nursery and develop quickly because teaching is good and they have the opportunity to choose from a wide range of interesting activities. Progress is also good in Reception, because teachers and their assistants skilfully develop children's understanding and abilities through well-focused teaching and many really compelling presentations and activities. Frequently, teachers' explanations of learning and tasks are of high quality and lead to rapid progress.
- Children in both settings relate very well to the adults who work with them and trust them. They are happy in school and quickly learn to listen, concentrate and co-operate. Their development in numeracy and literacy is good. The level of development for recent intakes to Nursery and Reception has been below the typical level for their age. Nevertheless, good progress across all areas of learning has meant that more children reach a good stage of development by the end of the Reception Year and are ready to start in Year 1. Inspectors' observations of nursery and reception children confirm that progress towards the early learning goals is good. The school provides effective support for children's physical development, emotional health, and safety and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The success of the early years provision is strongly rooted in good leadership and management of the setting and the willingness of all members of staff to make it their business to ensure that the children are happy and making at least good progress. Good record keeping shows that over recent years, children have made good, rather than outstanding progress. This has had much to do with staffing issues which have now been resolved.

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	108818
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	448376

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	460
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Brundle
Headteacher	Colin Lofthouse
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2010
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