

Inspection of a good school: Acre Rigg Infant School

Acre Rigg Road, Peterlee, County Durham SR8 2DU

Inspection dates:

10 and 11 May 2022

Outcome

Acre Rigg Infant School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Acre Rigg Infant School is an extremely caring, inclusive and supportive place where all pupils can learn. Pupils were keen to tell the inspector that one of the best features of their school is their teachers. This view is backed up by parents and carers, who highly value the range of support provided by the school. One parent, echoing the views of many, wrote, 'The highest compliment I can give is that I completely trust the staff at Acre Rigg with my children.'

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND learn well. This is because of the targeted support teachers provide, both in the classroom and through small-group interventions. All pupils are given an exciting and challenging curriculum.

Pupils are polite and very well behaved. Pupils told the inspector that behaviour is good in school, and the inspector agrees. Pupils know about bullying and describe it as repeated, unkind behaviour. They say that it rarely, if ever, happens at their school. Pupils trust their teachers to deal with it quickly if it were to happen. Staff make time to talk to pupils regularly, and this gives pupils the confidence to express any concerns.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have planned an ambitious curriculum for pupils, so that children can succeed and do well. Learning is thoughtfully sequenced and teachers implement the curriculum well. It meets the needs of pupils, including those with SEND. Curriculum plans for subjects such as history and art are carefully sequenced. It is clear what knowledge and skills will be taught.

Teachers encourage pupils to think hard and solve problems. Pupils are curious and inquisitive. They enjoy opportunities to explore their learning. For example, in history, pupils in Year 2 confidently talk about Grace Darling and the different sources of evidence that told them what people thought about her and the rescue in which she was involved.

Teachers check pupils' learning frequently in lessons. They provide effective support to pupils and challenge any misconceptions.

Subject leaders have made sure that their plans cover the breadth and depth of the national curriculum and meet the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. They are suitably aspirational.

Early reading is a high priority in school. There is a consistent and rigorous approach to teaching phonics. Leaders have high expectations of the phonic knowledge pupils will acquire at key points from Reception to Year 2. Teachers ensure that the books pupils read match the sounds they know. They make regular checks on the sounds that pupils are learning. Pupils receive the help they need from well-trained and knowledgeable staff. They are confident and keen to talk about the books they have read. Staff throughout school promote books and encourage pupils to read at every opportunity.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Adults ensure that rules are fair and consistently applied. Pupils work hard in their lessons. Children in early years listen attentively and engage in their learning. Pupils work and play very happily together.

Pupils' personal development has a high priority in this school. Leaders are mindful to support pupils' emotional and mental well-being. Pupils learn life and social skills. In discussion, pupils are able to talk well about how school supports them for their future lives and careers. They are confident that their teachers help them to achieve their school motto: 'Be the best we can be'. COVID-19 has affected the programme of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities the school provides outside the classroom. Leaders have reinstated these opportunities where they can.

Children in early years settle well to school life due to the caring and supportive staff. They develop positive attitudes to learning. Staff have high expectations of children and have planned an ambitious curriculum. Staff model early language and communication skills well. Talk and vocabulary development is at the heart of everything they do. As a result, children are confident to talk about their learning. In Reception, children in history can confidently talk about what different objects, for example a box camera and 'pinny', can tell them about how someone lived in the past.

Leaders, including governors, build strong, supportive relationships with those in the school community. Staff work hard because they care deeply for the pupils and feel valued by leaders. Parents recognise and praise staff at all levels for the care they provide.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders see pupils' safety as one of the most important aspects of the school's work. They have ensured that there are effective systems in place for all staff to report any concerns. Staff have a very good knowledge of families and the local community. They

understand the dangers and challenges pupils may face. Staff use this knowledge, alongside regular training, to keep pupils safe.

Leaders ensure that pupils get appropriate support when they need it. They respond promptly to concerns and make referrals to outside agencies when required.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- As a result of COVID-19, the breadth of extra-curricular provision and enrichment opportunities pupils receive has been narrowed. Consequently, pupils are not accessing the usual range of activities, such as sports events and visits. As a result, pupils are not able to benefit from the skills, knowledge and new experiences these opportunities provide that support their learning beyond the classroom. Leaders should continue to prioritise returning to a fully enriched programme of extra-curricular enrichment opportunities for pupils in school.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2012.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	114154
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10227091
Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	292
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Reverend Elaine
Headteacher	Kate Longstaff
Website	www.acrerigg-inf.durham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of additional funding through the pupil premium grant is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND at the school is also above the national average.
- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, history and art. The inspector met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and talked to pupils and teachers.

- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders and members of staff. She met with the school improvement partner and six governors, including the chair and vice-chair of governors.
- The inspector monitored pupils' behaviour around school and during lessons. She also met with groups of pupils to hear their views about their work and school life.
- The inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult and visited reading and phonics lessons in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2.
- The inspector reviewed the school's self-evaluation and leaders' plans for improvement.
- The inspector examined information about safeguarding and met with the lead for safeguarding.
- The inspector considered 17 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 12 free-text responses. The inspector considered 36 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Anne Vernon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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