



# Regent Farm First School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 108440  
**LEA** Newcastle upon Tyne  
**Inspection number** 277970  
**Inspection dates** 31 October 2005 to 1 November 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Keith Bardon

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	First	<b>School address</b>	Wansbeck Road South
<b>School category</b>	Community		Gosforth
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 9		Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 2852294
<b>Number on roll</b>	240	<b>Fax number</b>	0191 2852294
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Enid Mitchell
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 April 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Jean Humphrey

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<b>Age group</b> 3 to 9	<b>Inspection dates</b> 31 October 2005 - 1 November 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 277970
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized school situated to the north of Newcastle upon Tyne that educates children in the 3 to 9 age range. While the majority of pupils live in an area of social and economic disadvantage, others come from more advantaged homes. Most children start school with attainment that is lower than usual. A little over one in eight pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, predominantly Asian. Many of these pupils speak English as an additional language, and the younger ones in particular are often at an early stage in acquiring English. A small number of pupils are from families seeking asylum. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has a centre for those with visual impairments and currently educates seven pupils with severe sight problems.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school and inspectors agree with the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness. Teaching and learning are good and pupils make clear and sustained progress. However, in English, boys do not achieve as well as girls. Pupils behave well in lessons and enjoy learning new things. The school promotes pupils' personal development well and relationships between staff and pupils are relaxed and friendly. The areas that could be improved further have been recognised and are being tackled by making the curriculum more lively and interesting for the pupils. This development now requires a sharper focus. Children from different backgrounds and cultures mix and learn happily together. Pupils with visual impairments are supported very well and enjoy learning alongside others in class. Children who enter the school speaking little English pick up the language quickly and achieve well. The stimulating provision made for children in the Foundation Stage classes (Nursery and Reception) gives them a good start to school and provides a firm base for their future learning. Parents hold positive views of the education their children receive, but are often reluctant to get fully involved in the life of the school. Effective leadership and management have helped the school to address the issues from the last inspection and have given it the capacity and will to move forward. However, a budget deficit and falling pupil numbers may cause the school problems in the future. Governors support the school conscientiously, but are not involved enough in measuring how well it is doing. The cost of educating each pupil is around the national average and represents good value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Construct and rigorously implement an action plan to raise boys' achievement in English.
- Increase governors' ability to evaluate for themselves how well the school is performing.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. This is a grade better than the school's own evaluation because it takes full account of more recent improvements in Years 3 and 4. When they first enter the school, many children lack basic skills, particularly in communication, language and mathematics. Children make good progress during their time in the Foundation Stage. However, while a majority of children attain the targets for their age by the end of Reception, about one in five are still a little way short. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and the school's results in the annual tests for Year 2 pupils often match the national average, and are good in comparison with similar schools. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve well and many attain results in the tests that are higher than those of other pupils. A combination of factors, some under the school's control and some outside, adversely affected the

progress of Year 4 pupils in 2004/05. The school has put constructive improvements in place and Year 4 pupils are now building successfully on the gains they made in Year 3. Girls often attain better than boys do, particularly in English. For example, while the written work of the girls is often carefully constructed with accurate spelling and correct punctuation, that of the boys is less thoughtful, lacks cohesion and contains more basic errors. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Pupils with visual impairments achieve very well and in most cases reach the levels expected for their age.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The evidence from the inspection confirms the school's own judgement that the personal development and well-being of pupils are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school 'because we do loads of interesting things and they take us to interesting places'. This is confirmed by the improving levels of attendance. Pupils' good behaviour and attitudes to work are reflected in the sustained progress they make. They know that staff have high expectations of them and rise well to the challenges they are set. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to contribute to the life of the school through the school council, the buddy scheme and the friendship benches. These are used successfully to build good relationships and to encourage caring attitudes towards each other. Pupils also make a major contribution to the wider community through the active role they take in supporting charities and initiatives such as Eco-schools and keyhole gardening in Lesotho. Pupils explain with gusto the benefits of playground exercise and healthy eating, and have a clear understanding of how these activities contribute to the healthy lifestyle the school encourages. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. The strong community spirit that permeates the school contributes a feeling of security and well-being that makes for happy and contented pupils. From the time they first enter the nursery, pupils are given clear guidance on how they should conduct themselves. Throughout the school, pupils treat each other and adults with respect and readily give help to those who need it. Pupils are prepared well for future learning.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good overall. The school's perception that most lessons are at least good and a few are satisfactory is correct. Staff know their pupils very well and teachers are adept at using effective questions to challenge and extend learning, as in a Year 2 lesson when pupils were given time to think carefully and were then able to explain their thoughts and ideas. In most lessons, learning is enjoyed because teachers make sure that the activities hold pupils' interest. In lessons that are satisfactory rather than good, teachers are still discovering the best ways to engage the pupils fully. Teachers match work to the wide range of learning needs very

effectively. Much of the marking in books gives pupils clear pointers about what they need to do to make their work better. Pupils are encouraged to measure their own success and to use their self-evaluation to decide what they need to do to improve. Lessons are organised and managed well. Teachers use successful strategies to promote pupils' good behaviour and to ensure their concentration. The skilled and knowledgeable teaching assistants work closely with class teachers and provide very good support for pupils' learning. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are good. Children are provided with a lively environment that stimulates learning and develops their independence.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum caters well for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. The school accurately judges its curriculum to be good. The Foundation Stage curriculum has improved well since the last inspection, particularly through improvements made to the outdoor provision. The school has recognised that boys do not achieve as well as girls. As a result, it has taken steps to develop a curriculum better suited to capturing the interests of all its learners. The basic curriculum is enriched well by a good range of additional activities, including music and sporting activities and visits to places of local interest such as museums and the theatre. Pupils feel that their out-of-school visits are 'really exciting' and it is clear that the visits have strengthened their cultural understanding and appreciation. After school activities are popular and well attended, enabling pupils to successfully improve their sporting, creative and musical skills.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are provided with a good quality of care, guidance and support and are safe and secure at school. Staff know their pupils well and monitor their personal development and academic progress closely. Systems for tracking pupils' progress are regularly reviewed and improved. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or visual impairments are supported well and fully included in school activities. Regular meetings between teachers, support staff, parents, pupils and outside agencies enable pupils' needs to be identified early and met effectively. Parents are very pleased with the support given to their children. For example, a parent of a child with visual impairment comments 'the school is really good because the staff give the children more confidence and teaches them to be independent. I am really happy with the way the school is supporting us'. Health and safety routines, risk assessments and child protection procedures are firmly in place, and pupils are well aware of how to keep themselves safe.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The quality of leadership and management is good and the school's own evaluation is accurate. Procedures for monitoring the work of the school have improved since the last inspection and provide accurate and detailed information. The headteacher and senior staff analyse thoroughly all the information the school collects and they have a clear picture of how well it is performing and what needs to improve. Staff are consulted when plans for improvement are formulated and there is unity of purpose throughout the school. Enlivening the curriculum is a particular focus this year that was decided upon after careful consideration of the needs of all pupils. The successful manner in which the school meets the diverse needs of its pupils is very impressive. While the objectives in the school improvement plan are well considered, some are very broad and not focused on important details, such as the need to raise boys' achievement.

Secure plans are in place to eliminate the school's financial deficit over the next three years. This, along with the implications of the school's falling pupil numbers, is causing uncertainties amongst staff. Despite this, the school ethos is positive and the atmosphere is pleasant and productive. The views of parents are sought and acted upon regularly. This has resulted, among other things, in an increase in after school activities and more regular information from school to home. However, despite its best efforts, the school has difficulty involving parents fully in the life of the school and continues to look for ways to increase parents' involvement. Governors meet their statutory responsibilities and are very supportive of the school. However, they continue to depend too much on the headteacher for their views of how well the school is performing.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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Regent Farm First School

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2 November 2005

Dear Children

Thank you very much for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. Although we were with you for only two days, we enjoyed finding out about the work you do, and a special thanks to those who talked with us about the school. Regent Farm First School is a good school and we understand why you enjoy it so much.

These are the things we particularly liked about the school.

The school is a happy place to be.

Teachers make learning interesting and because of that children make good progress.

Children are friendly to adults and nice to each other.

Adults are very caring and helpful.

Children behave well and try hard in lessons.

Children care about the needs of others and help whenever they can.

Children are encouraged to do things in a safe and healthy way.

The Nursery and Reception classes give children a good start to school.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher are clear about how to make the school even better.

We also looked at what the school might do next. Here are some of the things we suggested.

Make sure that everyone is clear about how to make pupils' work even better (particularly the boys).

Involve school governors more in looking at how well the school is doing.

With Best Wishes

Keith Bardon

(Lead Inspector)

Annex B