



Riverdale Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111639
LEA Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number 278738
Inspection dates 22 November 2005 to 23 November 2005
Reporting inspector Elizabeth Greensides

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Hambleton Avenue, Redcar, TS10 4HH
School category	Community	Telephone number	01642 471298
Age range of pupils	3 to 11	Fax number	01642 756300
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Chair of governors	Mr David Coates
Number on roll	179	Headteacher	Mrs Kirsty Reilly
Appropriate authority	The governing body		
Date of previous inspection	1 October 2000		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This slightly smaller than average primary school serves families in a regeneration area of local authority housing. When most children enter the school's nursery, their skills and knowledge are below average, and well below in language and communication. The majority of children are from White British families. The proportions of children who are entitled to free school meals or who have learning difficulties are a little higher than is typical for primary schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some good features. It gives sound value for money and promotes satisfactory achievement. The school does not monitor and know its own performance well enough. This leads to inconsistencies in provision and to uneven progress for children in Years 3 to 6. The new head teacher has introduced self-evaluation procedures, but these do not yet inform planning for the future. As a result, development plans miss the main priorities for improvement. The vast majority of parents support the school and appreciate the quality of care that it gives. Children's personal development is good, so that they grow in confidence and maturity. They feel happy and safe in school and enjoy the good range of opportunities it provides to enrich their learning. Because of good provision, children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and in the infants. For children in Years 3 to 6 progress is inconsistent, though satisfactory overall. Their standards are well above average in mathematics and reading, but below average in writing. Progress in other subjects is satisfactory, but the curriculum lacks focus on the basic skills. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and the school has the capacity to go on improving.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

- Set up and use systems for checking and improving the school's performance so as to make teaching, the curriculum and pupils' progress consistently good.
- Raise children's achievement in writing by teaching them all the basic writing skills and giving them more opportunities to write in a wide range of demanding situations.
- Improve the curriculum to ensure that key skills for learning are taught more effectively in relation to pupils' different needs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The standards children reach by the age of seven are average in reading, writing and mathematics. By the time children are eleven, standards are average in English, and well above average in mathematics and science. Achievement in writing is well below that for reading, and has significantly declined over the last two years. Standards of writing in other work are well below those seen in children's literacy books. Children's attainment in information and communication technology is average and has improved since the last inspection. Standards seen in other subjects are satisfactory, although there is too little emphasis on the key skills that equip children for their later education and life. From below average starting points, children achieve well in the nursery and reception classes. By the end of reception they reach the goals expected of them in all areas except communication, language and literacy. Most children make good progress by the age of seven. Progress in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory, but it is uneven because the quality of teaching is not consistent. Children with learning difficulties

make good progress. They are well supported by teaching assistants and given work that is well adapted for their needs. In writing, and in subjects other than English, mathematics and science, some of the more able children do not make the progress they are capable of. This is because they are not given enough independence in their work, and are expected to follow given examples too closely. Boys and girls achieve as well as each other.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of the children are good, and the good quality of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development found in the last inspection has been maintained. Children behave well in the classroom and around the school and have positive attitudes to learning. They are friendly, confident, courteous and attentive. Children approve of the merit system because it promotes good behaviour and helps them to feel safe. They enjoy coming to school and believe they are well supported in lessons. Older children feel well prepared for the move to high school. However, the school does not equip them well with all the key skills needed for their future schooling and lives. The "Eco Committee" represents pupils' views on the school environment, and they believe that their suggestions are valued. The school has developed successful strategies to ensure that attendance is above the national average. Pupils are actively involved in a number of local projects, and in charitable fund-raising initiatives such as Food Aid and Marie Curie. They are very aware of the need to use safe practices. The school strongly promotes a healthy lifestyle for pupils. It has achieved the prestigious Active Mark Gold Award and encourages pupils to make healthier choices in their diet.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall, but good for children up to the age of seven. For older children, it is sometimes good, particularly in mathematics and science, with elements that are outstanding. The best teaching uses a range of resources, and encourages children to think about how they are learning, as well as about what they are learning. However, some teaching is unsatisfactory, and this leads to uneven progress for the children, both between classes and between subjects. This has not been identified by the school, and so has not yet been addressed. Where teaching is satisfactory, or worse, teachers do not use what they know of children's abilities to match the work to their current needs. Too often children of average and high ability are expected to do the same work. This holds up the progress of some more able children, who do not get enough challenge and whose achievement is restricted by the task they are given. Writing has been identified as a priority throughout school, but children still do not have enough opportunity to learn specific skills, or to develop them by applying them in different subjects. Teachers do not make enough use of the learning environment

in the classrooms. Walls display children's art work and information about the current topic, but there are not enough prompts, stimuli or targets to raise children's awareness of their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, with an acceptable balance between subjects and strands within subjects. It strongly develops children's ability to stay safe and healthy. The good range of trips, visits and after-school clubs adds enjoyment and enrichment to learning. However, in some subjects too little importance is given to the development of key skills and too much to the acquisition of knowledge. Work in English does not teach specific writing skills, and teachers do not maximise opportunities for demanding writing tasks in other subjects. Computer skills are effectively taught, but are seldom applied across the curriculum. The school has not yet evaluated the curriculum to decide how it could be further developed to meet pupils' current needs. The curriculum does not reflect the wider cultural make-up of today's society so as to raise children's awareness in this mono-cultural school. Some teachers plan units of work which link a number of subjects together well, but this practice is not consistent throughout the school. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good and children make good progress in their first few years in school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory aspect of the school's work. Partnership with other agencies has enabled the school to respond well to concerns about low attendance, challenging behaviour and poor speech. The school collects, values and acts on parents' views. Risk assessments are carried out regularly and fully. Provision for pupils' health and safety is good and recent improvements to the building have reinforced it further. Children are fully justified in saying they feel safe and well supported by adults. This has led to their good behaviour and attitudes, and raised their awareness of how to keep healthy. Child protection procedures have recently been updated and are good. Effective support for children with learning difficulties results in their good progress. However, teachers do not yet use information on children's learning to set clear targets to raise achievement. Also, the quality of marking in some subjects is not good enough to help pupils to know how well they are doing and how to do better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. They are not better than this because senior staff do not keep a close enough watch on the effectiveness of the school's work. The school has no useful, embedded systems for self evaluation, and does not yet regularly monitor teaching and learning. As a result, the school has no adequate means of recognising the right priorities for improvement. The quality

of provision is uneven and inconsistent. Some good and even outstanding practices are not recognised, shared and spread, and less good elements are not identified for improvement. The new head teacher has quickly realised this, and has started to analyse aspects of provision. She has begun an audit of the school curriculum, and has collected and analysed the views of parents. The school improvement plan is in its infancy, and being further developed as the head teacher gains a more complete and accurate evaluation of the work of the school. The development plans produced by other leaders are not securely based on priorities from self-review. The school does not always carry out new initiatives fully, nor does it monitor either their impact on practice or their effect on standards. The governors are supportive of the work of the school. However, they are not given enough information to have an accurate view of its performance. As a result they are not always able to challenge the school's views or its priorities for improvement. The work of the governors is, however, satisfactory overall.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	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

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	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	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	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

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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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24 November, 2005

Dear Children,

You will have noticed some extra adults in your school this week. As you know, we have been looking at your school to see how well it helps you to learn. Thank you for being part of our week, and thank you also for your politeness, your good manners, and, above all, your smiles and your helpfulness at all times.

These are the main things which we have found out about your school:

Your teachers look after you well and you enjoy coming to school, so your behaviour is good.

Your work in mathematics and science is very good and you achieve very high standards in these subjects.

Your reading skills are much better than your writing skills.

The way that different subjects are taught does not always help you to develop better skills.

Here are some of the ways in which the school will be able to improve:

Your school needs to decide on better ways to find out how well you are all doing.

The teachers and leaders need to use what they have found out to decide upon the best ways to help you all to improve further.

You have a happy school where you all feel safe. You are encouraged to live a healthy life style, and you enjoy learning. Keep it up!

Yours faithfully,

Elizabeth Greensides (Lead Inspector)