



Red Row First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122197
LEA Northumberland
Inspection number 281187
Inspection dates 4 July 2006 to 5 July 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Andrew Scott

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

Type of school	First	School address	Red Row
School category	Community		Morpeth
Age range of pupils	3 to 9		Northumberland, NE61 5AS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01670 760282
Number on roll	107	Fax number	01670 761617
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Lorna Patterson
Date of previous inspection	1 June 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Linda Brett

Age group 3 to 9	Inspection dates 4 July 2006 - 5 July 2006	Inspection number 281187
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school serves a village of considerable social and economic deprivation in an ex-mining area of Northumberland. The pupil population is fairly static and predominantly from White British families. There is a higher percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than average. There are no pupils who have English as their second language. The school has received the Healthy Schools award every year since 2003.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's provision for its pupils is satisfactory with several strengths. Good levels of care and support mean that pupils feel secure and relaxed in school. Their respect for the staff ensures mostly good behaviour and a responsible attitude to learning. Pupils enjoy coming to school, even though attendance is just below the national average.

Standards of work are usually average. This year, they are not as high as usual mainly due to high numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and problems caused by staffing absences. Nevertheless, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Good provision in the Nursery and Reception classes enables children to achieve well.

Teaching elsewhere is satisfactory. However, some of the teaching does not always expect enough of pupils and ensure a brisk pace to learning. Although the curriculum is well enriched by a variety of activities, work in lessons is too reliant on set schemes of work and not creative enough. In addition, pupils do not have enough opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.

The overall leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher is good. She has the right priorities for the school and has done well; for example, to raise standards compared with the last inspection, to improve the quality of care and the school environment. She has been well supported by the assistant headteacher and the chair of governors. Subject coordinators carry out their roles satisfactorily overall, but there is scope for further improvement. The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory, but when changes are needed, they are not always carried out rigorously. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and the school has the capacity to develop further. It provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the level of challenge and pace of learning in lessons.
- Ensure that lessons are more stimulating and that pupils have more scope for independent learning.
- Be more analytical and rigorous in managing change in the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils achieve satisfactorily by the time they leave school. Children begin in the nursery with low abilities, especially in language and awareness of the outside world, as well as in their personal and social development. Good teaching enables children to make good progress by the end of the Reception year, although they do not reach all their expected goals. Their attainment in mathematics, though, is average.

Standards by the end of Year 2 are usually broadly average. This year's class has a high percentage of pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties and their standards are

not as high as usual. By the end of Year 4, pupils' attainment is also lower than usual in all subjects, except in reading where most pupils reach the national expected standard. Pupils in this class have been especially affected by a lack of continuity in teaching because of staff absences. This has adversely affected their progress.

Throughout the school, pupils' basic skills in spelling, handwriting and number are sound. Their progress is constrained by a limited vocabulary, structure and creativity in their writing, problem-solving in mathematics and investigative skills in science. Most pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the good support they receive in lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils develop well in their time at school. Although their attendance is slightly below the national average, they enjoy coming to school and especially appreciate the sports, activities and visits outside lessons. Within lessons, they usually concentrate well, although their attention falters when the subject matter is not stimulating enough. Pupils say that behaviour is not always good but they feel safe at school. There is restlessness and occasional aggression but most of the pupils behave well most of the time, and are well aware when they are out of order.

Pupils work well together in lessons. They rightly feel that they contribute well to the school's development, particularly through the school council. Their spiritual development is good, strengthened by exciting visits, like going to the theatre, and pond-dipping with David Bellamy. Cultural development is also good overall, and satisfactory in relation to their awareness of life in a multicultural society.

Pupils take part happily in all forms of exercise and know it is good for them. They identify healthy foods, such as fruit and vegetables. Their interpersonal, literacy and numeracy skills prepare them adequately for life ahead.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, and not good as the school believes. In all classes, pupils are clear about what they have to learn because teachers present and explain new work methodically. All staff manage pupils' behaviour well and make good use of resources to promote concentration. Grasses in varying states of health certainly helped pupils in a Year 1 science lesson to understand the importance of light and water to plant growth. Teachers are good at raising pupils' self-esteem through regular encouragement and praise.

Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage because lessons are brisk, well planned and there are high expectations. There is plenty of scope for independent play in the classroom and in the excellent outdoor play area. Teaching is often good elsewhere

in the school. During the inspection, lively and purposeful lessons were seen in literacy and science, for example. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from close and sensitive support.

Teaching does not always match work closely enough to pupils' individual needs. This means, for example, that in some lessons, more able pupils tend to work at the same pace as other pupils. Basic skills are taught correctly but not used effectively in other subjects to motivate pupils fully.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school rightly believes that its enrichment of the curriculum through activities and visits is good. Its provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also effective. The school's grounds are an excellent teaching resource and pupils have benefited well by, for example, designing and helping to plant a sensory garden. A new science room is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' investigative skills.

However, the overall curriculum is satisfactory and not good as the school believes. There is an understandable focus on literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication technology (ICT), but teachers do not blend subjects together enough to make learning relevant to the pupils and make lessons come alive. Workshop activities, such as 'art in the environment', are influential but are not echoed much in classrooms. Although the school has good plans for pupils with special gifts or talents, there is still not enough provision for them.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school rightly places considerable emphasis on supporting the well-being of pupils. There are thorough procedures to safeguard pupils and to cater for their many social and emotional needs. All pupils have a special adult in whom they can confide should the need arise. 'Golden time' motivates pupils to behave, massage sessions act as a calming influence and free breakfasts guarantee pupils a positive start to the day. Work with parents is viewed as crucial to pupils' development and the school has run some excellent courses to improve parenting skills and encourage support for their children's work at home.

The school is good at checking the progress of pupils. Teachers can readily see which pupils are doing well, which need extra support and then set suitable targets. However, not all pupils are clear what their targets are. Marking is satisfactory, but does not consistently insist that pupils learn from their mistakes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school is well led by the headteacher. Her clear-sighted and resolute approach has strengthened the school, especially in standards, pastoral care and the school environment. She is open to new ideas, for example, successfully trialling a new behaviour strategy, and managed long term staff absences well. She is well supported by the assistant headteacher.

However, overall leadership and management are satisfactory. Subject leaders have a reasonable overview of their subjects but do not consistently monitor all aspects and draw clear conclusions. As a result, areas for development are not clearly defined and analysed, and action plans are not rigorously implemented. There is a similar situation with management of teaching but the recent staff absences have not helped.

Governors know the school well and are very supportive, although they are not vigilant enough in ensuring that the quality of teaching is as good as it should be. The school has done well to resolve the problem of vacancies on the governing body. Parents think well of the school and feel well informed about their children's progress. Links with outside agencies, such as the local authority behaviour team and the Healthy Schools award team, are very fruitful.

The school has made sound progress since the last inspection. Standards have improved, although they have dipped this year; other issues have been suitably addressed. Consequently, the school has the capacity to improve further.

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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?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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	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	3	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?	2	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	3	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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The School Council

Red Row First School

Red Row

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NE61 5AS

5 July 2006

Dear Pupils

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to your school, and meeting you and your teachers. Thank you very much for all your comments and help around the school.

I believe that your school gives you a satisfactory education, with several things that are good. I particularly liked the way in which all staff take care of you and make the school a safe and happy place. I know there is some misbehaviour sometimes, but I think that your behaviour is mostly good. You are keen to learn new things, and I know you especially enjoy the extra activities and visits that the school provides.

You have a good start to school in the Nursery and Reception classes, because you make good progress in work and in getting on together. Throughout the school, teachers work hard for you and make sure that you learn your basic skills in literacy, numeracy, science and ICT. You have a good headteacher who has the right ideas to improve your school. I was certainly impressed by the gardens that you helped to create. It is good that she is trying to involve your parents more in your work.

I believe that you would learn more if the work in every lesson is always challenging and interesting, and if you had more chance to find things out for yourselves. Your headteacher and teachers should also make every effort to work out how best they can improve the school further.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Scott

Lead Inspector