



# Ravenswood Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 108475  
**Local Authority** Newcastle upon Tyne  
**Inspection number** 288110  
**Inspection dates** 11–12 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Wendy Ripley HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Ravenswood Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Heaton, Newcastle upon Tyne
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		Tyne and Wear, NE6 5TU
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 265 9599
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	550	<b>Fax number</b>	0191 276 2024
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Christine Murray
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Pauline Summerhill
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 January 2003		

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<b>Age group</b> 3–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 11–12 January 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 288110
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Ravenswood is a much larger than average primary school with a 60 place nursery. The area served includes a wide socio-economic mix. Although the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average, the number of pupils from less advantaged backgrounds is increasing. Children's attainment on entry varies but is average overall. There are more boys than girls throughout the school, although the proportions vary in each year group. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or with a statement of special educational need is below average. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is slightly above average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is also just above the average for most primary schools, but includes some 13 different nationalities and 17 languages.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Inspectors judge that school effectiveness and value for money are satisfactory and not good as judged by the school. Although the school has several strengths, and results in national tests have remained above the national average for a number of years, there has been a decline in standards in Key Stages 1 and 2 over the last three years, especially in English. The school acknowledges that it was initially slow to spot and respond to this trend but is now implementing a range of appropriate measures to halt this decline and improve the pupils' progress. However, these measures are not impacting fully on all aspects of provision and consequently, some pupils are not achieving as well as they might.

Parents are supportive and appreciative of the school because it ensures the well-being of their children and provides them with a good range of opportunities. Most parents report that communication with them has improved recently but some would welcome more detailed information about their children's progress and more timely information about out-of-school activities. Pupils report that they enjoy coming to school because they like learning and being able to take part in the different clubs and activities that the school provides at lunchtime and after school. Pupils are confident, their attendance is good, they are well aware of the needs of others and their behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. This is due to the emphasis placed on developing good relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils, so that all groups feel secure and cared for, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language.

After starting Nursery with average standards, well managed Foundation Stage provision covers all the required areas of learning and provides a good range of interesting and stimulating activities. These result in children reaching standards above those expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. The curriculum is satisfactory, ensures that pupils cover all statutory requirements and develop a good knowledge and understanding of how to live healthily and safely. The curriculum is enriched by good sports provision and a wide range of educational visits. Teaching throughout the school is satisfactory overall and some is good, although work is frequently not challenging enough. Pupils are not clear about their own progress and learning goals and teachers' marking of work does not clearly indicate how they might improve. Attendance and absence rates are both slightly better than national averages. There have been no exclusions during the past seven years.

School leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have established a clear direction for the school, supported by a strengthened leadership team. The recent introduction of standards team leaders and the school's own pupil tracking system, are beginning to have a positive impact by monitoring school performance more rigorously and accurately so as to find ways of raising standards. The governing body is committed and supportive, but does not sufficiently challenge and hold the school to account. The school has taken effective steps to make the improvements raised in the last inspection report and now provides some outstanding learning opportunities for the under-fives in the outdoor play area

adjacent to Reception. However, the outdoor play area attached to the Nursery should be made secure as soon as possible. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that the outside learning/play area attached to the Nursery is secure.
- Halt the decline in standards and accelerate progress across the school in all subjects, particularly in English.
- Ensure that planning and the monitoring of new initiatives are sharply focused on raising standards, progress and achievement across the school.
- Press forward quickly with plans to involve pupils more in their own learning and progress.
- Ensure that the marking of pupils' work makes clear what they need to do to improve.
- Roll out tracking systems quickly and consistently so that any underachievement can be nipped in the bud.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Standards are satisfactory overall and good in the Foundation Stage. Children enter the Nursery with average standards and good provision in the Foundation Stage results in children reaching standards above those expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1.

Although standards are above national averages in both Key Stages 1 and 2, and progress in lessons is satisfactory, many pupils are not achieving as well as might be expected or when compared to pupils in similar schools. Standards have declined at Key Stage 2, over the last three years, especially in English. Unvalidated results for the 2006 tests indicate that standards at Key Stage 1 declined in reading, remained the same in writing and improved in mathematics. Pupils with statements of educational need and with learning difficulties and/or disabilities generally make satisfactory progress from their starting points, although a small group of school action plus pupils in Key Stage 2 are underachieving. Boys' achievement in English at both Key Stages 1 and 2 is lower than for girls. Boys in receipt of free school meals in Key Stage 1 are also underachieving. Recently implemented strategies in English and an emphasis on developing pupils' writing skills across the curriculum, are beginning to have a good impact and continue to be a focus for the school to raise standards and accelerate progress.

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

### **Grade: 2**

The school successfully promotes pupils' personal development and well-being. Central to this is the school's aim to develop 'relationships which promote successes'. The Foundation Stage ensures that all children have a good start to their school life, and

they grow in confidence. Pupils behave well around the school. There is a calm atmosphere around the school and pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming. Pupils report that they are happy at school and enjoy coming. Most have positive attitudes to lessons and told inspectors that they like being actively involved in learning, for example, working together in groups. Pupils did not express any concerns about bullying or racism and reported that most of the time they play well together, value and respect each other and feel safe. The recently introduced playground friends and friendship bus-stop contribute well to this. Despite this, some pupils are concerned about their safety at break and lunchtimes, particularly of being pushed into or knocked down, because there are so many children in the outside play areas.

Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory but the school could emphasise the positive understanding that pupils have of these aspects, for example, through displays celebrating and highlighting activities such as the highly successful multicultural school parade. Pupils' moral and social development is good. They have a clear sense of right and wrong and understand how differences can be resolved. Pupils are able to influence decisions made about improving their school through their well organised school council, through this they learn useful skills, which will support their future economic well-being. They have a clear understanding of the importance of a healthy diet and the need for exercise to keep fit.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. Teachers and other adults, including parents, form very effective partnerships to help children to learn well. Adults engage pupils in purposeful discussions about activities and as a result, children gain confidence in contributing their personal views. In the best sessions, a good balance is struck between practical, free choice activities and adult-directed activities and children are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

In Key Stages 1 and 2 teaching is satisfactory, with some examples of good practice. In the best lessons, learning intentions are clearly communicated to pupils and this makes a positive contribution to their progress. The pace is brisk and there is a good balance between teacher-directed and pupil-centred learning. Good practice is not shared effectively with other staff to improve teaching and learning across the school as a whole. Many lessons' plans are not sufficiently detailed or specific. The standard of marking is inconsistent and most does not provide adequate or meaningful guidance to help pupils improve.

Learning outcomes are not always shared with pupils. Where they are shared, they are not always related back to particular learning activities or used effectively, for example, to reinforce previous learning. Target-setting is evident in some planning but pupils are often unclear of the targets they are working towards. The pace of some lessons

is too slow with pupils spending too much time on teacher-directed activities. There is an over-reliance on worksheets in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. In some cases these are used well to allow learners to identify and reflect on what they already know, but often they constrain pupils' thinking.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum fulfils statutory requirements. The breadth and balance of the curriculum are enriched by a good range of extra-curricular opportunities and visits that contribute well to pupils' personal development and self-esteem and extend their physical, practical and creative skills.

Some good curriculum plans and supporting tools are available centrally on the school network. However, these are not being used sufficiently or consistently at individual lesson level, although the introduction of a new curriculum management structure is beginning to tackle this. The standards team leaders in particular are starting to have an impact on raising standards and improving the quality of provision because they are facilitating the sharing of good practice and establishing mechanisms to track progress and monitor and evaluate the impact of strategies.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory with some good features. Pupils know that they are important and they speak highly of the care and support they receive from adults, with whom they enjoy good relationships. They know who they can go to talk to, trust staff and feel confident to ask for help if it is needed. Attendance and absence rates are both slightly better than national averages. There have been no exclusions during the past seven years. Support for pupils with English as an additional language is good; it is well thought-out and delivered effectively. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory. Whilst parents of children with individual education plans are involved in reviews, the pupils themselves do not participate in monitoring or reviewing their plans. The school maintains a register for able and talented pupils and some summer school activities have been provided for these pupils.

Academic guidance is satisfactory, although the school recognises that learners' progress is not monitored systematically and robustly enough at present and is implementing strategies to improve this. Marking is inconsistent and not sharp enough to help pupils understand how they can improve and achieve more. As yet, the majority of pupils are not actively engaged in meaningful discussions about their progress and as a consequence, pupils do not have a clear understanding of their individual targets or the progress that they are making in lessons. The targets for some pupils are not challenging enough.

Transition arrangements between stages are satisfactory. However, whilst the majority of parents are supportive of the school, some feel that information about their child's

progress is not always shared effectively between staff. Some parents also feel that they are not given enough detail about their child's progress and achievements at parents' evenings and that the school could communicate more effectively with them and engage them more fully in their child's education.

Although safeguarding arrangements are in place and meet statutory requirements overall, the present security arrangements for the outdoor play and learning area attached to the nursery are inadequate. The school is aware of this and is remedying it as a matter of urgency now that the necessary planning permission has been received.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

School leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have established a clear direction for the school. They have begun to tackle shortcomings and identified what needs to be done, such as the introduction of systems to keep track of pupils' progress and to raise standards.

A good ethos of care contributes to the good personal development of the pupils and good inclusion for everyone. The Foundation Stage is effectively managed. The management structure has recently altered and staff are adjusting to the changes. At the moment, the standards team leaders are only just beginning to appreciate their strategic management role. Planning for improvement is starting to develop well, with increasing use of success criteria that are measurable and quantifiable. Nevertheless, the evaluation of the school's work has some shortcomings and the school's judgements about its strengths and weaknesses in its self-evaluation tend to be too optimistic.

The governing body is highly committed and supportive of the school. However, although it views itself as a critical friend, there is a heavy reliance on the information received from the school leadership team and governors are still in the early stages of developing their role to include robust challenge. The school manages its finances well to provide a good staffing ratio and continue its programme of refurbishment to the school. It provides satisfactory value for money and has satisfactorily responded to the area for improvement identified at the last inspection. It has a satisfactory capacity for improvement.



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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</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>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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

Ravenswood Primary School

Ravenswood Road

Heaton

Newcastle upon Tyne

Tyne and Wear

NE6 5TU

12 January 2007

Dear Pupils

I am writing to say a big thank you to you all for helping us and making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently to see how well you were doing. We enjoyed meeting you and were very interested to hear all about the things you do and what you think about your school. You told us that you like your teachers and learning, you enjoy going to school and you feel happy and safe when you are there. We think that the teachers take good care of you. Here are some of the other things we found out.

- Your behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. You try hard to do your best and your attendance is really great. You all deserve a big round of applause for that!
- You get on well with the adults and with each other.
- There are lots of activities at lunchtime and after school for you to take part in.
- Some of you get worried at break and lunchtimes. This is because there are so many children at your school that when you are all playing you are worried you might get pushed or perhaps even knocked over accidentally. The adults at school know about this and are working hard to make sure that playtime outside is well organised with lots of interesting things to do. Your school council is also very good and knows about this too and you told us that playground buddies and the friendship bus-stop is helping you to feel safer and happier at break times. Of course you can all make playtimes safe and more enjoyable by being careful, kind and considerate to each other – which is what we know you usually are anyway.

We also found some things that can be better in your school and we have asked the headteacher and staff to sort these out. These are the things we have asked them to do.

- Involve you more in your own learning so that you are ‘doing’ more rather than listening a lot of the time.
- Talk to/listen to you more about what you can do so that you can help set your own targets for learning and achieve as much as you possibly can.
- Plan lessons more carefully so that you are clear about what you are going to do and why.
- Improve how your work is marked so that you can read and understand what the teacher is telling you and what they say explains clearly what you have done well and what you could do better.
- Make sure that the play area outside the nursery is safely fenced off so that people can’t just walk through it.

This is quite a lot to do and you can help too by continuing to behave well and working as hard as you were when we saw you. The main thing is to keep on enjoying going to school, learning as much as you can and being proud of yourselves for working so hard and because you are

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special. Thank you again for being so friendly. We liked you all a lot. You deserve to do well and we know that you can!

Best wishes

Wendy Ripley

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools