



Richard Avenue Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108819
Local Authority Sunderland
Inspection number 288196
Inspection dates 6–7 February 2007
Reporting inspector Janet Bennett

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Hurstwood Road
School category	Community		Sunderland, Tyne and Wear
Age range of pupils	3–11		SR4 7LQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 5536053
Number on roll (school)	412	Fax number	0191 5536055
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Anne Moore
		Headteacher	Mrs Karen Lesley Todd
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2002		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 6–7 February 2007	Inspection number 288196
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Richard Avenue Primary school is larger than the average primary school. The school serves an area that has a broad social mix. Almost half of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and more than one third of children are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, and the proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. Children's abilities on entry to school are well below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Richard Avenue Primary is a good school with a number of outstanding features. One parent said, 'This is a happy, purposeful and productive place'. This is a fitting description of this highly inclusive school. The headteacher provides dynamic leadership for a team of staff who are highly committed to the achievement of all pupils. Parents appreciate the good care and support given to their children, particularly those who are vulnerable or have learning difficulties and disabilities.

Pupils, no matter what their cultural backgrounds or abilities, achieve well and reach average standards. Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes from their well below average starting points because of good teaching. The teachers and other adults build very good relationships with them, plan activities that interest them and engage them well in learning. Even so, they do not all achieve the standards expected for their age. The children in the Reception class do not have enough opportunities for learning out of doors.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils continue to make good progress, reaching average standards in Year 6. This is again because of good teaching and curriculum. It is well matched to the abilities and interests of the pupils, and those who need extra help are identified early. Recent whole-school developments have had a positive impact on pupils' progress, particularly in English. Pupils understand what they have to do in lessons, and there are excellent opportunities for them to talk about their work with others. This contributes very well to their enjoyment of school, their excellent behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. However, pupils do not always have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve. This limits their ability to accurately judge the quality of their work and to improve it.

Pupils' personal development is good. The excellent partnerships established with other professionals and the community contribute very well to pupils' excellent understanding of healthy living, and the wide range of skills that they develop prepares them very well to be good citizens of the future.

Leadership and management are good. The school leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, the subject leaders have not consistently evaluated the effects of recent improvements in teaching and, as a result; when their impact on pupils' learning is not as good as it could be it may not be remedied quickly enough. The governors have used available finances very effectively to employ a skilful team of staff which responds well to pupils' needs. As a result, the school has good capacity to further improve and provides excellent value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the rigour and use of systems to evaluate the impact of teaching on learning.
- Sharpen assessment and marking so that pupils have a better understanding of how to improve their work.

- Improve opportunities for children in the reception class to learn outdoors.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and reach average standards by the end of Year 6. Children join the school with attainment well below that typical for their age. This is because a significant number of them are at an early stage of learning English. Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. Despite this, many children do not achieve the early learning goals by the beginning of Year 1.

Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 2 the majority of pupils attain the levels expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2 and reach average standards by the end of Year 6, as shown by the results of the most recent national tests. Good teaching and well targeted support ensures that all pupils, no matter what their cultural backgrounds or abilities are, achieve well.

Inspection evidence indicates that pupils make good progress in lessons. This is because recent improvements in teaching and well-targeted support for groups of pupils, has a positive impact on learning, particularly in English.

Pupils whose first language is not English and those with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress and achieve well. This is because their needs are identified early and they receive good support from knowledgeable and experienced staff who tailor work effectively to their next steps in learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good with many outstanding features. Cultural, moral and social development is outstanding. Spiritual development is good. Pupils show high levels of understanding and respect for others and have an acute understanding of what constitutes acceptable behaviour particularly in relation to bullying and racism. Behaviour in lessons and around school is outstanding. Pupils listen carefully and respond well to the views and opinions of others. This has a positive impact on their personal and academic achievement. As a result, all pupils feel safe in school and enjoy their learning.

The school has good strategies for improving attendance, which have been largely successful; however, the impact of cultural practices that result in some pupils taking extended holidays have yet to be overcome. Pupils make healthy choices at meal-times and take advantage of the excellent range of sporting activities to keep fit. They take their responsibilities to the school and wider community very seriously. For example, pupils have worked with community police officers to improve an area outside school so that it is no longer attractive to those who would use it inappropriately. The good

range of skills that pupils develop prepares them exceptionally well to be good citizens of the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well because teaching is good. Staff have high expectations of pupils and motivate them to achieve as much as they can. They provide good opportunities for pupils to talk about their learning and to share ideas. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to provide clear explanations in lessons.

Excellent relationships between staff and pupils result in very positive attitudes to learning and excellent behaviour. Teachers plan lessons that interest pupils and activities are well matched to the needs and abilities of all learners. Teachers provide regular feedback to pupils about their work but marking is not sufficiently focused so that it helps them to understand how it could be improved; this limits their ability to evaluate and extend their own learning.

Pupils at an early stage of learning English and those with learning difficulties and disabilities receive good support from staff who have specialist knowledge and expertise. As a result, these pupils make good progress and achieve well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is adapted well to the interests of pupils and meets all statutory requirements. The excellent range of before and after-school clubs and well-planned links with local organisations enable pupils to develop their gifts and talents and to take part in an outstanding range of activities, which contribute very well to their healthy lifestyles.

Good planning ensures that all pupils experience a range of activities, which match their needs and abilities well. Children in the Foundation Stage have good opportunities to learn through play but too few opportunities exist for Reception class children to learn outdoors. The curriculum provides pupils with excellent opportunities to take responsibility and to make a positive contribution to the school, and wider community. For example, the school's Eco Team is currently developing a recycling station, which is clearly established on the principles of 'Reduce, Recycle and Re-use'. Their plans to 're-use' clothing will have benefits to the local and wider world community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils' well-being is central to the work of the school. All staff develop very good relationships with pupils and respond very well to the needs of individuals. This results in a calm, happy and safe environment where all

pupils, including those that are most vulnerable, develop into confident learners. Excellent partnerships with external agencies provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of healthy living and issues surrounding health and safety. For example, recent work with the community police officer helped pupils to understand that their actions, as well as those of motorists can each contribute to road safety. Arrangements for safeguarding children are good and high priority is given to protecting them from risk of harm whilst in school or on visits. There are very good systems in place for tracking pupils' progress, which ensures that individuals receive the support they need.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership for this highly inclusive school. She is central to the school's success in establishing a clear steer and brisk pace for school improvement. She has created an effective and enthusiastic team of staff, and ensures that pupils benefit fully from their individual skills. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher who shares her vision for the school. Staff offer each other mutual support and challenge, and share a willingness to take on new ideas. These strengths have led to good improvement since the last inspection.

Self-evaluation is good. The school judges itself to be effective and it is right to do so. However, the systems for monitoring teaching do not currently enable leaders to accurately evaluate the impact of recent developments on pupils' learning. As a result, the new approaches used by teachers do not impact as well as they might on the progress that pupils make in lessons. Good use is made of assessment data to evaluate pupils' progress and effectively target support to improve learning. This contributes well to pupils' good achievement.

Governance is good. Governors are well informed and committed to securing the best possible outcomes for pupils. They have used available finances very effectively to create a skilful team of staff, and to develop well resourced learning areas, which meet the needs of learners very well. They contribute well to the leadership and management of the school.

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Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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

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

Richard Avenue Primary School

Hurstwood Road

Sunderland

Tyne and Wear

SR4 7LQ

06 February 2007

Dear Children

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed spending time with you. You helped us to understand why you like school and what it is about it that helps you to enjoy your learning.

We were very impressed with your excellent behaviour and how well you take responsibility for looking after each other. This makes your school a pleasant and safe place in which to learn. You are very good at choosing healthy food at lunchtimes and we were impressed by how many sporting activities you take part in. We know that there are lots of adults in school who look after you very well and listen carefully to what you have to say. We think that they are very good at recognising when you have difficulties and work with you to sort things out and to help you to learn really well. One of the things we have asked your teachers to do is to help you to understand what you need to do to improve so that you can assess your own work and set yourself targets for making it even better.

We know that your teachers make lessons interesting and they explain things very well. We have asked the headteacher to look carefully at what happens in lessons to see if there are any more things that teachers could do to help you to learn even more.

We think you are all very good at taking responsibility for important things in school. We were very impressed by how well you work with visitors to school and also with the excellent work you do in your local community. The children in the Reception and Nursery classes have great fun. Adults help them to settle in really quickly and they enjoy coming to school too. We think the Reception children would enjoy their learning even more if they could do more activities outdoors.

Be proud of your school – it is great. Carry on looking after each other and enjoying your learning. We wish you all great things for the future.

Yours sincerely

Janet Bennett

(Inspector)