



Wheatlands Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111659
Local Authority Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number 289017
Inspection dates 14–15 November 2006
Reporting inspector Lynne Read

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Hundale Crescent
School category	Community		Redcar
Age range of pupils	3–11		TS10 2PU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01642 489784
Number on roll (school)	485	Fax number	01642 490855
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Rev John Weetman
		Headteacher	Mrs Julie Green
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	14–15 November 2006	289017

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This larger than average primary school serves a newly built area of Redcar. The proportion of pupils taking a free school meal is much lower than average. When they enter the Nursery, children's development is around that usually seen in schools nationally. There is a lower proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than in most schools. The majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds and a small minority of pupils have Asian heritage. A private facility runs in the school offering after-hours and holiday care for children.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Wheatlands Primary is an outstanding school that provides excellent value for money. There is outstanding work taking place in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), art and design as well as in the Foundation Stage. From an average starting point on entry to the Nursery, pupils achieve extremely well and consistently attain high results at age 11. This is because teaching is excellent and carefully tailored to meet pupils' learning needs. There is a very fast pace to learning as teachers include problem solving and collaborative tasks in their lessons, together with practical learning techniques such as drama. Pupils describe their learning as 'fun' and relish the challenges they are given. This is an inclusive school where pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are exceptionally well supported. Teachers and teaching assistants go to great lengths to ensure that they have the best in terms of equipment and expertise to cater for individual needs. Alongside this provision, specialist staff provide additional sessions for pupils who are not meeting the expected targets. As a result, learning is boosted and this is a major factor underpinning the high standards.

Another important factor behind the school's success is the quality of pupils' personal development which is outstanding. Relationships are excellent and built on mutual respect. The outstanding curriculum includes a very good emphasis on creative and physical activities and promotes the all-round development of the pupils exceptionally well. The school places a very strong emphasis on teaching about healthy living and provides extensive opportunities for pupils to experience responsibility. This prepares them very well for the next stage of education and their future lives. Parents express great confidence in the school. Understandably, they praise the high quality of teaching, the range of exciting activities on offer and the progress their children make. Parents' and pupils' views are valued and acted upon and excellent links with families, schools and outside agencies contribute a great deal to pupils' learning.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and is exceptionally well supported by the senior managers. Together with good governance, they lead a relentless drive for excellence, continually checking on the quality of provision and outcomes in terms of pupils' academic and personal development. Attention to safety issues, including checking on the suitability of staff and helpers, is meticulous. There is no complacency in this excellent school where staff have an accurate knowledge of strengths, and identify and act upon any issues very quickly. The considerable range of strengths reported at the time of the previous inspection is still evident and, because of continuous development work, it now excels in its purpose of educating children. There is excellent capacity for the school to maintain this outstanding record and to enjoy continued success in the face of challenges that may arise.

What the school should do to improve further

There are no significant areas for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding and puts the school in the top 10% in the country. Standards are very high in English, mathematics and science and pupils' attainment in ICT and art and design is well above that normally seen. Children's prior learning and experiences are around average when they enter the Nursery, although there are very wide variations. They make excellent progress during the Foundation Stage, especially in the development of personal, language and creative skills. By the end of the Reception year, their attainment is just above average overall, with excellent skills of independent working and communication. Those who entered at below average have caught up and some higher attaining pupils have progressed to working within the National Curriculum Year 1 work.

By the end of Year 2, standards are above average and well above for reading. By Year 6, pupils' attainment is very high. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, they are nearly a year ahead of what is expected. A slight dip in 2004 was due to fewer boys attaining the higher Level 5 in writing, although results were still high. The school acted on this quickly by introducing new teaching techniques. School records and inspection evidence show that boys progress at a faster rate than they do nationally. They are closing the gap on the girls. Pupils from all ethnic groups do equally well.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress equally well to their peers because teachers meet their needs very well, be they of a physical, emotional or learning nature. Special sessions help to boost the learning of pupils who are not meeting expected targets. This very effective safety net is one reason why the school has a relatively low number of pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and is able to maintain high standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Attendance rates are well above average and pupils say they love school. Behaviour is excellent and pupils have an exemplary sense of self-discipline. They take the 'Wheatland Promise' very seriously and acknowledge that being part of a community brings rights and responsibilities. Through their Eco council, pupils play an active role in the day to day running of the school and make their views heard. They are passionate about environmental issues; this is promoting their development as good citizens very effectively. A wide range of jobs around school are rotated so everyone has the chance to get involved; this helps to generate a feeling of community in school and to prepare pupils very well for future work.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social and cultural development is outstanding and the school is a harmonious community. Assemblies and strong links with local churches help to instil a sense of spirituality. Through the Creative Partnership project, pupils

enjoy stories, music and art from around the world, which supports their cultural development very well. They have an excellent awareness of how to keep safe and healthy and enjoy varied opportunities for sport and exercise. Many take advantage of the school's award winning 'walking bus' arrangements.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. For English and mathematics, pupils are taught in groups according to ability so, for those who can cope, there is an exacting pace to learning. Very stimulating tasks challenge pupils' thinking so that they develop a keen interest in learning. Gifted and talented pupils are stretched through work that enhances their research and study skills. Teachers often introduce 'games' into lessons that inject extra pace as pupils speed up their thinking and recall. In the Foundation Stage, excellent continuous assessment means that children are constantly given new challenges so their learning moves on at a fast pace.

Throughout school, information from the assessment procedures is used extremely well to challenge the more able and to provide support programmes where needed. Pupils benefit from the excellent range of expertise among staff. For example, communicators sign for the hearing impaired pupils and one teacher is trained to help those with specific reading and writing difficulties. The advanced skills teachers enhance the provision for mathematics and science by sharing their excellent practice. Teachers give very helpful feedback in lessons and through marking so that pupils are well informed about how they can improve. Parents are encouraged to be partners in the learning process so work done at home effectively extends learning beyond the school day. Teaching assistants provide very good support for pupils who need extra help so they are fully involved in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum, including enrichment activities, is outstanding and promotes excellent achievement. Subjects are often linked together so pupils have extensive opportunities to make use of their English and computer skills. Lessons offer a richness of practical and interesting experiences so pupils' different learning styles are catered for effectively. A particular strength is the promotion of thinking, teamwork and questioning skills across subject studies. Learners' needs are central to the planning process. For example, the 'wake and shake' sessions provide a refreshing break between lessons. The excellent curriculum in the Foundation Stage encourages children to explore and investigate and to follow their own interests. It makes very effective use of the outside areas.

Pupils enjoy an extremely wide range of additional activities that take their learning beyond the classroom and widen their horizons. For example, theatre and museum

visits form the basis of 'cultural weekends' and residential activity breaks extend physical skills. Themed weeks, such as those for writing or science, provide opportunities for pupils to engage in extended study or to follow their own lines of enquiry. Very good links with the secondary school and local college provide specialist teaching and resources, for example in ICT.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, support and guidance for pupils are seen as paramount and are outstanding. Governors and staff work hard to ensure that health and safety policies are in place and are followed systematically. There are very high expectations of behaviour, matched with an excellent system of awards to celebrate good conduct. Excellent relationships and the useful 'bother boxes' in classes mean that pupils can readily access help if they need it. Great care is taken to ensure that all pupils, regardless of disability, can have full access to all that is on offer. Arrangements to help new children to settle into school are excellent and pupils are very well prepared to move on to secondary education.

Excellent advice for pupils on how to improve their work, together with useful prompts and reminders in class, are very effective in helping them to achieve their targets. As part of the drive to develop independent learning, pupils are encouraged to set their own goals, based on the comments from teachers' marking. There are also valuable opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own and others' work. As a result, pupils are ambitious and contemplative learners.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher provides excellent leadership, which is based firmly on the pursuit of high achievement. Working in close partnership with the deputy headteacher and senior managers, she promotes excellent teamwork and a shared vision in school. The strength of the management team is illustrated by the fact that provision and standards have been maintained during recent changes to staffing and management. A very good programme for staff training ensures that all are well informed and able to take on new initiatives.

Through their excellent evaluation procedures, staff and governors have a clear idea of what needs to be done and have a detailed plan showing what actions are being introduced and planned for the coming years. The system of tracking pupils' performance and setting challenging targets for attainment is very effective and an essential factor behind the excellent achievement and very high standards. Pupils have the benefit of high quality resources because finances are well managed and 'Friends of the School' raise substantial extra funds. The learning environment is very stimulating, administration is highly effective and standards of maintenance and cleanliness are high. These factors reflect a shared sense of pride among all adults at the school.

The governors are a very strong, well-informed and highly supportive group. They work closely with the headteacher, staff, pupils and parents in decision making. They have plans to extend their monitoring role further by forging stronger links with subject managers.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
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

Wheatlands Primary School

Hundale Crescent

Redcar

TS10 2PU

15 November 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for the warm welcome and for helping me when I came to visit your school. I would like to tell you what I found out.

Wheatlands Primary is a very friendly school. You told me that it is excellent, and I agree! Your behaviour is excellent and you take really good care of each other. You thoroughly enjoy your learning and love the wide variety of extra activities, visits and visitors that your teachers organise. I was impressed with the high standards of work in school and the excellent progress that you make from Nursery to Year 6.

You are taking very good advantage of the excellent teaching in your school and you work hard. Very well done-keep it up! I really enjoyed talking to members of the Eco council and seeing all the work you are doing to re-cycle and save energy and water. I'm sure that all the plants and beasts in the garden are very grateful for the way you ensure that they have a good environment to live in. It's very comforting to know that people like you are taking the time and the effort to care for our planet.

Your headteacher and staff work very hard to make sure you are happy and safe. You have excellent relationships with your teachers and I think that encourages you to try hard. Please thank your parents for sending us lots of replies to the questionnaire. They are very pleased with the school and have hardly any criticisms to make.

Thank you once again for the interesting conversations I had and for letting me know your views so clearly. There is a great deal about your exciting school of which you and the staff should be proud. Please accept my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs L Read

(Lead inspector)