

Acre Rigg Infant School

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 114154 |
| Local Authority | Durham |
| Inspection number | 289818 |
| Inspection dates | 27–28 March 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Margaret Shepherd |

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

| | |
|---|--|
| Type of school | Infant |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 171 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | |
| Headteacher | Mrs Lynne Laws |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 April 2002 |
| School address | Acre Rigg Road Peterlee County Durham SR8 2DU |
| Telephone number | 0191 5864437 |
| Fax number | 0191 5865300 |

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Age group | 3–7 |
| Inspection dates | 27–28 March 2007 |
| Inspection number | 289818 |

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves an area of lower social and economic circumstances than usual. The pupil population is relatively stable and comes almost entirely from White British families. The great majority of children join the school in the Nursery and attend on a part-time basis. The school is running a pilot programme for two-year-olds who learn with the Nursery children and have their own members of staff. Standards on entry are below average, with a high proportion of children having speech and language and/or behavioural disabilities. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. The headteacher works very effectively with the well established staff to provide an education that extends pupils' academic and personal development. Children make an excellent start in the Nursery where their achievement is outstanding. Learning difficulties are quickly identified and individual support provided. This support is particularly good for the high proportion of children with speech, language and/or behavioural disabilities. The excellent start that children make in the Nursery is consolidated well in Reception and in the infant classes.

The school provides a stimulating curriculum with a strong emphasis on basic skills. These features help to promote consistently good achievement throughout the school with outstanding achievement in writing. Standards are generally above average in reading and mathematics, and consistently above average in writing, by the end of Year 2. The outstanding achievement in writing is due to the school's emphasis on the systematic development of pupils' technical literacy skills as they move through the school.

Pupils love coming to school. They thoroughly enjoy their learning and develop confidence in their own abilities. A parent wrote of her son, 'He seems to bring his happiness from school home with him.' The high levels of enjoyment are a result of good care, support and guidance and good teaching and learning. Teams of teachers work very effectively to provide lively and interesting activities. Pupils have a good understanding of safe and healthy living and appreciate their part in contributing to the school and local community. Attendance rates are broadly average. Pupils are well prepared for their future lives and have good basic skills. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils have an excellent understanding of right and wrong and their behaviour is outstanding.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a clear vision of how she wants the school to develop, which the staff wholeheartedly support. There is a strong emphasis on supporting individual pupils, assessing their progress carefully and ensuring that they get the support they need. Parents appreciate the very strong partnership that the school creates with them. Governance is satisfactory. Several new governors have recently been appointed and the governing body is now in a good position to play a more effective part in the life of the school. The school uses its resources very carefully and provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the role of the governing body to involve more formal monitoring of the school's work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Standards are generally above average by the time pupils leave the school. The school uses well-organised systems to ensure that pupils progress well as they move through the school.

Children make an excellent start in the Nursery where their progress is exceptional. Individual's needs are identified very early on and provide the basis for carefully targeted additional support for each child. The Reception classes build systematically on this excellent start and by the time children reach the end of these classes many have reached the expected level for their age.

Although good progress is made in communication, language and literacy, and personal development, by the end of Reception the low standards in these areas pupils had on entry to the school, although improved, remain below average.

Standards at the end of Year 2 have generally been above average over time. In 2006 standards fell due to a larger proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in this year group. The inspection evidence indicates that standards have risen again. Standards in writing have been consistently above average over time and achievement is outstanding. This is due to the high priority given to the development of basic writing skills and the many interesting and stimulating practical experiences provided for pupils to write about.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. The assessment systems for these pupils are rigorous. The school acts quickly to respond to their different rates of progress and gives them well targeted support. Boys and girls generally achieve equally well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good with outstanding features. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a clear understanding of other cultures. They have an excellent knowledge of right and wrong and their behaviour is outstanding. They are respectful to each other and to adults. Most pupils know it is best to be fit and healthy and they are keen to take part in the whole school daily exercises. Attendance rates are broadly average. Pupils say that they feel safe and that they are confident to turn to adults if they are troubled. They thoroughly enjoy coming to school and respond enthusiastically to the interesting opportunities the school provides. They have very positive attitudes towards their work and settle quickly to complete their tasks. Pupils respond well to opportunities for taking responsibility within the school community. They are proud to be school councillors and expect their views to be taken into account. They enjoy going out into the community to represent the school. Pupils are well prepared for their future lives because they have a very good grounding in basic skills and develop good levels of self-confidence.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good with outstanding features in each of the age groups. Teams of teachers work very well together to ensure that the work set is matched to pupils' particular needs. A high priority is given to the development of basic skills and this contributes very well to the good progress pupils make throughout the school. In the outstanding lessons teachers make activities great fun and pupils thoroughly enjoy rising to the challenges that teachers set. For example, pupils added up two numbers in a trice in order to beat the time the sand took to run through the egg timer. Teachers manage behaviour very effectively and lessons are calm and well ordered occasions. In some lessons teachers spend too much time talking in the whole-class sessions and do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to speak or ask questions. Staff use assessment systems well to make sure that pupils' progress is tracked carefully and to match the learning closely to individual needs. The group target-setting works well and the school is in a good position to extend pupils' understanding of their own learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum supports pupils well. The school rightly places a high priority on English and mathematics, which bears fruit in pupils' good achievement in these subjects. The curriculum for writing is extremely thorough and pupils gain great confidence in basic skills as a result of the careful sequences of work running through the school. The curriculum for mixed age classes is very good and ensures that pupils have programmes of work that support their different learning needs. There is a very strong curriculum for personal development, which results in pupils gaining great confidence in their own abilities. Several pupils were heard to say, 'I've done really well haven't I?' The school provides many opportunities for pupils to enrich their learning, ranging from visitors into the school such as Indian dancers, to visits out of school, for example to a local farm. The Nursery curriculum is outstanding. It provides an excellent balance between working with adults and learning independently, both indoors and outdoors. Although the Reception classes use the outdoor Nursery facilities on a timetabled basis, they are unable to move directly between indoor and outdoor learning because they do not have direct access to an outdoor area from their classrooms.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, support and guidance are good. Teachers and other adults know individual pupils very well and use this knowledge to ensure sensitive personal support. Effective safeguarding systems are in place. The school has an excellent partnership with parents and works hard to involve them in extending their children's learning and promoting regular attendance. The extremely well organised toy library and the sensitive support of the family worker are both very successful in promoting this partnership. The scheme for the two-year-olds in the Nursery is working well and ensures that these children are very well prepared for their Nursery education.

Guidance and support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and vulnerable pupils are good. The school makes very good use of external specialists, particularly speech therapists. Good quality guidance is given to pupils to extend their academic progress. The whole-school organisation of group targets is based firmly on basic skills. Staff use these targets consistently and successfully in lessons to support and further pupils' achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a very clear vision of how she wants the school to improve. She uses her in-depth knowledge of the school and its community to make sure that she builds on the existing strengths of the school, whilst refining and extending systems to make the provision even better. She values every single member of the school team, and the staff have great confidence in her leadership. Monitoring systems are effective and the deployment of resources is good. Self-evaluation systems are accurate and the school knows itself well. There is good capacity to improve further, building on the good improvement made since the previous inspection. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are effectively coordinated. Governance is satisfactory. There is now a full governing body which is in a good position to further extend its monitoring of the work of the school.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

| | |
|--|-----------------------|
| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | School Overall |
|--|-----------------------|

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? | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| 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 | 2 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |

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.

Annex A

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 | 2 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 2 |
| 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

29 March 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Acre Rigg Infant School, County Durham, SR8 2DU

Thank you for being so welcoming to us when we came to your school. You were all so friendly and helpful in answering our questions. You all helped us to get to know your school really quickly.

We were very impressed with your behaviour, which is excellent. You try really hard to improve your work and we saw that you thoroughly enjoyed your lessons. You have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy and we thought that your school council worked really well. Your hard work helps you to make good progress in your reading and mathematics and we were really impressed with your writing. Your handwriting and spelling gets better and better as you move through the school and you write really interesting stories. We think that all your teachers and assistants work really well together and that you have lots of interesting visits out of school and visits into school. We were sorry that we missed the Indian dancers on Monday, but we saw how much you learnt about them by talking to you and looking at your paintings. We think that your headteacher works really well to make your school an even better place to be. You can help by making sure you are at school every day.

You have some new governors who have joined your school and we have asked them to find out more about what you are all doing in school. We are sure that you will enjoy talking to them about your work.

Yours sincerely,

Maggi Shepherd and Derek Sleightholme

Additional Inspectors