

Nord Anglia Inspections
Anglia House
Carrs Road
Cheadle
Stockport SK8 2LA

T 0161 491 4191
F 0161 491 9677

Ofsted helpline
08456 404045



14th December 2006

Mrs K. Reilly
Headteacher
Riverdale Primary School
Hambleton Avenue
Redcar
TS10 4HH

Dear Mrs Reilly,

OFSTED MONITORING OF SCHOOLS WHOSE OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS HAS BEEN JUDGED SATISFACTORY

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I visited your school on 13th December 2006, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my particular thanks to those children and staff who met with me and to the Chair of Governors and the local authority adviser, for the time they gave.

As a result of the inspection on 22nd November 2005 the school was asked to:

- Set up and use systems for checking and improving the school's performance so as to make teaching, the curriculum and pupils' progress consistently good.
- Raise children's achievement in writing by teaching them all the basic writing skills and giving more opportunities to write in a wider range of demanding situations.
- Improve the curriculum to ensure that key skills for learning are taught more effectively in relation to pupils' different needs.

The headteacher has a clear agenda for improvement set out in action plans based on the areas identified for improvement following the previous inspection. The journey of improvement has been systematic and measured. She has successfully built a positive team approach to improvement. There is currently a growing confidence among staff and a readiness to take on more responsibility for the progress of their pupils' and the quality of provision.

Systems for checking and improving the school's performance are improving. Currently these are mostly carried out by the headteacher. The school is

aware of the need to develop a broader and more systematic approach to monitoring and evaluation that will involve senior staff and subject leaders and tie in to a school improvement plan. This is a focus for the headteacher's work with the school adviser for next term.

Systems to assess, record and track pupils' progress are now more rigorous. New systems for assessing progress in writing have been trialled this term. Staff are gaining confidence in these systems and they will be fully implemented across the school from next term. Assessment information is increasingly used by teachers to plan work to match pupils' different needs and to set individual targets for pupils in writing, reading and mathematics. Pupils find these targets very helpful.

The headteacher has a secure knowledge of the quality of work in lessons through carrying out frequent short, supportive visits to classrooms that have a clear focus relating to areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. These have been effective in helping to bring about improvements, for example, in the quality of the learning environment. The visits and their outcomes are not necessarily recorded formally.

Good progress has been made in providing more opportunities for pupils to write in a wider range of demanding situations and there is evidence of improvements in the quality of writing. It is too soon however for these improvements to be reflected in the results gained in the national tests. A new approach to teaching and learning basic skills introduced this term has led to writing being taught within a clear context, often related to learning in another subject. Writing is now the outcome of exciting experiences for pupils. The use of drama helps pupils to write more easily enabling them to empathise, for example, with what life was like for children in Victorian times.

The very recent introduction of 'Vision 20/20', a carefully structured programme for developing writing, is ensuring that teaching and learning is well focused on improving writing skills alongside writing for real purpose and from direct experiences.

A thorough curriculum review was carried out in the summer term. Pupils' emotional and social development is now tackled more thoroughly through the recent introduction of a programme of personal development for each class. Improved planning for lessons is giving a sharper focus on developing the key skills of communication, working with others, problem solving, self-evaluation, numeracy and information and communication technology. Basic skills are learned through more exciting contexts that arise from pupils' direct experiences of events, visits, visitors or drama. Consequently, learning in lessons is now more meaningful to pupils. The paired planning introduced this term, where two teachers jointly plan for two year groups, has led to a developing confidence in the ability to provide excitement and challenge in learning. Much of this work is in the early stages of development and its effective on pupils' progress has yet fully evident.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Salter-Smith
Additional Inspector