



Rockcliffe First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108583
Local Authority North Tyneside
Inspection number 300553
Inspection dates 13–14 February 2007
Reporting inspector Margaret Shepherd

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

The inspection of the day care was carried out under Children Act 1989: Part XA (as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000) and, where (funded) nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Type of school	First	School address	Grafton Road
School category	Community		Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear
Age range of pupils	3–9		NE26 2NR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 2008799
Number on roll (school)	209	Fax number	0191 200 1489
Number on roll (day care)	16		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Elizabeth Hawksworth
		Headteacher	Mrs Sharron Colpitts-Elliott
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2003		
Date of previous day care inspection	1 January 1900		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–9	13–14 February 2007	300553

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves an area with a wide range of different social and economic circumstances, including short term bed and breakfast accommodation. Children often arrive without prior notification and spend varying amounts of time in the school. Both the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and those with learning difficulties and disabilities are above average. Four per cent of pupils have English as an additional language who are mainly of Bangladeshi nationality. Not all children move through to Reception from Nursery and several children join Reception from other types of child care provision. The school provides a breakfast club and an after school club.

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. Parents really appreciate its provision. Children make an excellent start in the Nursery as a result of the outstanding teaching and curriculum. By the time they leave Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception), standards are in line with the national average. Given that some pupils leave at the end of Nursery and others join at the start of Reception, this represents good progress overall. Pupils build well on this beginning and make consistently good progress through the rest of the school. This is due to the good quality teaching and learning, a well-balanced curriculum and extremely strong partnerships with specialists from the locality and region. There is a very high priority on equality of opportunity; this results in all pupils achieving well and standards that are above average. Standards in the imaginative aspects of writing are particularly high but handwriting and presentation standards are inconsistent. The sensitive support of teaching assistants is a key factor in the good progress of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Staff are very aware of the needs of pupils with English as an additional language and they ensure that these pupils gain confidence in their learning, resulting in good achievement.

The whole school team is committed to supporting pupils' personal development. This results in pupils having a good understanding of safe and healthy living. Behaviour is good and pupils contribute well to the school community. Older pupils thoroughly enjoy looking after younger children. The Creative Partnership initiatives provide excellent opportunities for developing spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is outstanding. Rates of attendance have improved over time but are below average. Pupils are well prepared for their future lives, particularly in the acquisition of the majority of basic skills and in learning to work together in teams. Pupils have excellent attitudes towards their learning and settle very quickly to their work. These attitudes stem in part from the praise that teachers' feedback to pupils and also from the very interesting activities that are evident throughout the school in lessons. In contrast, opportunities for providing good quality feedback in teachers' marking vary between classes. The sensitive support that staff give to pupils when they join the school unexpectedly ensures that they settle into their classes quickly and make good progress.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher sets a clear educational direction for the work of the school and ensures that staff work as a team to improve provision and raise standards. The senior leadership team manage key initiatives well and coordinators lead their subjects effectively. Governors have a very good understanding of the school's work. Self-evaluation is a shared process and works well. The shared vision of the school's staff has resulted in good improvement since the previous inspection and a good capacity for future improvement. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve rates of attendance.

- Raise standards in handwriting and presentation.
- Make the quality of marking more consistent across all classes.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are above average. Achievement across the Foundation Stage is good. Children enter the Nursery with standards that are lower than typically found at this age. They make outstanding progress due to the very high quality provision in this class. Owing to high mobility, not all children in Reception benefit from the high quality of Nursery, so standards at the end of Reception are at the expected level. A particular strength is the higher than expected personal, social and emotional skills.

All pupils continue to make good progress through the rest of the school. National assessments show that by the end of Year 2 standards are above average. Standards rose in 2006 partly because attainment on entry was higher and partly because of improvements in basic skills brought about by the Creative Partnership initiative. Standards in mathematics were well above average with more than half of the class reaching a higher level than expected for their age. By the end of Year 4, standards are above average across more subjects, such as art and design and pupils progress well. Standards in imaginative writing are particularly high but handwriting and presentation standards vary across classes.

Good analysis of pupils' achievements results in the good progress of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, those learning English as an additional language and the ones who join the school for short periods. All groups of pupils reach standards in the national tests that are higher than the national average for the group, including boys. Boys' achievement is not as high as girls and the school has recently introduced a range of strategies to increase their progress further. It is too early to judge the outcomes of these.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good with some outstanding features, such as their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A particular strength is pupils' knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity brought about by the wonderful range of cultural experiences offered. Pupils show great sensitivity within lessons. For example, they use subtle language in poetry, such as describing a river as, 'evolving to the sea, raging, hungry, deadly...the river!' Behaviour is good and pupils work confidently together in different groups and pairs, appreciating each other's efforts. Pupils have a good understanding of safe and healthy living. They contribute well to the school community and older pupils thoroughly enjoy taking responsibility for looking after the youngest children. Attendance rates are rising but are still below average. Pupils are well prepared for their future lives, particularly in their development

of the majority of basic skills and in working in teams to achieve a common purpose. They have excellent attitudes towards their learning and thoroughly enjoy lessons, particularly when they are engaged in practical activities, such as videoing their classmates performing poems or creating the school sensory garden.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good with outstanding features. Teachers work very well with the teaching assistants and the additional adults. This promotes the good achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Teachers use the interactive whiteboards confidently and well; for instance, in mathematics where standards are high. Their use helps to sustain the pace in whole class sessions and support pupils' learning, particularly for those with English as an additional language. Greater opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology, is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils' learning from their use of video cameras is particularly good and they thoroughly enjoy recording their classmates in action. Teachers give pupils good quality spoken feedback in lessons but the quality of marking of their written work varies across classes. Teaching and learning in the Nursery is outstanding. The organisation for independent learning is very high quality and the teaching in the whole group sessions is extremely well-focused and challenging.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with outstanding features. The provision for personal, social and emotional development is good and contributes superbly to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The Creative Partnership project has improved pupils' achievement and basic skills. Throughout the school, teachers enrich the curriculum with an extremely wide range of very stimulating learning opportunities for pupils. The projects are packed with a rich range of opportunities, from the highly visual impact of the real space rocket brought to school, to African drumming and Salsa dancing and the construction of the sensory garden. Projects related to eco-friendly issues work well and give pupils a very good understanding of issues such as saving water and electricity. The curriculum is well balanced, although there is not enough emphasis on the development of handwriting and presentation skills. The Nursery curriculum is excellent and follows the interests of the children extremely effectively, resulting in outstanding achievement.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, support and guidance are good. The staff work very effectively together as a team and understand individual needs very well. The school shows great sensitivity

towards pupils who join the school suddenly. There are some very good strategies for ensuring that these pupils settle quickly into their new classes, such as the effective use of 'buddies'. Pupils with additional learning needs are very well supported by really strong partnerships with external specialists. Safeguarding systems are in place. Pupils receive very effective guidance for their personal development. The school has worked hard to extend the quality of their academic guidance and are aware of and are addressing some inconsistencies between different classes and subjects.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher sets a clear educational direction for the work of the school. She analyses data carefully to identify trends and then manages changes well to increase achievement. The senior leadership team work very well together. The new strategy of teams monitoring teaching and learning is working well. Subject coordinators all make an important contribution to the work of the school. Governors show a very good understanding of the school and work closely with senior leaders and monitor provision conscientiously. There is a clear commitment across the school to improve provision. For example, the school has introduced a range of strategies to increase boys' achievement further. The school is now in a good position to evaluate the impact of these strategies. The promotion of equal opportunities is excellent and results in all groups of pupils achieving well.

Effectiveness of registered day care

Grade: 2

Child care at Rockcliffe First School out of school club is good. Parents are pleased with the quality of care in this recently developed provision. Such is the children's enjoyment that many are reluctant to leave at the end of the session.

The staff are vigilant regarding attention to cleanliness when preparing snacks and share their good practice with the children so that they, too, develop an understanding of the importance of good hygiene. Children appreciate the food that is carefully prepared for them and select items of fruit and raw vegetables from the bowls provided around the room throughout the session. This warm and inviting provision has its primary base in a room that reflects the comforts of home. Couches, small tables and a modern kitchen area set the scene. There are areas for creative activities and games. Staff give children a good balance of activities. In some, they work and play with independence whilst others are led by adults who often help develop their practical skills. However, children who need to take a sleep must do so as the other activities go on all around them. Good procedures are in place to protect children. The staff are friendly and approachable helping children to feel secure whilst enjoying their work and play. Boys and girls, older and younger, mix well during activities and at snack times, aiding their personal development. On several occasions, older children were observed helping and befriending younger members of the club. Adults talk with the

children and listen to what they have to say. They value children's contributions and give them opportunities to develop a sense of ownership of the provision. For example, pupils designed and produced the club's logo, a silk wall hanging and some soft furnishings. The manager and staff are experienced and well qualified for their roles. They value opportunities for further training and are keen to take advice towards further improvement of the provision. Staff are available for discussions with parents and carers and have produced a guidance brochure. However, this does not include full information on making complaints.

Since registration, there have been no complaints about the registered day care that required Ofsted or the school to take action so that the day care continued to meet the National Standards. The school is required to keep a record of complaints about the registered day care made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints about the registered day care other than those made to Ofsted.

Recommendations or actions to improve the registered day care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take into account the following recommendations:

- provide a discrete area or planned time in which children can rest and/or sleep with some privacy
- include full details of the complaints procedure for parents in the brochure so that they have the contact information for Ofsted without having to take it from within the setting.

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.

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	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	1
The behaviour of learners	2
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.

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	2
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

The effectiveness of the registered day care

The quality and standards of the registered day care	2
How effective is the day care in helping children to be healthy?	2
How effective is the day care in protecting children and helping them to stay safe?	2
How effective is the day care in helping children to achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
How effective is the day care in helping children to make a positive contribution?	2
How effectively is the day care organised?	2
Does the day care meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides?	Yes
Has the day care improved since the last inspection?	No
Does the day care require enforcement action?	NA
Does the day care require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Rockcliffe First School

Grafton Road

Whitley Bay

Tyne and Wear

NE26 2NR

15 February 2007

Dear Pupils

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.

We were really impressed with how much you enjoy learning, particularly the very exciting activities that your teachers organise for you. There are so many interesting ways that you find out about new things and learn new skills. You obviously thoroughly enjoyed learning about the real life rocket that arrived in your playground and videoing each other when you performed poems or made your sensory garden. We think that you respond very sensitively to things in your school, like writing poems about rivers and you have lots of opportunities to find out about how other people live and what they like to do. We thought that you behaved well and that the older pupils really looked after the younger pupils carefully. We were very impressed with how well the very youngest children who go to the Nursery are learning. You all work hard and that means that you reach better standards than are expected for your ages. Your teachers all use the interactive whiteboards really well to help you to understand new things. All the staff work hard to look after you and they know what is special about each one of you.

Your headteacher, teachers, staff and governors all work well together to try to keep making your school a better place. You can help them by trying harder to make your handwriting neat and tidy, and by making sure that every single one of you makes sure that you come to school every day. Your teachers are going to write more in your books to let you know how you can improve your work. We are sure that you will read what they have written carefully and think about it when you do your work in future.

We really enjoyed our visit to your school and we hope that you all do your best in future to make it an even better place to learn.

Yours sincerely

Maggi Shepherd and Geoffrey Watson

Additional Inspectors