

Richard Lee Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103693
Local Authority	Coventry
Inspection number	308391
Inspection dates	9–10 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Ruth Westbrook

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	489
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bryan Davies
Headteacher	Nicola Harwood
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2003
School address	The Drive Wyken Coventry CV2 5FU
Telephone number	024 76450023
Fax number	024 76650603

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large school with a Nursery class that offers part-time places. The school has been re-organised recently from three to two forms of entry. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is average, although recently, the number in the early stages of learning English has increased. More pupils than average join or leave the school other than at the normal times, and the school consistently loses and gains the equivalent of a class of pupils each year. The school received the Healthy Schools award in 2007. After a term without a permanent headteacher, the current headteacher took up her post in January 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. In the last two years there has been an unsettled period, with changes of leadership and some staff shortages. This has contributed to a decline in standards over that time. Since her arrival, the headteacher has provided good leadership. She has a clear view of how the school should move forward and has shared this with the school community and governors. Monitoring has identified inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning as a key contributor to the decline in standards. There are inconsistencies in the effectiveness of marking and in the quality of planning for the needs of different groups in the class. Already, a number of strategies are improving teaching and learning, which are satisfactory. This is leading to improved standards. In the Foundation Stage and Year 1, for example, a new approach to teaching letters and sounds adopted this year is improving standards in reading and pupils are making good progress. The majority of parents are entirely positive in their evaluation of the school's work. A small number comment rightly on the negative impact on their child's progress of recent staffing difficulties. However, parents are clearly confident about the direction in which the school is going. As one parent put it, 'Exciting times lie ahead under the new leadership.'

In the Foundation Stage, children's achievement has improved this year and is good. They have reached above average standards in most aspects of their learning, although their creative development is a little lower. In Years 1 to 6, achievement is satisfactory and standards are average. However, there are some general weaknesses in pupils' development of investigative skills in science and some able pupils do not always make as much progress as other groups of pupils. The school is addressing these matters.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. Under effective senior leadership, the school is demonstrating sound capacity to improve. The school's evaluation of its work is accurate and gives a firm foundation to its improvement plans. Considerable progress has been made already and there are clear indications of its future direction. There is a strong determination to tackle the weaker areas of the school's work. There are inconsistencies in the quality of leadership given by some subject leaders. These are being addressed and a clear sense of purpose exists amongst staff and governors to move the school forward.

The curriculum is satisfactory, but its strength is in the well-planned programme to promote healthy and safe lifestyles. This, combined with good pastoral care for pupils, results in pupils' good personal development and well-being. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall because systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are in place but not fully developed. Teachers are beginning to use information from the new tracking system to set targets for individual pupils and groups more effectively. These targets are more challenging than previously and teachers share their higher expectations of what can be achieved with pupils regularly.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with a wide range of abilities but generally are at the level expected for their age. They make good progress, with most children reaching the expected levels by the end of the Foundation Stage. This year, most children are exceeding the expected levels. Because of a focus this year, children have improved their knowledge of sounds and letters. For example, they are beginning to write short sentences to describe their observations of the

different stages of growth of a seed following a planting activity. The warm and positive interaction between staff and children makes learning fun and enjoyable. Children behave well and work positively, both independently and in groups. They make effective use of the recently refurbished outdoor provision to undertake enjoyable, wet play sessions. Children have good access to activities and resources and are encouraged to make appropriate choices. The capable leadership and management of the Foundation Stage and the assistance of a committed team ensure the children's safety and well-being. Leaders have rightly identified the need to improve opportunities for creative development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teaching, particularly in marking and planning to meet the needs of all groups of pupils in the class.
- Develop those middle leaders who lack the skills to monitor, evaluate and plan to raise standards in the subject they coordinate.
- Plan more opportunities for pupils to develop their investigative skills in science.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' uneven progress overall from Year 1 resulted in below average standards in the 2007 national tests in both Year 2 and Year 6. Current evidence indicates that Year 6 pupils have reached broadly average standards in both English and mathematics this year. There has been a small amount of underachievement in other years in classes affected by staffing difficulties, which the school recognises and has made clear plans to address. All groups of pupils make satisfactory progress by the end of Year 6, but the school rightly identifies the progress of able pupils as less secure than other groups. Investigative skills are developed insufficiently which has resulted in lower standards in science.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because of some effective strategies and the good support they receive from teaching assistants. A programme of intervention has raised the attainment of a targeted group of Year 6 pupils in mathematics, highlighting the success of the first of a series of initiatives designed to raise standards. The school is now setting more challenging targets, which represent good progress, but pupils' performance is still falling a little short of reaching them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are warm and friendly. They are helpful to visitors and to each other. These qualities, coupled with improving standards in basic skills, contribute satisfactorily towards preparing the pupils for the next stage of their education. They welcome opportunities to give service to their school in a number of ways. The school council has been active over a number of years and pupils have improved the environment and play facilities in the playground, for example. One pupil proudly described her contribution as a helper to a pupil in Year 2. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy life. They are active at break times and take advantage of the many activities that are available. They clearly enjoy coming to school because

of the opportunities to work together with friends. Attendance is average and improving. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. It has improved this year, as pupils have been involved in developing class rules and reward systems. Pupils say they feel safe in school and have confidence in adults and others to help with problems. Incidents of racism and bullying are rare, but when they do occur, pupils are confident that they are managed appropriately.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but an increasing amount is good. Some staff shortages have slowed pupils' progress in the past. Teachers have good relationships with pupils, motivating them to behave and try their best. Lessons have clear objectives to help pupils make progress with their learning. Planning increasingly takes account of pupils' differing abilities, including those of the most able pupils where teachers' expectations in the past have been set too low. However, there are still some inconsistencies in this. Initiatives, such as a week's focus on investigations, have helped pupils' mathematical development. Teaching assistants are effective in supporting pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities so that they make satisfactory progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Personal, social and health education is planned carefully across all years and classes. As a result, its impact on pupils' social and moral development through the promotion of safe and healthy lifestyles is good. Links with secondary school partners enhance this programme by providing sports coaching and swimming. A good range of extra-curricular activities promotes many sporting and cultural activities. A number of themed days and weeks enrich the curriculum and contribute to sound spiritual and cultural development. Pupils benefited from a recent Arts Week by learning about American Indians. Staff share their enthusiasms with pupils through the gardening club or Asian dance. There are suitable plans in place for next year to provide further opportunities to develop creative and investigative skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Strong pastoral support has a positive impact on pupils' personal development. The well-established transitional arrangements help new pupils to settle into the school. Staff are committed to creating a safe and happy place for pupils. Pupils know that they can approach adults in the school to help solve problems and that they will be listened to. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous. The school liaises well with outside agencies to address the needs of vulnerable pupils. Effective intervention programmes this year for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have enabled them to make satisfactory progress. Additional support for those at an early stage of learning English has been effective and some pupils have made good gains in external tests. Systems to track pupils' progress are beginning to be used more effectively by middle leaders and teachers to identify those who require additional support. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, often giving positive comments. However, practice is inconsistent and some pupils do not always get a clear view of what they need to do to improve.

Effective procedures to monitor absence have led to improved attendance and a decrease in persistent absence.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has provided a clear sense of direction to the staff as a whole. All staff and governors have been fully involved in developing a vision for the school's future and appropriate plans are in place to achieve this. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's work has been more systematic in the last year and is beginning to influence planning directly. Systems to track progress and the analysis of data have improved considerably and senior leaders are now able to pinpoint where improvements have been effective and where further work is required. Senior leaders monitor the performance of teachers effectively and have a clear understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. They are beginning to train middle leaders to perform a similar function. The variability in the skills of middle leaders has not been addressed until recently and has contributed to a lack of achievement in some areas. The school has developed its links with external partners over the last year, particularly the local authority. This partnership is making an effective contribution to improved standards. Governors are contributing soundly to the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work. They are playing a more active part in holding the school to account.

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Annex A

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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

11 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Richard Lee Primary School, Coventry, CV2 5FU

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us on our recent visit to your school. We think it is a satisfactory school and that it is improving. We would like to share with you what we learned.

- You make satisfactory progress in your work and reach average standards.
- You are taught satisfactorily. You enjoy the activities and interesting lessons that are available to you.
- The headteacher is working hard with other staff to improve what is happening in the school. This is helping you to make better progress in your work.
- All staff care for you well and encourage you to do your best. As a result, you feel safe in school and there is always someone there to help you if you need it.
- You have learnt a great deal about how to be healthy and stay safe and it was good to see you putting this in to practice at break and lunch times. A large number of you take advantage of the after-school clubs to help you stay fit.
- You look after each other well and enjoy the opportunities you have to help and give service to others. Your school council has achieved a great deal with your help to make the school a better place.
- Most of you behave well. You are friendly and welcoming to visitors.

We are asking your headteacher and governors to make sure that the work you are given is matched carefully to your ability because we think some of you could do harder work. We want staff to make sure that you have more opportunities to investigate in your science lessons. We are also asking them to help some subject leaders to check more carefully on the progress you are making in the subject and plan to help you to make better progress. I hope you will do your best to help them put these plans in place and make your school an even better place.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Westbrook Lead inspector