

Reid Street Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114178
Local Authority	Darlington
Inspection number	311508
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Derek Sleightholme

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	426
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs C Saunders
Headteacher	Mr P Rhatigan
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2004
School address	Reid Street Darlington County Durham DL3 6EX
Telephone number	01325 251006
Fax number	01325 251005

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large school. Most pupils are White British with a few whose first language is not English. The percentage of pupils eligible for a free school meal is average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below 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. It has some outstanding features. 'All of the changes have been for the better', is a typical comment that reflects most parents' high regard for the school. The headteacher works with staff, many of whom are new to the school, and governors to set clear priorities for the school's development. This collaboration has resulted in good improvement since the previous inspection, especially in teaching, standards, pupils' progress and its facilities.

Pupils love school and they are eager to show visitors around. They are excited about learning especially when they do practical tasks. They feel safe. Their exceptional understanding of the value of exercise and a good diet has helped the school secure a national award. Pupils form good relationships, enjoy taking responsibility and behave well. They support the school well through acting as councillors and buddies. They reflect deeply on the lives of others by supporting good causes and national charities. Their attendance is satisfactory.

Achievement is good. All pupils achieve equally well. Standards have risen and are above average by the end of Year 6. This is because teaching is good and pupils' progress is tracked rigorously. Teachers' expectations are high and lesson content is closely matched to abilities. Dialogue with pupils includes praise for success and encouragement to do well. Challenging targets are communicated clearly and adjusted appropriately. School leaders have a firm steer on raising achievement and promoting pupils' good personal development. Securing the 'Basic Skills Quality Mark' is recognition that pupils are preparing well for their future lives.

The good curriculum incorporates an outstanding range of enrichment programmes, including sports partnerships, visits and visiting specialists. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to appreciate the diversity of modern Britain. Care, guidance and support for pupils are outstanding. There are exemplary practices within the day-to-day operation of the school that demonstrate high levels of organisation and supervision.

Leadership and governance are good. Self-evaluation is mostly accurate although there is not enough involvement by all senior leaders in monitoring and evaluating the school's work. Even so, there is a strong sense of teamwork and desire for further success. The school provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision is good with some outstanding aspects. Children start school with abilities that are below what is typical for their age especially in language and mathematical skills. Their personal skills are as expected for their age. Children make good progress and, by the end of the Reception year, most reach the goals expected of five year olds, but not all manage to do so. Good teaching ensures that children are confident, happy learners who enjoy the range of exciting activities and make good progress. There is a good balance between activities led by adults and those that children choose independently. The leadership is excellent. For example, the restructuring of the Reception classes into a Foundation Stage Unit to meet the needs of the under fives is a significant strength. The overall quality of the learning environment is excellent, highly imaginative and interesting, especially outdoors. The staff work well as a team and provide a high standard of care. The quality of assessment, especially through discussions with children, is outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the monitoring and evaluating roles of senior leaders.
- Promote pupils' understanding of the diversity of culture in modern Britain.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement throughout the school is good. Boys and girls, more able pupils, those with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language make similarly good progress. From Year 1 to Year 6 pupils make good progress. Standards by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics are average and by the end of Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science.

Since 2005, standards at the end of Year 6 have been rising. In 2007, the results of national tests were above average in English, mathematics and science. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher levels was above average in all three subjects. There are several reasons for this improvement in results. These include the school leaders' unwavering focus on raising standards. They have introduced much more rigorous tracking of pupils' progress so that staff are clearer about the needs of their pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development is good, as is pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Some aspects are outstanding, although attendance is average.

Pupils respond well in assemblies, they reflect carefully on issues raised and offer opinions thoughtfully. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe and avoid danger. They value school friendship and the contribution of playground 'buddies'. They are well mannered, courteous and helpful. Behaviour is good.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of being fit and healthy. They start the day by energetically taking part in brisk, rhythmical movement sessions. Through their considerable efforts the school has gained accreditations as a 'Healthy School'. Pupils love school and show high levels of enjoyment. Year 5 pupils were thrilled, for example, to try new painting and crayon techniques when producing work for an arts festival. Their enthusiasm for sport shows in the popularity of extra-curricular clubs that are regularly oversubscribed.

Pupils' contribution to the school and wider community is good. Pupils have a 'voice' in school improvement through the work of councillors and their contribution to charitable fund-raising is commendable. However, pupils do not have enough scope to appreciate the richness and diversity of modern British society. Pupils prepare well for their future lives by supporting the day-to-day organisation of the school in practical ways. Some run a school fruit shop, others learn good organisation skills by managing playground games equipment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and occasionally outstanding. Teachers use imaginative methods, such as role-play and media clips, to engage and maintain pupils' interest. Teachers have high

expectations. They skilfully plan interesting lessons to match the full range of pupils' needs. Consequently, all pupils achieve well. Teachers' subject knowledge and management of pupils are good. Relationships are positive.

Some practice is outstanding. This is particularly true in the ways pupils are challenged and dialogue with them is developed. In one outstanding Year 6 mathematics lesson, covering the concept of probability, pupils were expected to reach decisions rapidly and accurately. Their quick mental recall flowed from their good understanding of decimals, fractions and percentages and their confidence to tackle investigations. Their enthusiasm for learning culminated in them designing their own probability spinners. Not all teaching is of this quality although many lessons are conducted at a good pace. The focus on investigations has helped improve standards in mathematics and science. Teaching assistants are deployed well. They provide sensitive support to individual pupils and small groups. Marking is good. It is used well to praise good effort and provide clear guidance on how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Some aspects are outstanding. Planning takes good account of pupils' different starting points. Provision is good for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). The excellent new library enhances provision. The Year 1 curriculum is adjusted appropriately to meet the learning needs of pupils not reaching the levels expected at the end of Reception. It includes 'hands on' activities including making salt dough figures to weigh and measure.

The range of opportunities to enrich the curriculum in the arts, music and sport is outstanding. The Year 5 'Into the Deep Woods' project with a visiting artist typifies the enriched learning that comes with access to a specialist. Good partnerships with the local secondary school enhance the sporting opportunities. Training for athletics promotes skills and self-esteem well. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This is a school that clearly demonstrates that every child matters. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. One parent typically wrote that 'care is very high and keeps on getting better'. There are robust systems to ensure that pupils are kept safe, well protected and free from harm. Child protection procedures meet requirements with all staff have undergone appropriate training. Safeguarding and risk assessments fully meet requirements. Incident logs are meticulously kept. There are high levels of pupil supervision.

All pupils benefit from the high quality support including academic guidance, especially for those who may show signs of underachieving or who need extra help. Good links with specialist staff from external agencies benefit pupils with specific needs. The excellent tracking systems ensure that those stalling in their progress are helped to improve and that challenging targets are met. These are set to ensure pupils make at least good progress. The 2007 results confirm the targets set for the most able pupils were exceeded. Some pupils with special educational needs attained standards that were better than their respective group nationally.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management including governance are good. The good, purposeful leadership of the headteacher is helping the school achieve its aim, 'that children in our care achieve their full potential, as individuals, within the caring ethos of our school'. School leaders work effectively together to oversee the strategic development of the school. Much has been achieved since the previous inspection and improvement has been good. Important outcomes include raising standards, better facilities for the Foundation Stage, a new school library and establishing high quality care. There is good capacity for further improvement.

Purposeful self-evaluation leads to a mostly accurate picture of the school and the subsequent drafting of a clear school development plan. Planned deadlines for action points are met. Although the headteacher provides a good sense of direction in terms of monitoring of the curriculum there is scope to further develop the contribution made by other senior leaders. Consequently, the monitoring and sharing of best practice, such as the impact arising from outstanding teaching, is not yet fully developed. Challenging targets are set and linked to rigorous performance management arrangements. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths of the school. They have been resolute in taking difficult decisions, such as reducing the admission limit, to ensure optimum use of resources.

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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?	2
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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	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?	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.

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

6 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Reid Street Primary School, Darlington, DL3 6EX

Thank you for helping us when we inspected your school. You were friendly, helpful and courteous. We enjoyed visiting your classrooms, looking at your work on display and in your books, and talking to you about your school. Your school councillors told us how your suggestions to improve school are acted upon.

You attend a good school. You behave well and your attendance is satisfactory. Some of your personal qualities and the work of the school are outstanding. People get on well together and it is a friendly school. You told us you love school. We know you feel safe and the school provides you with high quality care. The staff support and guide you exceptionally well. You have an excellent understanding of how important it is to be healthy and stay fit. We know that you are eager to take part in clubs and other activities that give you a good start for your future lives.

You make good progress because teaching is good. You have many interesting things to do. We know you enjoy the opportunities you get to carry out investigations and experiments. Those of you in Year 5 are clearly enthralled by the 'Deep Woods' project! It is typical of the good curriculum you receive.

In order to help your school improve even more, I have asked the school to:

- ensure that all staff play their part in making sure that the school is as good as it can be
- help you to understand that life in modern Britain is often different from the area where you live.

I wish you and all the staff the very best for the future.

Derek Sleightholme

Lead inspector