

The Reddings Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117234
Local Authority	HERTFORDSHIRE LA
Inspection number	312540
Inspection dates	10–11 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Geof Timms

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	134
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Barbara Jones
Headteacher	Miss Tracy Prickett
Date of previous school inspection	2 June 2003
School address	Bennetts End Road Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire HP3 8DX
Telephone number	01442 406500
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector over two days.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average and serves an area to the west of Hemel Hempstead. An above average proportion of the pupils are entitled to free school meals and this reflects the socio-economic background of many of the pupils. The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds has grown recently and is now above average. A significant proportion is at an early stage of learning English and additional support is provided, especially for those speaking Polish, Tamil and Urdu. There is a broadly average proportion of the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The number of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than normal is high. The school has been through a period of unsettled leadership both before and since the last inspection. The current headteacher has been in her post for eighteen months.

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 is improving rapidly under the effective leadership of the headteacher, who is well supported by her senior staff. Standards are rising sharply and the school provides good value for money. The headteacher has made outstanding use of highly effective self-evaluation to recognise what needed doing to improve standards. She has raised everyone's expectations of what the pupils are capable of achieving, and this is resulting in the good achievement evident by the end of Year 6. The whole school community is working well together to bring about improvement. One parent said, 'I can honestly say I think the school has never been better.'

Leadership and management are good overall, with some outstanding features. As well as the excellent self-evaluation, the school has a very clear educational direction. It made very good use of intensive support from the local authority two years ago and this has helped to create the outstanding conditions for future progress now evident. The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and provides an effective level of challenge and support. Structures for supporting teachers are good and the school is effective in seeking outside expertise where necessary. The improvements made, reflected in the sharply rising standards and improved quality of provision, together with the accuracy of the school's priorities for development, demonstrate an outstanding capacity to improve further.

Progress is good and pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science. Progress in writing is below that in other subjects, especially among the youngest pupils and those in Years 1 and 2. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in line with the targets set for them. A growing number of pupils join the school with a home language other than English, and the school is effective in helping them settle. They make good progress in learning the language partly due to the good links between the school and local authority staff. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall and the school has made changes to staffing to try to improve this. Progress is good from Years 3 to 6, and by the time pupils leave this school most of them have reached above average standards. This is effective in helping prepare them well for their future education and life after school.

The standards are good because the quality of the teaching is good and pupils are learning effectively. Targets set are appropriately challenging and understood by the pupils. The curriculum is satisfactory, but pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to make links between subjects or to use their good basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in other subjects. Teachers have very strong relationships with their pupils. A lot of successful work has been done to improve behaviour and this is clearly having a positive impact on their learning. Pupils are very keen to talk about how much they wholeheartedly enjoy all aspects of school. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy, and they are very keen to take on roles and responsibilities that contribute to the school community. The school is a very caring place. Statutory requirements for safeguarding pupils are met. There is good provision for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Assessment is used effectively to track pupils' progress and offer them appropriate guidance to help them improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. When children enter the school, many have not achieved the level of development typically expected. The good teaching, skilled adult support, spacious accommodation and good quality resources are clearly reflected in the good progress evident in the children's assessment records. Weaknesses in children's social skills are an early priority and addressed well. Good progress is made in all areas of learning and children are attaining close to the expected levels by the end of the Reception year. However, writing currently remains a relatively weaker area.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, particularly by improving pupils' handwriting, spelling and sentence construction.
- Ensure the curriculum provides sufficient links between subjects and opportunities for creativity.
- Ensure sufficient opportunities for pupils to use basic writing, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The progress made by pupils is good because many have below average attainment on entry to the school but above average standards when they leave. This picture is evident in test results and in pupils' current work in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Almost all pupils achieve well but the school is at an early stage of identifying and providing for the most able pupils. Standards by the end of Year 2 were below average for a number of years but rose sharply in 2006. This picture has been largely maintained in 2007 and standards are broadly in line with those expected. The improvement made in standards by the end of Year 6 is even more impressive. From a very poor position in 2004, results have risen dramatically to above average levels. This improvement has been the result of challenging targets and intensive support, as well as the school's willingness to raise expectations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This is good because the school provides high quality opportunities for pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. They are encouraged to reflect on their actions and to be aware of the needs of others. This work is evident in improvements made to their behaviour, which is now good, and in the outstanding level of enjoyment they show in their work and play. In addition, the school council has a higher profile and members are aware of their role as 'improving the school.' Pupils have many other opportunities to show responsibility but currently fewer opportunities to show initiative or develop as independent learners. Although attendance remains below average, the work done by the school to improve this has resulted in a sharp improvement recently.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good because the school has focused on improving pupils' behaviour and ensuring sufficient challenge in the tasks provided for them. Because of this, pupils are happy and feel safe at the school. Classrooms have a well-ordered ethos and a good working environment. Relationships are strong and this encourages pupils to work hard. Work is well planned and mostly well matched to their prior attainment although there are times when the most able pupils are not as well challenged. The marking of pupils' work is a strength as it helps them understand what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Teaching assistants offer good support and are usually deployed effectively.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum with some good opportunities for enrichment. The recent focus for improvement has correctly been on standards of achievement and the quality of teaching. The school accurately recognises that more needs to be done to develop a meaningful and creative curriculum which will enable pupils to make links between subjects, and to use the basic skills they acquire to support their learning in other subjects. Staff actively seek to make the curriculum interesting by using a range of trips and external visitors such as those in the arts and in music. In addition, there is a close link with a local sports college and this has helped raise standards in physical education by developing teachers' own expertise.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This is a very caring school which continually revises the arrangements for keeping pupils safe and quickly addresses problems when they arise. All statutory safeguarding arrangements are met. Staff are well trained to deal with pupils at risk or who demonstrate challenging behaviour. Health and safety measures are appropriate and good risk assessments are carried out for all activities. These measures are reflected in the pupils' comments about enjoying school and by the parent of a pupil new to the school who said their child had been made to feel very welcome. Pupils are given good support and guidance, stemming from the good quality assessment and tracking of progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has very quickly developed an effective senior team and helped to create a school where all staff are working hard to raise standards. The clear educational direction is shared by all and is clearly visible in the detailed and extensive development plans. These contain appropriate priorities based on some excellent self-evaluation and an honest appraisal of where the school was two years ago, and where it needed to improve. Governors are supportive but also act as critical friends, based on their good knowledge of the school. Subject leaders are developing their role but do not yet carry out sufficient monitoring of provision. The school is aware of this and plans are in place to extend this aspect of their work.

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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	1

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	2
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?	3
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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

12 September 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of The Reddings Primary and Nursery School, Hemel Hempstead, HP3 8DX

I am writing to let you know the result of my recent visit. I also want to thank you all for being so welcoming, being willing to talk to me and to share your thoughts about the success of your school.

Many of those I talked to, including the school council, told me how much you really enjoy school. This means you get on better with your friends and the adults in the school, and you work harder and learn more. You make good progress, especially in reading, mathematics and science. Everyone I spoke to said how behaviour has improved. This is good because it helps your teachers teach you, and you have a happier time at school.

The teachers plan your work well and the way they mark it helps you to know what you need to do to improve. The school is very good at tracking how well you are doing and checking on your progress. There are some good clubs and many of you join those. I especially like the way some of you learn Urdu at a club so that you can speak the same language as your friends. Many of you also enjoy the interesting school trips and look forward to going away overnight. Many of the good things that happen are because of the hard work of Miss Prickett and her staff. The school is especially good at deciding what needs to improve more and I believe your school will carry on getting even better!

There are three things that I think the school needs to do to help you learn even more in the future.

- Help you get better at writing especially when you are still just beginning.
- Make more links between subjects so you can see how learning in one subject can help you in another.
- Give you opportunities to use your skills in reading, writing, number and computer skills in other subjects like history and geography.

Thank you again for your help during my visit. Enjoy your time at The Reddings and keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms Lead Inspector