

# Regent Farm First School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108440
<b>Local Authority</b>	Newcastle upon Tyne
<b>Inspection number</b>	324768
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 November 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Andrew Scott

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	233
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Enid Mitchell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jean Humphrey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 October 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Wansbeck Road South Gosforth Newcastle upon Tyne Tyne and Wear NE3 3PE
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 2852294
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 2852294

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average sized first school serves an urban area with some social and economic disadvantage. A high percentage of pupils is eligible for free school meals. A small minority come from more advantaged areas. Most pupils are from White British families. About 20% are from minority ethnic groups and most of these pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL). The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, but a comparatively high number have a statement of special educational need. The school has an Additionally Resourced Centre (ARC) for pupils with a sight impairment and has developed a mini-ARC for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. The movement within the pupil population is more fluid than in most schools. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) comprises one Nursery and two Reception classes.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Regent Farm is a satisfactory school with some good features. It provides a caring, supportive environment in which pupils feel valued and acquire a positive attitude to learning. They develop good personal and social skills, and behave well. Constant encouragement and guidance from staff give pupils belief in themselves and a healthy tolerance of others. For example, pupils with sight impairment and those newly arrived from abroad are readily absorbed into the life of the school. Parents are right to appreciate the quality of care. 'All staff are friendly and approachable, and are always happy to help when requested', wrote one parent, typical of others.

Children benefit from a good start in the EYFS. Effective teaching enables them to make good progress in all aspects of learning and reach the levels expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. Thereafter, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards remain average by the end of Years 2 and 4. Teaching is sometimes good in Years 1 to 4 but not consistently so, and more often it is satisfactory. Most lessons are organised thoughtfully and galvanise pupils so that little time is wasted and pupils concentrate well. In the better lessons, there is a palpable energy and clear sense of purpose, so pupils make good progress. However, teaching is not always interesting enough. Teachers do not consistently make good use of assessment information to match the work to the capabilities of all pupils, and so provide challenging work that will raise standards. Teaching is more successful in doing this with pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and these pupils achieve well. Similarly, the close support for pupils with English as an additional language enables them to achieve well, especially in English.

The curriculum is satisfactory. The school is right to maintain a clear focus on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Learning in these subjects is very structured and linked closely to national guidelines. However, teachers do not enrich this diet enough so that, for example, mathematical calculations involve real-life situations. Other subjects are taught more creatively, although the links between them are not fully exploited. The school provides good activities after school, especially sports which pupils love. Many take part and are well aware of this benefit to their health. They also know the equal importance of a healthy diet, but often find this harder to adopt. Pupils contribute reasonably well to the local community, but the school has yet to formulate its approach to community cohesion. Consequently, pupils' awareness of the wider world and other cultures is underdeveloped.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The emphasis on pastoral support for pupils with specific needs is praiseworthy. The headteacher has created a warm and stimulating environment. Resources are good and the EYFS outdoor learning area is excellent. However, the school has not succeeded in raising standards because it does not have a clear and incisive view of itself. Self-evaluation is regular and involves all staff who generate good information about the school. However, this is not analysed skilfully to identify all key areas for improvement in relation to pupils' achievement. Governors are more involved than they were at the last inspection, but are still developing their role in identifying weaknesses and requiring answers to them. The school has made sufficient progress over recent years to demonstrate that it has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children benefit from a good start in the EYFS. They enter Nursery with skills and abilities below those typical for their age, particularly in early mathematical skills, and awareness of the world around them. They achieve well and most reach average levels by the end of Reception. They make particularly good progress in their personal and social skills, because adults champion these aspects of their development. Children with English as an additional language receive good support so that they quickly learn English and settle into the daily routines.

Children's personal development is good. They work and play well together, taking turns and accepting responsibility, for example, by keeping the rooms tidy. They enjoy the various activities, and relish the fresh fruit and the chance to exercise in lessons and at playtimes. Children behave well, because adults make clear what is expected of them, and they are happy in the secure environment. Parents are pleased with the progress their children make. Regular information about future topics and activities enables parents to participate purposefully in their children's development.

Planning is good overall, although leaders and managers of the EYFS recognise the need to tailor some activities more accurately to individuals or groups of children. Some lessons involve children sitting for too long on the carpet, limiting opportunities to investigate through practical activity. The EYFS is well managed. Provision is analysed regularly to identify areas for further development. The outside area is an excellent resource and provides a stimulating place for children to explore, although staff do not always make best use of its potential to promote children's learning.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of assessment information to plan work that is consistently matched to the abilities of all groups of pupils.
- Develop a more creative curriculum to strengthen the learning of basic skills and pupils' involvement with the local community and the wider world.
- Ensure that self-evaluation is more rigorous and linked more closely to pupils' achievement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as 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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are average. Attainment on entry to Year 1 is broadly average. By the end of Year 2, standards have tended to be average, although teacher assessments have dipped in recent years, mainly because of the lower ability of the cohorts. Conversely, standards by the end of Year 4 have been a little lower than is expected of nine-year-olds especially in mathematics but improved in 2008, particularly in reading. The school's data show that pupils in the current Years 2 and 4 are on track to reach standards that are broadly average.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress to meet their individual targets, and this includes pupils from the ARC and mini-ARC. Teachers and support staff focus well on their individual needs and provide sensitive guidance and encouragement. Pupils with

English as an additional language also make good progress, especially in their learning of English. There are no consistent or significant disparities between the achievements of other groups of pupils.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their spiritual, moral and social development is good; their cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils develop a sensitivity towards others and value their friendships. They are clear about the rules and expectations of them. Behaviour is good, especially in lessons and, although some pupils would like to see improvement at playtimes, inspectors found no cause for concern. Attendance remains slightly below average. The school continually seeks new ways to reduce absences, working closely with external agencies.

Pupils talk knowledgeably about leading a healthy lifestyle, knowing the importance of regular exercise and caring for themselves. They recognise what constitutes a good diet, although there are occasional lapses in their choice of food at lunchtimes. Pupils develop good self-confidence and understand how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. They willingly accept responsibilities, such as being 'buddies', and increasingly play a part in shaping their school. Their successful petition for a lollipop lady was impressive. Pupils' contribution to the local community and wider world is satisfactory. They learn about religions, but their awareness of other cultures is underdeveloped. Their basic skills in literacy and numeracy, combined with their social skills, prepare them satisfactorily for the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching is satisfactory with some that is good. Lessons are well organised with good expectations of pupils' participation so that they are mostly eager to learn and little time is lost. Teachers use a range of strategies to present information to suit the pupils; the phonic sessions, for example, are especially enjoyable. Resources are used effectively to bring learning alive. However, less motivational activities on worksheets feature quite often. In the better lessons, greater vitality from the teacher and suitable challenge for all pupils ensure that they readily acquire new knowledge and understanding. Occasionally, lessons are less inspiring especially in English and mathematics, and tasks lack enough interest or purpose. As a result, pupils are not fully motivated and miss opportunities to strengthen their learning in practical applications. In addition, teachers do not make the best use of the good information they have about pupils' progress to plan work that consistently challenges them all. A good marking system gives helpful guidance in writing, but is not applied routinely in all subjects.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. Literacy and numeracy rightly remain key priorities. Other subjects are organised around topics with some useful links to literacy. Good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities helps them make good progress. The school has yet to ensure that curriculum planning fully meets the needs of all groups of pupils. Some time ago, the school initiated a more creative curriculum in order to inspire pupils whilst providing extra

opportunities to develop basic skills. This initiative has yet to be fully implemented. Another initiative has successfully developed pupils' understanding of social and emotional aspects in learning. Supported by the expertise of professionals from outside school, the school provides a good range of activities, many of which boost pupils' physical exercise. The good take-up reflects how much pupils appreciate them.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school takes good care of its pupils; the systems for safeguarding pupils are securely in place. Parents greatly appreciate the way staff respond sensitively and effectively to their children's needs, including those with specific problems. They are reassured that any concerns are acted upon swiftly. The school works closely with external agencies, for example, to attempt to boost attendance and to support vulnerable pupils. The ARC and mini-ARC provide havens of calm where pupils benefit from the close attention of specialist staff.

The school has efficient procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress, and uses the data well to support pupils when it is identified they need additional help. However, staff do not use the data skilfully enough to expect more from other pupils. Similarly, teachers give suitable guidance to help pupils improve but their approach is not consistent enough across the school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The school has satisfactory leadership and management. The headteacher promotes a positive ethos and ensures that staff and governors share a common vision. She provides good leadership in promoting pupils' well-being and personal development. The ARC and mini-ARC are good examples of the quality of care. The leadership is not quite as successful in improving academic achievement and establishing initiatives that would benefit learning. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion and is in the process of adopting a more strategic approach to its links with the community.

The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory. Senior staff confidently judge some aspects, such as the EYFS, but are not clinical enough in their assessments of others, for example, achievement. Too much emphasis is placed on judging provision and not enough is linked to outcomes. For example, the school does not analyse the plentiful data to see how the mobility of pupils influences achievement. The school's improvement plans are well structured but do not reflect all of the key priorities.

Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Governors have undergone training and are now much more involved in the work of the school. They are developing their role of questioning and challenging the school. Improvements have been made in boys' writing, training for support staff and the range of sports activities. However, standards and the quality of teaching have remained much the same.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

**Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	2

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<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

27 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Regent Farm First School, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 3PE

I am writing to thank you for the kindness you showed and the help you gave to Mr Watson and me when we inspected your school recently. We thoroughly enjoyed getting to know your school and we were grateful for your thoughts and those of your parents. I would like to tell you what we found out.

We think that your school gives you a satisfactory education. You get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes, and then make satisfactory progress. By the end of Year 4, the standards you reach are typical of nine-year-olds. Teaching is often good, especially when lessons have interesting activities and the work is hard enough for you all. This does not always happen, so we have asked the school to make sure that your English and mathematics lessons in particular are livelier and linked to other subjects, so that learning makes more sense. We would also like your work to keep you on your toes as often as possible. We are confident that you will rise to every challenge.

There are a number of good things about the school. We agree with you and your parents that the school takes good care of you. It provides you with plenty of activities outside lessons, especially the increasing amount of sport. You obviously enjoy school, even though your attendance is not as good as it could be. Behaviour is good, particularly in lessons, and you look after one another well. It was great to see how well you all get on, including those of you in the ARC and mini-ARC and those of you who have recently arrived from a foreign country.

The headteacher and all the staff work hard to improve the school. The outside area for the younger children is very impressive, for example. Some things are taking longer to change, such as the daily curriculum. The school is good at highlighting some areas, like problem solving, that need improving but does not include all areas. We have, therefore, asked the school to make sure that all improvements will have a positive impact on your progress and personal development.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Scott

Lead inspector