

Richardson Dees Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108596
Local Authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	324799
Inspection dates	12–13 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Derek Neil HMI

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	228
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Gilroy
Headteacher	Dr Louise Payne
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	High Street East Wallsend Tyne and Wear NE28 7RT
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Richardson Dees is a school of above average size in the Wallsend ward of North Tyneside. It has Nursery and Reception classes, which form its Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Very high proportions of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and use English as an additional language. High numbers of pupils join and leave the school other than at the usual time. The school has several curriculum awards including the Quality Mark for basic skills, the Healthy School Award, the International School Award, the Activemark, and Artsmark Gold. In 2006, a new headteacher was appointed.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Richardson Dees is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school. One parent accurately summarised its strengths by writing, 'It helps the children to improve; it builds up their confidence to do well in school and in outdoor activities.'

The new headteacher has made a significant impact on the effectiveness of the school. Good progress has been made in many areas that were a concern at the last inspection. For example, a new, rigorous process for evaluating and improving teaching means that more lessons are good, even if occasionally the work is not altogether suitable for the most and least able. Some features that were good at the last inspection are even better now. Pupils' personal development and well-being are now outstanding. The school makes good contributions to community cohesion. Pupils develop into very friendly and confident young people, who take immense pleasure in school. 'Even on Saturdays and Sundays my son wants to be there!' exclaimed one parent. They are very proud of the excellent way they discharge their many responsibilities in the school and local communities. Their personal development owes much to the richly varied opportunities the curriculum offers, and the high level care the staff provide. The staff know their pupils well and diligently look after their interests. A particular strength of the school's support for its pupils is its excellent academic guidance. Pupils are set challenging targets and given very good advice on how to achieve them. A very thorough system for assessing and monitoring their progress helps the school to identify when a pupil is at risk of underachieving and to provide effective support to get them back on track.

These improvements are already having a positive effect on pupils' performance: attendance is better than at the time of the last inspection and is now just below average; and behaviour has greatly improved and is now excellent. However, the changes have not yet had an effect on the standards pupils reach at the end of each key stage. These remain below average, which represents for most year groups a satisfactory achievement. The school's assessment data indicate that pupils are making better progress than in the past and suggest that standards are set to rise. However, pupils' attainment in mathematics, particularly their ability to calculate, is still too low, and some of the most able pupils underachieve in the subject. The quality of some pupils' writing, too, is affected by poor technical skills, mainly their spelling.

The considerable improvements over the past year are due in no small measure to the determined leadership of the headteacher. She has led the school through a difficult period. With the support of a new and effective management team and a united staff she recognises the progress the school has made and has identified the areas that still need to improve. Given the distance it has travelled in a short time and the staff's commitment to raise standards, it has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with skills that are well below the level expected for their age. At the end of their year in Reception their skills are still below average. This constitutes good progress. This is achieved because staff carefully plan relevant and enjoyable activities to meet their individual needs. All staff regularly assess each child's development and use the information effectively to plan the next steps in their learning. The children's personal development is outstanding. From a low starting point, they quickly learn important social skills, such as playing

together, taking turns and good manners. They develop their communication skills at a good rate, particularly in speaking and listening. The indoor learning environment is excellent and very well equipped to meet their needs. The outdoor area is stimulating but short of resources to develop children's reading skills while they are outside. The children are very well cared for and the unit fully meets the welfare requirements. Each child has a key worker who monitors their development closely. As a result, children are able to take safe risks especially outdoors, where they play with great enthusiasm. The arrangements for welcoming the children when they begin in the Nursery are good, as are relationships with parents. The manager for the Early Years Foundation Stage works hard to ensure it operates smoothly and successfully. She knows its strengths and what needs to be done to improve its quality though she does not systematically monitor the teaching and learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Improve the quality of pupils' writing.
- Help teachers to make sure that the work they set in class is better matched to pupils' needs.

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

Pupils make satisfactory progress in both key stages to reach standards that are, in the main, below average. In the 2007 national tests for Key Stage 2, pupils performed poorly, largely because of a legacy of underachievement and because of staffing disruption during the year. The unvalidated results for the 2008 tests support the school's judgement and inspection evidence that standards in reading and science have improved to be broadly average, and that standards in mathematics remain too low. The school has challenged the results for the writing test; nonetheless, evidence indicates that standards remain below average. Many younger pupils do not form their letters well and older pupils are held back by poor technical skills, mainly spelling. The more able do not apply enough of their knowledge about good writing when they are writing creatively. In mathematics, the school recognises that pupils do not calculate quickly and accurately enough and that the most able do not do as well as they should. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress overall, because of the very flexible and intensive support they receive from specialist staff. Pupils who come from other schools during Key Stage 2 make at least satisfactory progress in their time here though their performance in the national tests tends to depress the school's results.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is excellent. They develop into extremely confident, sociable young people, who are friendly and courteous to each other and to adults. One parent said of her son, 'He is more friendly to people since joining this school.' The pupils have a good understanding of and interest in people from other cultures and countries. They understand what racism is and know it is not tolerated in school. Some children played their samba instruments at a recent 'Hope not Hate' festival to promote racial understanding. They

thoroughly enjoy school. They particularly appreciate the many activities and interesting trips that enhance their understanding of the world. Their behaviour has greatly improved since the last inspection and is now excellent. Attendance is satisfactory and is promoted well through a well designed reward system. Children feel very safe in school and play and learn with confidence. Bullying and racist abuse are rare and are usually dealt with effectively by the class teacher. The pupils understand how to make healthy choices; the school's annual 'health week' motivated many to take up sports out of school. They enthusiastically carry out the many posts of responsibility created by the school; for example, some are appointed toilet monitors to ensure everyone washes their hands. The school council is very active; for example, it raised money to create the remembrance garden, and helped initiate the delightful breakfast club. Pupils make a considerable contribution to the local community, for example, by singing for pensioners or clearing up litter in the streets. They are well prepared for adult life; visitors from the world of work, such as the fire and police services, make pupils aware of what they do and of potential career opportunities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are generally satisfactory and often good. Teachers have a clear view of what they expect the pupils to learn in each lesson and usually express this in terms the pupils can understand. Their explanations and instructions are clear. They take great pains to emphasise the main learning points throughout the lesson. They use a range of activities to ensure that pupils participate as much as possible; for example, pupils often have to discuss a problem with a partner before sharing their solution with others. The teachers use praise and encouragement effectively to motivate the class. In the better lessons, when pupils have misunderstood something the teacher is quick to spot this and corrects it sensitively. For example, when pupils miscalculated the time the wolf took to reach Little Red Riding Hood the teacher realised what they were doing wrong and used a very effective technique to get them to understand how to do it right. For most pupils, learning is satisfactory: they behave well, pay attention, and for the most part carry out the work as expected. Work is not always well matched to everyone's ability: some lessons deal with concepts that are too difficult for pupils who need more help with basic skills, while the most able are not always given work at a suitably demanding level. On occasions, the teacher does not ensure all pupils complete enough work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced. It boasts an exciting variety of interesting activities designed to enhance pupils' personal development, and this is reflected in the many awards it has earned. It has an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills, including a useful daily session designed to improve a particular skill that needs attention. Specific programmes in English and mathematics give effective support for those who need extra help. Lessons make links between some subjects, particularly between English and history, and this enables children to use their skills in different and relevant contexts. The many visits out of school support what is being taught in class; pupils learning about the Second World War, for example, experience a simulation of being evacuated. The school promotes community cohesion well; the prominence it gives to learning about other countries helps children develop their knowledge of people from different communities. A varied and interesting range of extra-curricular clubs is greatly

enjoyed by the many children who participate in them. The school recognises the need to make the content of the curriculum more interesting and creative to meet the needs and aspirations of its learners even more closely.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The level of care for pupils is outstanding. They are very closely supervised throughout the day; for example, at playtime they are carefully shepherded down the stairs to the playground. Detailed risk assessments for school activities consider relevant hazards and help ensure the activities are safe. The school meets requirements for safeguarding its pupils. Pupils from minority ethnic groups are supported well. Tellingly, one parent wrote: 'Being a parent from an ethnic minority, I give the school credit for the way my child has been integrated into the English education system.' The comprehensive arrangements for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress are excellent. Anyone at risk of underachieving is given additional help with their work, in lessons or in small groups outside the classroom. Work is marked regularly, and frequently teachers give useful advice on how to improve, closely linked to what pupils are learning. Pupils are set individual targets and they and their parents are well informed about their progress. One parent said that, as a result of this process, 'the school has catered for my son's needs well and he has reached his full potential'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The strength of the school's leadership is evident in the many improvements since the last inspection. For example, governors are now well informed about the school's needs and are developing their skills to play their part as its critical friend. Some former weaknesses have now become strengths. A comprehensive and rigorous programme of monitoring has been instituted and is leading to improvements in the quality of teaching. A system for managing teachers' performance, based on the school's thorough assessment system, makes each teacher accountable for the progress made by the pupils in their class. Subject leaders have a well understood role in monitoring and improving the quality of work in their subjects, although most of the responsibility for this still rests with the management team. These improvements in the way the school is managed have led to better outcomes for pupils: attendance has risen; and pupils' behaviour is now far better. It is taking longer for these changes to make a difference to the results in national tests, although inspection evidence and the school's own assessment data suggest that standards are rising. This improvement is due largely to the uncompromising leadership of the new headteacher, who has confronted some staffing difficulties, built up a new and effective management team, and united the staff behind a vision of higher standards. The school's self-evaluation is thorough and accurate and enables managers to draw up detailed plans for improvement that tackle a wide range of issues, including the most important.

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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	2

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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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 learners' needs?	3
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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

14 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Richardson Dees Primary School, North Tyneside, NE28 7RT

Thank you for welcoming me and my colleague so warmly into your school. We enjoyed watching you in lessons and at play; talking about your school with you and your teachers; and looking at your work. Now I want to share with you what we found.

Richardson Dees is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school.

- You told me you really enjoy school and feel very safe there.
- You like your lessons and the staff. One of you summed it up very neatly by telling me, 'This is a great place to learn; we have good teachers who help you and get you to learn in fun ways.'
- You thoroughly enjoy the visits to different places, including residential trips where you do lots of physical activities.
- You are growing up to be very confident, friendly and happy young people.
- You know how important it is to eat healthily and take exercise. I was pleased to hear that many of you are involved in sporting activities.
- You behave extremely well in class and in the playground. You should be proud of this.
- Your teachers and other staff take very good care of you. They make sure you are happy and safe and check you are making enough progress with your work.
- Many of you are very grown up and help with running the school; the school council, for instance, has done some useful work, and others willingly take on additional responsibilities, like being a house captain.

I think you and your teachers could make the school even better. I would like you to improve the quality of your mathematics and writing. I have asked your teachers to help you to do this by making sure that all the work you get is at the right level for each of you.

You are lucky to go to such a caring and interesting school. Thank you again for helping me with the inspection. It really was a great pleasure to meet you.

With very best wishes for the future!

Yours sincerely

Derek Neil

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools