

# Riverdale Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111639
<b>Local Authority</b>	Redcar and Cleveland
<b>Inspection number</b>	325420
<b>Inspection date</b>	9 October 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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	205
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 Sue Nicholson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Kirsty Reilly
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 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>	Hambleton Avenue Redcar TS10 4HH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01642 471298
<b>Fax number</b>	01642 756300

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the impact of changes in the pupil population and special needs on pupils' standards
- pupils' understanding of the world community and its diversity
- the rigour of school development planning at all levels of management.

Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons, analyses of pupils' work, performance data, parents' questionnaires and the school's documentation, and from discussions with pupils, staff and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This average sized school serves an area of some economic and social disadvantage. Almost all pupils are from White British families; a very small number speak English as an additional language. An above average number of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school runs Cygnets, an Ofsted accredited child care provision before and after school for 16 children; this was inspected at the same time. The school population has undergone and is continuing to be affected by considerable changes to housing in the locality. Older properties have been demolished and are being replaced by new houses. This means that more pupils than usual start school at times other than in the Nursery.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Riverdale Primary is a good school. It is a happy, welcoming place where very good pastoral care and support enable pupils to develop self-confidence and acquire a positive attitude to work. They make good progress in their learning because teaching is well focused on developing basic skills and because of an increasingly creative curriculum. Pupils openly enjoy their school; they find it hard to think of ways to improve what it offers. Their attendance has been steadily rising and is now above average. In the comparatively few questionnaires received, parents also indicated a good opinion of the school. They were rightly happy with their children's progress, the quality of care and the approachability of staff. 'The school has a lovely, friendly, close-knit atmosphere,' was a typical comment. The school is prospering under the good leadership of the headteacher.

All pupils achieve well from a starting point that is lower than usually seen. The results of national tests by Year 6 have tended to be above average in recent years, especially in mathematics. In 2007, test results showed standards were average, influenced by the number of pupils with learning difficulties who joined the school during Years 5 and 6, and some previous staffing instability. Current standards are also broadly average for the same reasons. The major house building programme on the school's doorstep is having a direct but temporary impact on learning outcomes. Standards by Year 2 are usually average. A high incidence of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities caused a fall in 2007, but indications are that performance in provisional 2008 assessments is better. Since the last inspection, the school has worked successfully to improve pupils' writing.

Teaching is good, but varies from satisfactory to outstanding. Common strengths include the clarity of expectations by teachers, helpful resources, effective support staff and skilful guidance, especially in very good marking and the setting of individual targets. Consequently, pupils know exactly how they can improve. Firm behaviour management and deft encouragement ensure pupils remain on task. Their responses are understandably better when lessons are lively and stimulating. A Year 5 writing session, for example, about the tough life in a Victorian match factory stirred pupils' interest. Whilst maintaining a good structure to learning, teachers are beginning to diversify the curricular diet, although there is still some way to go. Teaching usually ensures that all pupils are challenged, whatever their capabilities, but this is not always distinct enough and time can be wasted doing familiar work. As a result, the pace of learning falters. Pupils themselves said that, although work can be hard, it is sometimes too easy.

Pupils' personal development is good and they are well prepared for life ahead. They shrewdly acknowledge that behaviour is not perfect but essentially good. 'On a scale of 1 to 10', said one, 'it's an 8'. They look after one another well, and so the playground is a harmonious place. They also develop a good sense of responsibility, for example, in their roles as lunchtime supervisors. 'We are an extra pair of eyes for the dinner ladies', one pupil explained. Pupils feel safe in school, comfortable in the knowledge that staff readily listen to their problems, allow them time in the chill-out room or just soothe that grazed knee. The school has secure procedures for safeguarding pupils at all times, including those who attend Cygnets.

Pupils enjoy being healthy and active; many take part in the sports activities after school and the salad bar is well frequented at lunchtime. They talk proudly about their school and know that their voice counts, notably through the school council. However, they are less involved in

the local community and wider world, and their understanding of the diverse cultures beyond Redcar is underdeveloped.

The school is well led and managed. The enthusiastic and clear-sighted leadership of the headteacher galvanises colleagues and governors alike, and ensures a shared vision for the school. She has introduced new systems, such as for target setting, that are manageable and appropriate, and leads by example in ensuring their success. The experiment with the new Key Stage 1 curriculum is a praiseworthy move to smooth children's transition into Year 1. The relatively new senior leadership team is taking an increasingly influential role in the school's development. The impressive teaching skills of the deputy headteacher, for example, provide a good benchmark for colleagues. Governors are supportive and act as good critical friends to the headteacher, although their monitoring of the school's development could be more incisive.

The school has improved well since the last inspection. For example, the accommodation has been thoughtfully developed to expand internal and external provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and the library/information and communication technology room has been upgraded to provide good resources. Most importantly, the quality and effectiveness of self-evaluation are now good and augur well for the future. The school has good capacity to improve further and provides good value for money.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The EYFS provides a good platform for children starting school. The sympathetic and warm environment quickly puts children at their ease; they soon settle in, behave well and enjoy the many learning experiences. They make good progress from starting school with skills that are lower than typical of their age and, by the end of the Reception year, reach nearly all the goals expected for their age. The teaching is well structured and boosts basic skills, for example, in phonics and basic calculation. Wider experiences develop children's vocabulary and general knowledge. The school places considerable emphasis on children's personal development and, through sensitive but firm support by all staff, children are encouraged to develop early independence. This is important because when they begin school, their social and emotional development is weak. Despite good improvement, this remains below expected levels by Year 1, along with early writing skills.

The new extensions to the classrooms and improvements outdoors allow children more activities and greater scope to explore. A new entrance to the Nursery encourages better liaison with parents. Children are constantly assessed so that teachers can routinely challenge and motivate them. Children are safe and happy because of the high levels of care. The EYFS is well led and managed, and has overseen important changes that have sustained its quality. Those children who attend Cygnets also benefit from good provision; they enjoy a good variety of activities and are well looked after.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Make better use of existing staff skills to strengthen teaching and the curriculum across the school.
- Improve pupils' sense of community and awareness of diversity in the world at large.

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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 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?	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?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

<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	2
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	2

## The quality of provision

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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?	3
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**

10 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Riverdale Primary School, Redcar and Cleveland, TS10 4HH

I am writing to thank you for the help you gave me during the recent inspection of your school. I enjoyed my day at Riverdale, meeting you and the staff. Your comments helped me to get to know your school quickly in the short time I had there. Some of you were eager to know what I thought of your school.

Well, I can now say that you go to a good school. This will probably not surprise you because you clearly think highly of it; your good attendance is an obvious indicator. You get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and continue to achieve well throughout the school. Your standards are usually above average. They are a bit lower at present because not all pupils have had the benefit of continuous education at the school. Your teachers do a good job in helping you learn the 3 Rs and lots of other subjects. They are especially good at helping you understand how well you are working and what needs to be done next. They usually challenge you well in lessons but, as some of you told me, not always and some lessons are not very interesting. Therefore, I have asked the school to try to make lessons as good as the best in the school.

I expect you will respond very well to this because you are responsible and caring individuals, keen to succeed. Your behaviour is essentially good and you are right to feel safe. You and your parents have said how much you appreciate the school's care of you. Your headteacher has done well to improve the school, and is well supported by the senior teachers and governors. You also help through the work of the school council and become good school citizens. I would like the school to make sure that you are more aware of society in the wider world, especially its different cultures and traditions.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Scott

Lead inspector