

Richmond Methodist Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121544
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	327509
Inspection date	9 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Lesley Clark

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	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	302
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 R Fothergill
Headteacher	Mr M Allison
Date of previous school inspection	18 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Darlington Road Richmond North Yorkshire DL10 7BH

Age group	5–11
Inspection date	9 October 2008
Inspection number	327509

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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: pupils' achievement; the quality of teaching and learning; pupils' personal development; and the curriculum. Evidence was gathered from: the school's self-evaluation; national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, policies and minutes; observation of the school at work; interviews with senior members of staff and pupils; and the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest the school's own assessments, as given in the self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

Richmond Methodist Primary School is larger than average. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds including urban areas, rural villages, farms and a military base. Almost all are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average overall, but in most classes there is a small group with significant learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is above average. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in the Reception year, with the younger children starting at half-time for the first term. The headteacher was appointed in January 2007. A third of the teaching staff has changed since then. The school was extended last year to provide additional teaching space and the grounds developed to enhance outdoor play for the whole school.

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 which gives its pupils a well rounded education. A notable strength is the high quality provision for creative arts which plays a large part in pupils' enormous enthusiasm for school and their delight in learning. An area of relative weakness is the EYFS where much of children's learning is too formal too soon. Parents appreciate 'the increased focus on art, sport and music' and most agree that this is, 'A very happy school which provides good support for its children and cares and nurtures individuals.' The school knows itself well and has the right priorities. Its self-evaluation is largely accurate, but the school tends to underplay its strengths because of its strong focus on raising achievement. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. Good leadership and management by the leadership team, fully supported by a knowledgeable governing body, have been instrumental in bringing about effective changes. Pupils' learning has been revitalised through exciting and interesting lessons and a well thought out curriculum. The school has good capacity to improve further because of this relentless drive for all pupils to make the best possible progress.

The quality of teaching is good in Years 1 to 6. There are examples of outstanding practice, especially in: the quality of teachers' questions; the many different practical activities set; the tireless and expert support of teaching assistants; and the excellent relationships between adults and children. These qualities promote pupils' good achievement. Science results in national tests are especially good because pupils learn through investigation and discovery. It is no wonder that they find learning highly enjoyable. From slightly above average starting points in Year 1 pupils go on to reach well above average standards by the end of Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are the most able do especially well. This is because the work challenges them effectively at their different levels. Consequently, almost all pupils reach the expected level at the end of Year 6 and the most able reach the higher level. Exceptional mathematicians work comfortably within even higher levels. The school has identified a small group of learners, those who are at the upper end of average, who make slower progress. Current strategies to raise their achievement are beginning to work, albeit slowly. A factor in their slower progress is that all pupils are not fully involved in checking their learning. At present, pupils who are less confident with new concepts do not get the help they need quickly enough. This is especially true in mathematics and to a certain extent in writing, despite extremely good marking systems in both subjects.

The curriculum is good and offers pupils a breadth of experience because it draws connections between subjects so as to make learning more relevant. Activities that enrich the curriculum are outstanding. A two-week art project resulted in pupils throughout the school producing high quality, vibrant, large scale acrylic paintings, silk prints and glazed tile works. Many pupils play in the school's orchestra and small ensemble groups. Well established links with schools in other countries give pupils an insight into different cultures and a sense of being part of a wider community.

Pupils' good personal development is underpinned by their exemplary behaviour and good attendance. Pupils know why it is important to lead healthy lives and their energetic play at break-times together with their enthusiasm for sports ensure they are fit. They are well cared for and say they feel safe in school. Procedures for safeguarding pupils fully meet requirements. The school helps pupils to recognise and appreciate the diversities of the world in which they live. As a result they are articulate, self-assured, cheerful young people who are confident, take responsibilities as a matter of course and have a lively interest in learning. These skills and

qualities certainly help them make an excellent contribution to the community. School councillors explained, 'We need to try to make a difference' and gave their decision to install a lift in school as an example. Pupils say that assemblies help them deal with things that matter to them in their daily lives. This is why they talk openly about serious issues and say with conviction: 'Everyone's really nice here and if you're new you don't have to worry.' Pupils are certainly well prepared for their future lives.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

By the end of the Reception year most children meet, and a good proportion exceed, the levels expected, especially in their personal, social and emotional development and early literacy and numeracy skills. This is satisfactory progress from their slightly above average starting point. They are taught satisfactorily. While adults undoubtedly care for children well, which helps them settle in quickly, there are insufficient opportunities for children to direct their own learning. Tasks are weighted towards those directed by adults, especially those promoting children's early reading, writing and number skills. The school has identified this and the fact that the children's outdoor area for learning does not as yet offer children the widest opportunities. Teachers do organise instructive and clearly fascinating activities, for example, encouraging children to join together long plastic pipes and then pour water (and cars!) down them. However, adults do not use the potential of using these sorts of activities to extend children's problem solving, reasoning skills or their understanding of the world. This is because observing children's learning and then planning activities to help them make the next steps are not fundamental to the way learning is organised. The school has suitable plans to develop ready access to outside for younger children, who currently have an extended playtime in the outdoor area. The EYFS is managed satisfactorily with strengths in resources, displays and promoting children's welfare. Nevertheless, there are limitations in the way provision is planned which is not sufficiently based on what children need to learn next.

What the school should do to improve further

- Involve pupils more fully in checking their learning so they get the instant help they need to enable them to make faster progress.
- Give Reception children more time to learn on their own and to choose from a wide range of interesting indoor and outdoor activities that cover all areas of their learning and challenge them to think for themselves.
- Ensure that observations of what Reception children know and can do are used by staff to plan the next steps in their learning.

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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?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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/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?	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	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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?	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

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**

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave me when I inspected your school recently. Lots of you smiled and chatted to me and I felt comfortable and welcome. I thoroughly enjoyed finding out about the work you do and a special thanks to those who talked with me about the school and brought their English, mathematics and science books to show me. Your school gives you a good all round education.

These are the best things about your school:

- your art work and music making are impressive
- you achieve well, especially in science, and some of you are first-rate mathematicians
- your behaviour is excellent
- your teachers make learning fun and that is why you really enjoy your lessons
- your school is run well and all the staff spend a lot of time thinking how they can help you all to make the best possible progress.

There are three things I have asked your school to do to make it even better.

- It would help those of you who are less confident or who find some parts of learning easy and other parts difficult, if your teachers thought of a way in which you could tell them what puzzles you. You could then get the help you need very quickly, and this would help you to make faster progress.
- I have asked the school to make sure that Reception children have a lot more time to learn on their own both indoors and outdoors and have lots more interesting things to do that make them think and work things out by themselves.
- I have asked the staff in Reception class to note down what the children know and can do and to use this information to help them plan the next steps in children's learning.