

Richard Avenue Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108819
Local Authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	337159
Inspection dates	20–21 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Margaret Armstrong

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 of pupils on the school roll	418
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs A Moore
Headteacher	Mrs K Todd
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors spent 40% of their time observing learning, visited 22 lessons, observed 18 teachers and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed pupils at work, and looked at the data the school has collected on pupils' progress, the safeguarding procedures, the school improvement plan and systems for monitoring the quality of teaching. There were 170 parental questionnaires returned and scrutinised by the inspection team. Staff and pupil questionnaires were also analysed during the inspection.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the quality of outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- how well teaching and learning supports progress for all pupils to meet challenging targets
- how effectively all leaders and managers monitor, review and evaluate the impact of their actions to improve outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

The school is situated to the west of the city of Sunderland. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and for whom English is not their first language, is much higher than average. Early Years Foundation Stage provision consists of a Nursery class and two Reception classes. The school has gained a number of awards including the Healthy Schools Status, Activemark and the Artsmark Silver. The school runs its own breakfast club and offers study support and a number of learning opportunities for families.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good and improving school. Very positive relationships and good pastoral care result in pupils' good behaviour and enthusiasm for learning. Pupils enjoy school. Their excellent awareness of how to stay safe, good understanding of healthy lifestyles and their good social skills means they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Pupils spoke confidently about the contribution they have made to improve the life of the school. For example, they take their responsibilities as fund-raisers and peer mentors very seriously. The school promotes cultural diversity very well through a wide range of special events such as 'Multicultural Week'. As a result, pupils make outstanding progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's engagement with parents and carers is excellent. The overwhelming majority of parents are very appreciative of the work of the school and speak highly of the 'caring, warm environment' where 'all children are valued as individuals'.

Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage at a level well below that typical for their age. An increasing number have very poorly developed language skills. Good provision in both the Nursery and the Reception classes means children rapidly become active learners and achieve well. The good progress children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage slows slightly in Key Stage 1. This is because teachers do not always make effective use of assessment information to build on the prior attainment of lower attaining pupils, particularly boys. Progress accelerates again in Key Stage 2, towards increasingly challenging targets. As a result, standards are average by the end of Year 6 and pupils achieve well. Good teaching, together with a broad range of imaginative opportunities for learning, motivates pupils well. The skilled work of specialist staff, together with effective intervention and support, enables pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those from minority ethnic groups and those at an early stage of learning English, to progress equally well.

Senior leaders have complementary skills and use these to good effect; they work well together as a team. Leaders at all levels are involved in monitoring the performance of the school and in taking steps to improve it. However, this action has not yet ensured teaching fully meets the needs of all pupils in Key Stage 1. Generally, self-evaluation is accurate and this has meant the school has successfully addressed weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. An example of this can be seen in the new, imaginative outdoor learning areas which provide ample opportunities for children in the Reception classes to explore the world around them. This realistic self-evaluation alongside the school's track record of tackling areas of weakness confirms there is good capacity for further improvement. Governors support the school well and are committed to continuous improvement. The school promotes community cohesion exceptionally

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well. Consequently, the school is a very cohesive and harmonious community where the contributions of all pupils are highly valued. Resources are managed well to secure good outcomes for pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in Key Stage 1 by ensuring that:
 - teachers make better use of assessment data to plan effectively, particularly for lower attaining boys
 - leaders at all levels are more rigorous in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils enjoy school and have good attitudes to learning. They arrive punctually, respond well in lessons and take a pride in their work. Exemplary relationships ensure that pupils behave well and are motivated to learn. Standards are below average at the end of Key Stage 1. Although the most recent school data indicate standards are rising, lower attaining pupils, particularly boys, do not always fully engage in their learning and this slows down the progress they make. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2 to attain average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress due to the carefully tailored support they receive. Pupils who join the school with limited English make good progress in developing their confidence in speaking, reading and writing because their needs are identified swiftly and provided for effectively.

Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy diet and taking regular exercise. Their understanding of how to stay safe is excellent and they are confident bullying is not tolerated. Visits to places of worship, extensive links with other countries and the exemplary way in which the school builds upon its own cultural diversity promote outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are proud of the contributions they make to their school and the local community. They act responsibly as members of the 'Playground Squad' and serve on the active school council. The good grounding pupils receive in their social and basic skills prepares them well for the next stages of learning.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good. It is most effective in Key Stage 2 where setting arrangements enable teachers to more accurately set work which is matched to the differing needs of pupils. Pupils are eager to learn because teachers use a range of exciting activities and resources. As a result, lessons have good pace and pupils engage well. Teachers set high expectations for all pupils. Clear explanations ensure pupils have a good understanding of what they are expected to do and how they will know they have been successful. Consequently, pupils talk confidently about what they need to do to improve their work. Teaching assistants are well trained and provide good support for individuals and small groups. Generally, teachers make good use of their knowledge of pupils' previous learning to ensure tasks are smartly tailored to pupils' needs. Occasionally, teachers do not use this information effectively enough to ensure the needs of lower attaining boys in Key Stage 1 are fully met.

The curriculum has been developed well to enhance pupils' motivation to learn. It is adapted expertly to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and also for pupils with limited English. There is a consistent approach to teaching and applying literacy, numeracy and other key skills across the curriculum. This contributes well to pupils' enjoyment of learning. An extensive range of activities is available to all pupils during the school day. These include opportunities to participate in exciting projects for dance, music and sport. Pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences outside school. They talked excitedly about the residential visits to France and Derwent Hill Outdoor centre and the contribution they have made to the development of the wildlife garden. The partnership with other schools in the area is

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supporting the school well in developing its curriculum. As a result, pupils benefit from specialist support in areas such as design and technology, singing, and business and enterprise.

The well-targeted care and support for pupils enable them to develop in a safe and secure environment. The clear guidance which is given on internet safety, for example, is appreciated by all pupils. All adults share a good understanding of the needs of individuals and provide an inclusive environment where all pupils confidently learn. This supportive approach is most valued by parents and pupils. Parents are kept informed of their children's well-being and they receive good quality information about academic progress and their child's current targets for improvement. Close working relationships with external agencies mean that support for vulnerable pupils is organised quickly so any barriers to learning can be addressed. Transition at all stages is a positive experience as teachers work closely with families to ensure pupils settle quickly into new surroundings.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's success in sharing her vision for the school is demonstrated by the good team spirit which pervades the school. The school's positive reputation in the community and the good outcomes for pupils is due to the effective support of staff and governors who share the headteacher's values and ambitions. As a result, the school is effective in promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination. Leaders make good use of a range of monitoring activities to improve the quality of teaching and other aspects of provision. They have been successful, for example, in making effective use of data to track the progress of those pupils at risk of poor attendance and to target support where it is most needed. As a result, attendance is now above average. However, although observations of teaching take place regularly, monitoring has not been rigorous enough in ensuring teachers fully meet the needs of lower attaining pupils, especially in Key Stage 1.

Leaders succeed well in ensuring pupils flourish in a highly cohesive school community. Good partnerships with specialist agencies and outstanding links with parents and carers ensure pupils are well supported. A particular strength is the breadth of work undertaken to support pupils' understanding of global and environmental issues and international communities. Consequently, the school makes an exceptional contribution

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to community cohesion. The governing body has extended its role in holding the school to account and is influential in determining the strategic direction of the school. There is a clear understanding of key responsibilities, especially of those which require robust assurance checks. As a result, safeguarding arrangements are robust and meet all requirements well, ensuring the safety and well-being of staff and pupils.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start and achieve well. From a low level of entry to the nursery, children make good progress and achieve well due to effective induction arrangements and good quality provision. Teaching and learning in the Nursery and Reception classes are good. This is because they are focused specifically on the children's personal and social skills and in their communication and language development and it is in these key aspects that they make the most progress. Nevertheless, by the time children leave the Reception Year, their skills are still below average. Parents and carers are very pleased with the start their children make. The good level of care given to children helps them settle quickly so they learn to work and play happily together in a safe and supportive learning environment. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are at an early stage of learning English are well integrated and benefit from good quality support. Adults make regular observations and assessments to plan the next steps of learning for each individual. As a result, there is a good balance between adult-led activities and those from which children can choose. Children are generally confident, independent and work together happily on joint tasks. They are willing to make choices and decisions and

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eagerly demonstrate how much they enjoy school. Activities, both indoors and outside, are interesting and excite children helping them enjoy their learning. Leadership and management are good and there are detailed plans in place to improve outdoor provision further. Arrangements to meet the health, safety and welfare of the children meet requirements.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers have overwhelmingly positive views of the school. Parents said the school is very approachable and responds quickly to queries and concerns. They feel their children are very safe and well cared for throughout the school. They comment that their children enjoy school, are well prepared to lead a healthy lifestyle and that staff work hard to help all children achieve as well as they should. A few individual concerns were raised and investigated by inspectors; these were not shared by the vast majority of parents and carers or substantiated by the inspection evidence.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Richard Avenue Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 170 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 418 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	104	61	64	38	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	110	65	59	35	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	84	49	78	46	5	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	87	51	80	47	3	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	98	58	71	42	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	90	53	74	44	5	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	84	49	82	48	3	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	61	36	95	56	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	64	38	100	59	3	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	70	41	88	52	8	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	60	35	95	56	4	2	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	83	49	81	48	3	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	100	59	66	39	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



22 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Richard Avenue Primary School, Sunderland, SR4 7LQ

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave to inspectors when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and especially liked the way in which you care for each other and your school. We would like to give special thanks to those who gave up some of their own time to talk to us about school life. We were impressed with your behaviour and the valuable contribution you make to the school and local community. We were particularly interested in the way you take responsibility as members of the school council and the gardening club. The displays of your work make the school an attractive place to learn. Yours is a good school and we found it to be a happy place where people get on very well and treat each other with respect. Your teachers know you well and find lots of interesting ways to help you learn and develop. We saw this in your lessons and in some of the exciting activities the school organises for you. As a result, you attain average standards by the time you leave at the end of Year 6. You clearly enjoy your learning and your attendance is improving. Well done!

We could see that you are encouraged to live healthy lifestyles. You have a very good understanding of how to stay safe and the school helps you become mature and sensible individuals. Your parents and carers told us they are very happy with the work of the school. The headteacher, staff and governors have your best interests at heart and are very dedicated to making sure you do well.

It is clear you have lots of lovely experiences at school but we have asked your headteacher and teachers to help you even more. We have asked them to check your teachers are making the best possible use of information about your progress to plan activities which fully meet your individual needs. You can help by continuing to come to school as regularly as you do, by working as hard as you can and by helping each other in and around school.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Margaret Armstrong

Lead inspector

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