

Richard Avenue Primary School

Hurstwood Road, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR4 7LQ

Inspection dates 15–16 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders, including governors, make sure teaching is good so that all pupils achieve well.
- The senior leadership team is highly ambitious for the school and is determined to raise further the attainment of all pupils. Recent actions have ensured that achievement is good and improving.
- Senior and middle leaders carry out their roles effectively and work together as part of a strong team. They accurately review the school's work and plan in detail the next steps the school needs to take to improve.
- The governing body is very well informed and holds the school to account, while remaining supportive. They enthusiastically share the school's vision for self improvement and working within the community.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make a good start in their reading, writing and understanding of number. They quickly develop skills that allow them to work and play together confidently and independently both inside and outside.
- Pupils' progress from their starting points is now good in every year group, including those pupils who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs or who are disabled. Progress is most rapid in Years 5 and 6.
- Teaching is good, which results in pupils learning quickly and enjoying their lessons. Teachers apply their high expectations to all subjects, allowing pupils to use their skills in reading, writing and mathematics in other subjects. Teaching assistants are skilled in supporting the learning of individuals and groups of pupils in the classroom.
- The behaviour of pupils is good, and is exemplary when they move around school and at playtime. There are high levels of trust and respect between pupils and adults in school.
- Pupils feel very safe, and their attendance is steadily improving and is now above average. They are usually eager to learn, and are very proud of their school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The rates of progress made by pupils over time have not been consistently outstanding across all year groups.
- Senior leaders do not check the progress made by groups of pupils often enough to address any gaps in achievement even sooner.
- Occasionally, some pupils are given work that is not well matched to their ability and the pace of some lessons results in pupils losing enthusiasm and concentration.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a good number of lessons or parts of lessons, including one observed jointly with the headteacher and one observed jointly with the deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors listened to some pupils read and reviewed a sample of their work alongside the headteacher and senior staff.
- Inspectors held meetings with different groups of people involved with the school. These included pupils, members of the governing body, the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, other members of the teaching staff, parents and a representative of the local authority.
- Seventy responses from parents via Ofsted’s on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the inspection questionnaire, and 33 responses from the school staff questionnaire were examined. The school’s informative website was also scrutinised.
- Inspectors viewed a range of documents, including information on pupils’ achievement, the school’s data on pupils’ current and recent progress, documents relating to safeguarding, and records of behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Philip Scott, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Karen Holmes	Additional Inspector
Timothy Nelson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Richard Avenue Primary is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and for whom English is not their first language is much higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils and therefore eligible for support through the pupil premium is slightly above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support children who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has achieved a great number of awards, including the Artsmark, the Basic Skills Mark and the Green Flag award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching so that standards of attainment and the rates of progress pupils make in their learning are outstanding by:
 - providing appropriately challenging work for pupils in every lesson so that it is neither too easy nor too hard
 - ensuring that the pace of lessons always allows pupils to remain engaged in their learning and maintain their concentration.
- Ensure senior leaders rigorously check the progress of all pupils more regularly in order to give immediate support to those at risk of falling behind and organise teaching so that any gaps between the achievement of groups of pupils narrows even further.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and the senior team have worked successfully to develop systems and procedures that support and encourage each teacher in school to improve in order to provide high quality teaching and guidance for all pupils. They share the same ambition to improve outcomes for all pupils, and to put the school firmly at the heart of the community. It is summed up by the comment that this is 'a very nurturing school with the children as its focus'.
- The senior team has developed an accurate and realistic picture of what the school does well, a well thought through prioritisation of actions and knows which areas it still needs to improve. They communicate a sense of drive and urgency to move forward and are ambitious to see success for all pupils.
- Procedures to check the quality of teaching across the school are thorough and well established, and include formal and informal observations, scrutiny of assessment data, discussions with teachers and analysis of work in books. However, although senior leaders check the performance and progress of individuals and groups of pupils across the school every term, this is not regular enough to give immediate support to those at risk of falling behind, and allow teachers to plan strategies and to close gaps between the achievement of groups of pupils even further.
- The performance of staff is well managed. Staff have challenging objectives for their own professional improvement, which are broadly linked to the progress made by pupils. The school's use of appropriate training matched to the needs of the school, as well as individuals' own needs, has been successful.
- Pupils benefit from a lively, well-planned curriculum, which is being reviewed as a school priority in light of the new National Curriculum, and it is starting to develop pupils' understanding and appreciation of British values. Topics reflected in immaculate displays around the school and in classrooms contribute to pupils' eagerness to learn, and have a clear focus on pupils' academic, physical and creative development. Opportunities to work together, demonstrate empathy, foster curiosity and imagination, and celebrate their own and others' successes and are evident in topics, such as a study of Anne Frank, local landmarks and a European Day, all of which provide a strong sense of 'togetherness' as a school. As a result, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional.
- The views of all pupils are valued and nurtured and many have opportunities to play an active part in the life of the school, such as through the school council or being a prefect, so all feel special. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed.
- The school works well with parents. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and positive about the school. One parent wrote that 'the staff at Richard Avenue are caring, compassionate and wonderful teachers.'
- Rigorous financial monitoring and evaluation ensures that the funds received by the school are used well, including the pupil premium. Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have worked to maintain the school's secure financial position while still undertaking projects to enhance the school building and grounds to support learning.
- The primary sport funding is used very well to increase teachers' expertise, develop strong links with the local secondary school and provide a wider range of sporting opportunities and after-school clubs such as street dance, skipping, gymnastics and a sports club. Pupils' participation in these clubs has increased significantly. The school effectively enables pupils to develop healthier lifestyles and better physical well-being.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures fully meet requirements. Record keeping and behaviour logs are kept up to date, allowing the school to track any patterns in incidents and take action to address issues quickly.
- The local authority knows the school well and offers support when needed.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well informed and possess the skills and expertise from their own professional backgrounds to challenge and support leaders appropriately, asking searching questions. Governors make a meaningful contribution to the way in which leaders check on the effectiveness of the school's performance, and help to set priorities for development. They are fully involved in strategic planning, and provide regular reports to governing body meetings following individual visits to the school.
 - Governors have an accurate view on the quality of teaching, and how this impacts on pupils' performance. They know how well different groups of pupils achieve, including disadvantaged pupils. Governors have exercised good financial monitoring, and check that teachers' salary increases link to their performance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Staff set high standards to which pupils respond well to, showing high levels of respect and friendliness to adults, visitors and their classmates. This ensures a happy, welcoming and harmonious school, committed to success for all pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour in the playground, in the dining hall and as they move around the school building is exemplary. They are polite and courteous, showing excellent manners, and listen to each other and take turns. They look after and care for each other well.
- Well-kept records show that minor incidents of poor behaviour involving a very small number of pupils, some of whom are no longer at the school, are dealt with swiftly and effectively. The responses to the on-line questionnaire shows that parents think that pupils' behaviour is very good, and that they are kept safe at school.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the school's systems to manage behaviour and are aware of the different types of bullying they may encounter, including cyber bullying. They are confident that should any bullying occur, it would be quickly resolved by staff.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are mostly good across the school, but occasionally a few pupils become disengaged from learning, lose concentration or are slow to respond to instructions.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. It is typified by the harmonious and friendly atmosphere around the school. Pupils report they feel very safe in school and know how to stay safe out of school. They appreciate the range of visitors to the school, the information they receive in assemblies and in lessons, such as in a Year 3 lesson on coastguards and how to stay safe at the seaside, and when on trains. Pupils have very good knowledge about the safe use of the internet and social networking sites.
- The school has worked very effectively to introduce a range of strategies to promote good attendance, such as weekly class awards and a 'lucky dip' for 100% attendance, and a group called 'Attendance 100'. As a result, attendance has improved and is now above average.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good across the school. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and ensure that the pace of learning and level of challenge usually enables pupils to concentrate and be fully involved in learning. However, this is not always the case for all teaching and occasionally the work is either too hard or too easy for pupils and so their progress slows. This variance over time has resulted in pupils' rates of progress and the standards reached not being high enough in the past.
- Imaginative strategies and exciting resources are often used to capture pupils' interest and ensure they remain engaged and enthusiastic throughout the lesson. This was seen, for example, when Year 5 pupils were describing a character from Greek mythology inspired by a picture of Medusa. Another good example was seen when Year 2 pupils created sentences by selecting two nouns from a bag to write a sentence about the properties of materials, such as 'I would not make a jumper from wood because of splinters'.
- Pupils benefit from teachers' excellent subject knowledge, as seen in a Year 6 geography lesson, when pupils found and recorded the position and features of various mountain ranges across Europe. The lesson was skilfully planned and increased pupils' knowledge and expertise well through the teacher's own knowledge and thorough preparation.
- Pupils' progress in lessons is checked well, often through excellent questioning, and this provides an accurate picture of what pupils have grasped, can do, and what their next steps in learning will be. Marking of work is thorough and regular, and usually of a high standard in both English and mathematics books, where detailed comments show clearly how well each pupil has done and provide next steps and further challenges.
- Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and manage classes well. This establishes a learning atmosphere that allows pupils to make good progress because they are keen to succeed by working hard, even requesting homework themselves in a Year 5 mathematics lesson on solving real-life problems using multiplication. Relationships are good and levels of trust are high; pupils listen attentively to adults and each other, and their spiritual, moral and social development is promoted extremely well.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together and give timely and constructive advice to pupils, including disabled pupils or those with special educational needs. This ensures that pupils have the

support and challenge that they need to make good progress. Pupils appreciate this support and report that they enjoy learning, that teachers make lessons fun but also that teachers usually make them work hard. Parents feel that children are taught very well.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils start Key Stage 1 with skills slightly below what is expected for their age. Most pupils now make at least good progress as they move through school. Data shows that standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 are continuing to rise year on year and by the end of Key Stage 2 standards are broadly average, although slightly higher than other pupils nationally in reading, mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils are making good progress in their knowledge of letters and the sounds that they make (phonics), and they read well. Pupils use their imaginations to write creatively, using correct sentences and punctuation, such as in Year 1, where pupils wrote sentences to re-tell the story of 'Oliver's Vegetables'.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 make good and increasingly rapid progress because of consistently good teaching, high expectations, quality marking in English and mathematics and pupils' good attitudes to learning. This is especially the case in Years 5 and 6, and also because the school has organised teaching groups very effectively. Assessment information and work in books indicates that standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics, which represents good progress from where they were at the end of Key Stage 1.
- Reading is taught effectively across the school, basic skills reinforced and practised regularly. Older pupils are developing their fluency and understanding of what they are reading, whether reading for pleasure or researching in other subjects.
- In mathematics, basic skills are taught well, such as in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, where pupils used cubes to find one half, one quarter and three quarters of numbers up to 40. Across the school, teachers make sure pupils have the opportunity to use their basic numeracy skills in a range of other subjects, for example, Year 6 using six -digit coordinates in geography.
- All groups of pupils make similarly good progress across the school, including the most able pupils. The proportion of pupils reaching above average levels of attainment by the end of Year 6 is similar to the proportion nationally, but a greater proportion of pupils in the school than nationally reach above average standards in reading. However, the progress of a minority of pupils is not as fast as it could be because the work set does not always match the pupils' ability well enough.
- Early identification of pupils who are at risk of falling behind enables the school to make effective provision for the small number of pupils who have special educational needs or who are disabled. These pupils make mostly good progress because they are given activities well matched to their individual ability and needs.
- The gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils in the school and other pupils nationally is closing. The latest published assessment data shows that disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 were about one term behind their classmates in reading and mathematics, but broadly in line with all pupils nationally. In writing, disadvantaged pupils were achieving levels in line with both other pupils in school and all pupils nationally. The gap between these groups of pupils in other years is narrowing, although it does vary from year group to year group.
- The gap between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates is continuing to narrow because the school uses the pupil premium funding well to support individuals and groups of pupils in a variety of ways. However, this is not currently assessed by senior leaders frequently enough to be able to adjust the support provided even sooner to achieve the very best effect.

The early years provision is good

- Children make a good start to their education in the early years. They enter nursery with knowledge and skills that are generally below those typical for their age, but there is a wide range within each year group. As a result of both good provision and teaching, and a vibrant, stimulating learning environment, children make good progress and leave the Reception class with skills slightly below those usually found. Standards are steadily rising year on year. Children with little or no spoken English on entry to school do just as well as this because they are supported and taught exceptionally well by staff.
- Positive relationships between staff, children and parents are a key strength of the early years. This helps

children develop confidence and a positive attitude to school and to learning. During the inspection, children worked and played happily together both inside and outside, especially in the Nursery class.

- Teaching is good and improving. Staff encourage children to experiment, and become more independent through well-established and consistent routines. Activities are organised so that there is an effective balance of activities led by adults and those chosen by children for them to explore and practise the skills they learn as they play. Teaching assistants are well deployed, and effectively extend the quality of learning and help to develop children's speaking and listening skills.
- Adults use assessment information well to ensure planned activities build securely on the progress that children have made. However, the use of the outside to develop children's learning further through a greater range of purposeful activities is not always fully exploited.
- Basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics are promoted through a range of interesting activities. Children were confidently counting up to 10 pumpkins grown on the school allotment during their autumn trail, while others were using their senses to describe different smells, or describing sounds they heard when on a 'listening walk' in the pouring rain.
- All groups of children make good progress in the early years, including the most able and those with special educational needs or who are disabled. Any specific needs are quickly identified and activities planned to ensure that their needs are met. Links between home and school are excellent.
- The leadership and management of the early years are good and staff are constantly and enthusiastically seeking improvements. The early years leader knows the strengths and weaknesses of the provision, and has well-thought through plans to further improve the setting. The provision is checked regularly to make sure children are safe, and staff are well trained.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	108819
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	448732

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	440
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Scott Elwell
Headteacher	K Todd
Date of previous school inspection	20 January 2010
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