



Reed First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117129
LEA HERTFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 279991
Inspection dates 3 July 2006 to 3 July 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Keith Sadler AI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Jacksons Lane
School category	Community		SG8 8AB
Age range of pupils	3 to 9		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01763 848304
Number on roll	48	Fax number	01763 848304
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs.Nadine Fynn
Date of previous inspection	23 May 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Alison Thomas

Age group 3 to 9	Inspection dates 3 July 2006 - 3 July 2006	Inspection number 279991
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a very small village first school. Pupils come from a wide area including other local villages. Nearly all are from White British backgrounds and a small number of pupils speak English as an additional language. Pupils come from a wide range of economic backgrounds and the proportion entitled to free school meals is very low. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities varies considerably from year to year and is currently average. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is average. The school has a very high rate of pupils leaving and joining the school. For example, due to house moves, only half of the current junior class have been in the school since Year 1.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspection confirms the school's view that its overall effectiveness is good. The school has some outstanding features and offers good value for money. Children in the Foundation Stage settle quickly and well. The quality of provision here is good. This is due to the good quality teaching, the excellent learning environment and the high quality of care and support that all the adults provide. In consequence the children achieve well and reach good standards. Pupils continue to make good progress in the other year groups. By the time that they leave at the end of Year 4, they attain standards that are above the national expectations. In the infant and junior classes, as in the Foundation Stage, the pupils achieve well because the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and all pupils are helped to feel safe and secure through the outstanding care, guidance and support that is provided. This high quality support helps to create an overwhelmingly positive atmosphere that pervades the school. In consequence the pupils develop very positive attitudes to school and a love of learning. Their behaviour and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. As one pupil said, 'If we are upset the teachers make things right for us straight away.' Parents are unanimously supportive of the school. One parent commented, 'I moved my child from another school eighteen months ago and her behaviour and schooling has improved tenfold.' However, pupils are not clear enough what their targets for improvement are, or what they need to do to achieve them. A vital factor in the school's success is in the quality of leadership and management. The headteacher in particular provides very good leadership and she sets an extremely clear educational direction for the school. This is based on her belief that pupils achieve best within a supportive and caring environment. She has ensured that the school has made good improvement since the last inspection and has developed the school's good capacity for further improvement in the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide pupils with clear targets for their improvement and tell them how they can be achieved.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school. Although the full range of ability is represented when children enter the school, overall their attainment is in line with standards typically found in this age group. Due to the consistently good provision, pupils progress and achieve well in all three classes. Standards by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 4 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. In science standards are also above average and the pupils have developed above average skills and understanding of scientific investigations. Challenging targets are set for pupils and invariably met, because teachers are careful in their assessments of pupils' achievements and ensure that suitably challenging work is set for them. However

pupils do not have a clear enough understanding themselves of what these targets are. All groups of pupils succeed well. Those that find learning hard are particularly well supported. The arrangements for these pupils are good, with the school providing well through additional support and careful checking of their progress. In consequence their progress matches that of their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and their behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is exemplary. They have very positive attitudes to lessons and school, feel safe and they thoroughly enjoy all that the school has to offer. There have been no exclusions and attendance is above average. Assemblies create a strong sense of community and this enables pupils to feel proud of themselves and what they have achieved. Those pupils with responsibilities, such as being 'buddies' to younger pupils, take them seriously and make a very valuable contribution to the life of the school. The pupils have an excellent understanding of the need to adopt safe practices. They understand, for example, the critical importance of protecting themselves from the sun during a hot day. They also help by undertaking a wide range of risk assessments themselves, such as one on playground safety. Due to the excellence of the school's provision in the area of developing healthy lifestyles, pupils' understanding is extremely good. They are clear about the benefits of exercise and have an exceptionally clear appreciation of healthy eating. The school gives a strong focus to literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) skills and team working, including working on projects that include pupils from three to nine years of age. The success of this high focus prepares pupils very well for their transfer to middle schools.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and is the key reason for the good progress that pupils make. In all three classes, teachers prepare lessons well and they are accomplished at ensuring that lessons are made stimulating and interesting for the different ability groups and year groups that are present in each class. Behaviour management is good and teachers ensure that the positive relationships that pervade the school help the pupils to achieve well. Pupils are listened to and presented with interesting and challenging tasks. The support staff make a strong contribution because they provide very good support for groups of pupils, such as those who find learning hard or a single year group within a class. They ensure that pupils concentrate well and tasks are successfully completed. This helps to cater for the pupils' wide range of learning needs very well. Teachers make good use of assessments through good questioning and this too helps to ensure that future work is adapted to meet the pupils' developing needs. The diagnosis and provision for pupils who find learning

hard are good. However, teachers do not make sure that the pupils understand what their targets are or how to meet them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a curriculum of good quality which meets the needs of all its pupils. National guidelines are used and have been adapted well, which results in a curriculum that is both imaginative and stimulating, whilst still focusing on key skills in language, mathematics, science and ICT. The school's ICT provision has been boosted by additional resources and this enables pupils to make good use of this high quality provision in most lessons. There is an excellent range of enrichment activities and a strong programme of visiting specialists, such as artists and musicians who work with the pupils. For example, a feltmaker visited recently and supported the creation of an outstanding piece of work to which all the pupils contributed, working together across the year groups from Nursery to Year 4. The school makes good use of specialist teachers in other schools, such as mathematics classes in the local upper school. There is a good range of after-school activities which pupils thoroughly enjoy. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good. Careful preparation and support enable these pupils to have full access to the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides pupils with good care, guidance and support. It provides a very safe and secure environment in which pupils thrive. There is a strong commitment to helping all pupils and this is aided by all the adults who have a strong relationship with all the pupils in the school. The arrangements for checking pupils' personal and academic progress are good, though the targets set are not shared with pupils. All pupils are regularly and systematically assessed and action taken to address difficulties and underachievement. Provision for pupils identified as having learning or medical difficulties is outstanding. They are supported exceptionally well and their progress against targets is monitored rigorously. Child protection and health and safety procedures are secure and all staff receive appropriate training on a regular basis.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and make a strong contribution to the pupils' achievement and personal development. The headteacher is effective and provides extremely clear educational direction. She has developed a very positive atmosphere of teamwork in which staff and pupils work closely together. All are invited to contribute their views both about the school's successes and what needs further improvement. This has led to the creation of a harmonious environment. The headteacher is determined to ensure that the school provides well for all pupils in terms of both their academic achievement and personal development. She is supported

well by the teaching staff who take on multiple responsibilities. The school's strategy of working as a whole team is effective, as evidenced for instance by the recent improvements in the use of ICT to support teaching and learning. The school has good systems for checking how well it is doing. Information gained is used well to contribute to the good quality improvement plan. Governors and staff work together in the plan's development and governors are directly involved in its evaluation. Parents' views are incorporated well using the questionnaires that focus on areas for improvement. The school has improved well since the last inspection and there is good capacity for further improvement. Governance is outstanding. Governors provide excellent support for the school and ensure that all legal requirements are met. Their daily involvement helps them to have a good understanding of the school's strengths. The school environment, both built and natural, is of high quality and the accommodation and level of resourcing for such a small school are good.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I really enjoyed visiting you when I came to inspect your school. You were very friendly and you welcomed me very well and helped me to find out about the school. Both you and your parents told me that you love school and that you feel very safe and well cared for. I am not surprised! Yours is a good school and everybody who works there tries very hard to help you to do well. Your teachers are good and they work hard to make sure that your lessons are interesting and exciting. You are also lucky in having a good headteacher. Mrs Thomas makes sure that you can all work and play together in such a friendly way. I was very impressed with your behaviour, which is excellent. You work hard in lessons so that you learn well. I have asked your teachers to make sure that you know what your targets are, particularly in literacy and numeracy. This will help you to make even better progress because you will know exactly what you have to do to improve. You're really lucky to go to Reed First School. It is a friendly place where everyone wants the best for you. Thank you once again for being so helpful to me.