

The Redstart Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 123736 |
| Local Authority | Somerset |
| Inspection number | 314698 |
| Inspection dates | 13–14 March 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Jon Palethorpe |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 325 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Eric Van Den Barselaar |
| Headteacher | Suzanne Flack |
| Date of previous school inspection | 13 October 2003 |
| School address | Redstart Road Chard TA20 1SD |
| Telephone number | 01460 67457 |
| Fax number | 01460 66552 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school serving both private and council housing. Many parents from outside the catchment area are choosing this school for their children because of the school's good reputation for special needs provision. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average but increasing. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is well below the national average. Children's attainment on joining Reception is broadly in line with expectations for this age group. There is an Early Years Centre on the site. The school has Healthy Schools Status, the Activemark and IIP Awards. It is working towards Dyslexia Friendly Status and the Challenge Award for provision for able pupils, and has enrolled on the Sustainable Schools Programme. The school has set up its own 'University', where one afternoon each week, pupils can study a variety of subjects not usually on the curriculum. It also has its own Forest School, where pupils can experience a range of outdoor activities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. There are outstanding features in several areas, in particular the curriculum, and pupils' personal development and well-being. The school has a deservedly good reputation locally. Parents recognise the school's good qualities, with many having chosen this school from out of catchment area. Such comments as, 'Not only is the school interested in my son's academic progress, but with his development as a whole', and 'I'm truly impressed with the school and how it is run', sum up the feelings of the vast majority of parents.

Many pupils benefit from good pre-school experiences. Effective transition arrangements enable children to settle quickly into the Foundation Stage because provision is good, and adjust to the new routines. Although overall, the school has a broadly average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, some year groups have a far higher than average number, the current Year 6 being one of those at nearly 30%. This means that to reach their current average standard in English, and above average standard in mathematics, science and information and communication technology, pupils have achieved well. Writing is the weakest area of pupils' attainment, and improvement in this area is part of the school's focus.

The good achievement is partly due to the good teaching pupils receive, and partly to the excellent curriculum that provides extremely well for pupils' academic and personal development. The amazing diversity of opportunities in the Redstart University, ranging from Japanese language and culture to budget management, effectively utilises the expertise of teachers and teaching assistants to enable pupils to develop a variety of skills that will be of use in future life. The innovative Forest School, where once a fortnight, pupils work on outdoor activities, develops team building and self-esteem. This effectively stimulates and motivates pupils, making them want to learn and want to be part of the school.

Teaching is good and has a positive impact on learning. There are numerous groups and activities to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and to challenge those who are gifted or talented. Some of these use the facilities of the local secondary school, and some involve extra swimming lessons or extra speech and language support. This is a caring school. Its inclusion strategy is outstanding, providing effectively for all pupils, irrespective of their academic, physical, social or emotional state. Teaching assistants play an important role in implementing this strategy. Academic guidance is good. However, marking and the use of pupils' individual targets, is not applied consistently throughout the school.

The school's leadership and management are good. The work of the headteacher is particularly effective. She has built a strong team, including teachers, teaching assistants and governors, who all work with a clear purpose and direction. They have a clear view on what the school does well and what needs to be improved. Nevertheless, the role of the subject co-ordinators has been under-developed, and they have not had sufficient impact on standards in their subject. The school's track record indicates a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good, giving children a good start to their school life. When children enter the school, their skills and experiences are wide ranging, with the majority at the expected levels for their age. Children settle quickly into school and get off to a good start because of the close partnership with parents and well-planned and

stimulating routines and activities. Good leadership ensures well trained staff work very well together to make sure children are happy and safe in school. Teaching is good. Staff have high expectations of the children, who respond well to the rich variety of activities that are planned for them each day. Consequently, they make appropriate and often good progress in the Foundation Stage. By the time they are in Year 1, they reach standards that are mostly above those expected of children of this age, although average for communication, language and literacy. Children enjoy friendly relationships with each other as well as adults, and their behaviour is exemplary. The outside area is used effectively to support children's learning. Creative and physical development is fostered well through a good range of play opportunities that children explore freely.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of pupils' writing, particularly in terms of vocabulary.
- Develop the role of subject co-ordinators to ensure that they have a greater impact on raising standards.
- Improve the quality of marking, making more effective use of pupils' targets to bring about improvements.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In 2007, at the end of Year 2 pupils reached slightly below average levels in reading and writing, and slightly above average level in mathematics. However, the school's records show that these results were distorted by more than 25% of pupils who did not start at the school in the Reception year, with many of these having learning difficulties. Without these pupils included, results show average standards in writing, above average in reading and well above in mathematics. The current Year 2 pupils are making good progress and reaching above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The 2007 standards at the end of Year 6 were above average in English, mathematics and science, showing that pupils had made good progress in all subjects. Currently, Year 6 pupils are reaching average standards in English, but above average standards in mathematics and science. In English, reading is much stronger than writing, and the school's focus is to improve writing performance. However, there is a high percentage of pupils in this year group with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and these pupils are making very good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Behaviour is exemplary both in lessons and on the playground. Pupils' cultural understanding develops well through art, music and literature, but the pupils' understanding of cultural diversity in Britain is not as fully developed. Enjoyment of school is good, particularly in the exciting opportunities in many lessons, although very occasionally, pupils show disinterest and are not fully engaged. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure in school. They have peers who support them in the playground (Redstart Rangers) and know that the teachers will help them if they have problems. Pupils understand the need to eat healthily and they appreciate the value of exercise, as seen in the popularity of sport in the after school clubs. Their contribution to the local and global community is outstanding i.e. sponsored events for charity and the involvement of pupils in the work towards becoming a Fair Trade school. Pupils influence improvements in the school, such as

the new school uniform, through the school council, and learn about democratic processes by electing their councillors. Sound basic skills in literacy, and good skills numeracy and information and communication technology, together with aspects of the Redstart University, where pupils are able to choose from a variety of topics including budget management, prepare pupils well for their future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good which enables pupils to make good progress. Teaching ranges from outstanding to satisfactory. Work is effectively planned to cater for different ages and abilities in each class, with good use of prior assessment to determine the level of challenge. Relationships are excellent, with pupils confident to offer their opinions. Consequently, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are outstanding. Teachers have good knowledge of their subjects enabling them to teach clearly and confidently. They use their interactive whiteboards very well to motivate pupils, and pupils often use computers to help their learning. Skilled teaching assistants give very good support, often for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but also for the higher attaining pupils. All pupils, including those with academic, physical, social or emotional problems, are fully included – an outstanding element of the school's provision. Very occasionally, lessons are too teacher directed, with not enough pupil discovery or independence. Marking is completed, but does not always indicate to pupils how they can improve, and it is not always related to pupils' targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school's curriculum, including in the Foundation Stage, is outstanding, with a good balance between developing core academic skills and personal development. The excellent Forest School excites and inspires pupils, nurturing their social and emotional growth. The innovative Redstart University, with its wide range of activities, very effectively develops self-confidence and skills to achieve future economic well-being. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is good. Extensive and well-considered additional learning programmes ensure that the school meets the needs of all pupils. This includes those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those who are gifted or talented. There is an appropriate system for supporting the very few pupils who have English as an additional language. The school's personal, social and health education curriculum is well developed and has very positive effects on pupils' personal development. The impressive curriculum is enriched further with a good range of lunchtime and after school activities. Good use is made of visits, visitors and links with other school to bring the curriculum to life.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care, guidance and support are outstanding. Teacher-pupil relationships are excellent and pupils enjoy school, often commenting that lessons are fun. The safety of pupils is ensured through robust child protection processes and risk assessments that meet all statutory requirements. Careful consideration is given to supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those with English as an additional language, often through intervention

strategies. Sessions are provided for higher attaining pupils to be challenged beyond the normal curriculum. Attendance is good, but, in spite of careful monitoring by the school, attendance rates are adversely affected by unauthorised holidays being taken in term time. Academic guidance is good. The best marking analyses what a pupil has done well and points precisely to where improvements should be made, but not all marking is equally skilful in moving pupils' learning on. Too often, individual targets are not used by either the teachers or the pupils to promote learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has successfully developed a hard-working team with a strong commitment to raising standards that is reaping rewards. Standards in science and ICT have greatly improved since the last inspection. Writing has improved, but the school recognises that there is still further to go. The impact of leadership and management on pupils' personal development and well-being, and on the curriculum, has led to these areas being outstanding. The leadership role of co-ordinators is underdeveloped and they do not have sufficient impact on raising standards. Systems for monitoring teaching and learning are in place, but are not always sufficiently robust. However, there are effective systems in place to improve teaching. The school's self-evaluation is largely accurate but is modest in its estimation of pupils' personal development and well-being, and some slight over-estimation of the impact of academic guidance. Target setting is realistic and based on tracking data, but is not fully embedded across all year groups. The school keeps a close eye on all pupils' progress, using intervention strategies particularly well. High quality care, including the use of a range of outside agencies, effectively promotes pupils' personal development and well-being. Governors are kept well informed. They are well organised and both support and challenge the school effectively. They have effectively addressed the issues raised in the last inspection. Equality of opportunity is very well addressed, with inclusion being exemplary. All resources, including teachers and teaching assistants, are very well used in pursuit of value for money.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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? | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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| 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 disabilities make progress | 2 |

Personal development and well-being

| | |
|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| 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

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|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 1 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 2 |

¹ 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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| 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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 1 |
| 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 |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

17 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Redstart Primary School, Chard, Somerset, TA20 1SD

Thank you very much for making us feel so welcome in your school. We found it a great pleasure to chat to you and find out how you are getting on. We thought that you looked particularly smart, and that you had made a good choice with your school uniform.

We think that yours is a good school, with some things that are outstanding – that means really good. Here are some of the reasons we think that.

- Teaching is good, which means that you can make good progress in your work.
- The curriculum you have, including Forest School and Redstart University, gives you a superb range of activities to do.
- We very much like the way that you are all included in the school's activities.
- All the staff take really good care of you, and help you to grow up as sensible and healthy young people.

All these things happen because the school is well run by the headteacher, governors, teachers and teaching assistants working together as a team. You respond well to this by your excellent attitudes and behaviour. We have asked the staff and governors to make sure that you improve the quality of your writing and that you know and understand your targets better. We also want the subject co-ordinators to know more about how well you are doing in each subject, and to make sure that marking in your books is more helpful.

Well done to all of you. Keep working hard and trying your best.

Best wishes

Jon Palethorpe

Lead Inspector