

# Red Hall Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114183
<b>Local Authority</b>	Darlington
<b>Inspection number</b>	325960
<b>Inspection dates</b>	31 March –1 April 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Margaret Farrow HMI

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	185
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	42
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr John Morrison
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Peter Boddy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 November 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Headingley Crescent Darlington County Durham DL1 2ST
<b>Telephone number</b>	01325 254770
<b>Fax number</b>	01325 254773

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	31 March –1 April 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspector's and an additional inspector.

## Description of the school

Red Hall is an average sized primary school serving an area of Darlington borough that experiences significant economic and social disadvantage and over half of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Most pupils are of White British heritage. Of the small proportion of pupils from minority ethnic communities, a very small number have English as a second language. A significantly higher-than-average number of pupils are deemed to have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, none of whom have a statement of special educational needs. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery and Reception class. A private childcare provider is based on the school site. It is subject to a different inspection and is not reported here. The school holds a number of nationally recognised awards including Investors in People, the Healthy Schools award, Activemark and Artsmark Gold Standard.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Red Hall is a good school with outstanding features that include the care, support and guidance provided to pupils. It is an inclusive, nurturing school and the headteacher and staff go out of their way to make sure everyone can take part in all the school has to offer and make the most of their time in school. The school provides a rich array of experiences, including visits and visitors, to broaden pupils' horizons, raise their aspirations and add to their enjoyment. Great care is taken to build pupils' confidence and self-esteem and to ensure they can experience the reality of the school's motto; 'Believe and achieve.' Such actions contribute to pupils' good attendance and achievement, and excellent behaviour and personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Pupils enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills, knowledge and understanding that are well below those expected for their age. As a result of good teaching and a well tailored curriculum, children make good progress in all areas of learning. Despite this, pupils do not catch up from their very low start by the end of Key Stage 1 and the standards they attain in their teacher assessments remain well below the national average. However, standards are average when compared with those found in similar schools nationally. Pupils' progress accelerates as they move through Key Stage 2 and by the time they leave school, an average proportion of pupils attain Level 4 or above in the national tests in English and Science. This represents good progress overall given pupils starting points. Mathematics results at both Key Stages have proved stubborn to improve since the last inspection. They are now improving because of the good actions recently taken. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress because of the effective support and help they receive.

Teaching is good overall because of the actions taken to improve it. Unsatisfactory teaching has been eradicated and some is outstanding. Strengths include excellent relationships and good use of resources. Lessons are generally planned well; however, work is not always pitched precisely enough to meet the needs of all pupils. For example, the school's recently strengthened excellent and regular assessment systems now inform pupils and staff exactly how well pupils are progressing and what they need to learn next. However, not all teachers are yet using this information well enough to tailor their planning to match all pupils individual needs. Consequently, some of the more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged.

The good curriculum is extended exceptionally well by the wide variety of out-of-school clubs. Pupils say they particularly like the many sporting activities in which they can take part. These contribute to pupils' excellent understanding of how to lead healthy lives. Partnerships with outside agencies are outstanding, particularly so in those secured to enhance the curriculum and to support the needs of children and their families in times of crisis. Partnerships with parents are good and the school continues to strive to improve communications with them and involve them in the life of the school. Nearly 100 parents responded to the inspection questionnaire. They were overwhelmingly and consistently positive about the school's impact on their children's enjoyment of and progress in school. They all believe the school takes great care of their children and virtually all think the school is well led, behaviour is good and their children's views are taken into account.

The school is well led and managed by the headteacher. He is ably supported by his leadership team and makes sure everyone contributes and feels part of the school's improvement. Senior

and middle managers and governors are fully involved in the evaluation of the school's work. Consequently, they have a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school development plan translates those weaknesses into focused priorities for improvement and they are tackled resolutely. For example, the need to improve pupils' behaviour, self-esteem and progress in writing and mathematics instigated the Assertive Mentoring, Big Write and basic skills programmes. These are reaping their rewards as evidenced by the very good confidence and attitudes of pupils as well as the good progress they make in English and science and recent improvement in mathematics. The school knows it needs to continue to raise standards further, especially in mathematics and for some of the more able pupils. The good leadership, strong team ethos amongst the staff, and the increasingly successful focus on raising standards demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve further.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Good leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage ensure that children are provided with a good start to their education. For many, attending the Nursery is their first experience of learning outside the home and a high proportion enter with skills that are well below that typical for their age, particularly in communication, language and social development. As a result of the outstanding care and support, children quickly settle in and make good progress in their learning and attitudes as they move through the unit. Children's speaking and listening skills develop well and they talk confidently when learning through play and making decisions about what to do next. A good balance of teacher-led and child-led activities supports the development of children's independence skills, confidence and self-esteem. Relationships between staff and children are exemplary; this helps children develop the positive attitudes to learning that sustain them as they move through the school. Well chosen and stimulating activities provide children with every opportunity to explore the indoor and outdoor provision seamlessly. This is because provision is well planned so that it provides a great balance of fun, challenge and exploration.

A relentless focus on identifying the needs of individual children ensures that adults have a very clear understanding about how well children are doing and what else they need to do to develop further. Planning is based on children's current achievements and outcomes from ongoing observation and assessment. Their progress is checked assiduously. By the time they enter Year 1, children have made good and occasionally exceptional progress, although their achievements remain well below that found nationally. Excellent relationships with Sure Start, the childcare provider, health and other agencies make certain that vulnerable children and children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified quickly so that their particular needs are met.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards further, particularly in mathematics and for more able pupils.
- Ensure the school's information about pupils' progress informs all teachers' planning so that pupils' work is always matched to their specific needs to enable them to make the very best progress possible.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

There has been a whole-school focus on improving basic skills over the past two years, starting in writing and, as a consequence, results in English have risen significantly. The school has developed a similar strategy for mathematics and current assessments and inspection evidence show that the gap between standards in mathematics and English and science is narrowing successfully. The school is well on the way to achieving their challenging 2009 end of Key Stage 2 targets. Senior managers are aware that boys' attainment has lagged behind that of girls. The successful concentration of developing basic mathematical skills and regular assessment of their progress to enable targeted support is helping to improve matters. The school is aware that not enough children attain higher levels in their tests and assessments in English and mathematics and is taking action to remedy this. Current school assessment data and inspection evidence shows that standards are rising; pupils are continuing to make good progress in their learning and more pupils are attaining higher levels in English and mathematics in both Key Stages.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils show remarkable confidence, friendliness and politeness. They are extremely supportive of one another and say they feel safe and well cared for. Attendance is good and improving and reflects pupils' exceptional enjoyment of school. The school's good actions to reduce absence include encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their attendance and to arrive promptly in lessons. They willingly show their mentoring files that indicate how much better their attendance has been over time. Behaviour is exemplary in lessons and around the school and this contributes to the generally good progress they make in lessons. Pupils show excellent cultural awareness and are encouraged to think deeply about social and moral issues. A range of external accreditation and awards shows the high quality of personal development in the arts, sport and health. Pupils make a significant contribution to the school community through the elected school council which has real influence in school. They speak highly of the way they are allowed to express their opinions and have them acted upon. Pupils are also strongly involved in the wider community, for example, through working with the police and council groups to improve the environment and provision for young people locally. Their enterprise skills are well developed through this work. These and the many other skills they acquire, allied to the improving standards they achieve, mean that pupils are well prepared for the next phase of their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

All lessons are typified by a calm and purposeful atmosphere, good relationships between children and teachers and pupils' excellent behaviour. Consequently, pupils quickly settle into lessons and are willing to learn. In good lessons, teachers are well prepared and make the work interesting and successfully use artefacts and information and communication technology (ICT) to stimulate pupils' interest further. When teaching is good, pupils enjoy their lessons, work hard and make good progress. Lessons are generally well planned but when teaching is

satisfactory, planning does not always provide sufficiently challenging opportunities to stretch the most able pupils. In the more satisfactory lessons, pupils' interest wanes and they make only satisfactory progress.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The good curriculum is broad and balanced. It is inclusive, increasingly responsive to pupils' interests and based on activities which allow pupils to see the links between subjects. Pupils are given opportunities to write at length in subjects other than English and this has had an impact on raising standards in this subject. The recent introduction of strategies to improve mathematics has also led to improving standards, although some opportunities are missed to allow pupils to learn through the application of these skills. There are many excellent enrichment activities such as visits to museums and activity weeks which allow pupils to learn at first-hand. There is an increasing range of activities, including learning French, which helps pupils to develop their understanding of the wider world and which contributes to community cohesion. Music, art, design and technology are strengths of the curriculum. A strong programme of personal, social and health education including promoting pupils emotional health, contributes significantly to pupils' outstanding personal development. There is an exceptional programme of extra-curricular activities, including dancing, choir and a variety of sporting activities, which very many pupils attend and enjoy.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Pastoral care and academic guidance are outstanding. There are exceptional links with outside agencies to meet the diverse needs of the pupils. Vulnerable children and those pupils who need extra help are identified early and help is readily available. There is smooth transition between classes and Key Stages and a full programme of activities to prepare pupils well for the next phase of education. The school's highly effective mentoring programme has allowed pupils to have a clearer insight into their own work and attitudes and has helped to raise their achievement and levels of attendance. Rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress gives teachers all the information they need to ensure pupils have targets to improve their work. These are well known to pupils; in fact they proudly talk about how well they are working towards them. For some of the more able pupils, the targets are not always challenging enough. Overall however, regular assessments and marking ensure that pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to progress further. This has had a positive impact on raising standards.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Middle managers are well supported and say they are fully accountable for the performance of their pupils according to their subject areas and they contribute effectively to monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching, planning and pupils progress. Good professional development opportunities are valued and help them to continue to develop their competencies and leadership skills. Governors carry out their role as critical friends well, supporting and challenging the senior management team through the analysis of information and by questioning where weaknesses are identified. They monitor the finances of the school robustly and secure good value for money.

Staff are totally committed to the care and well-being of pupils. Robust arrangements for health and safety and safeguarding children are in place and meet national guidelines. Community cohesion is promoted well in school; it is a place of harmony, where diversity is celebrated and there is an atmosphere of respect and care. Stereotypes are robustly challenged. Through the curriculum and additional experiences, pupils understanding of the local community, its diversity and their role within it are developing well. Although the school is extending pupils understanding of global and cultural diversity, for example, through rekindling links with a community in India, it acknowledges that more remains to be done to ensure pupils understand their role in an increasingly complex world.

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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?	1
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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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

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<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

2 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Red Hall Primary School, Darlington, DL1 2ST

Thank you for making Mr Potter and myself so welcome when we inspected your school recently. A special thanks to all of you who took the time to speak to us and tell us about your school. I would also like you to thank all of the parents who completed the inspection questionnaire. They, like you, were all very positive about the quality of care and education you receive.

We think the school is a good school with many outstanding features. We were particularly impressed with your exemplary behaviour. Other outstanding elements include:

- your personal, social, emotional, spiritual, moral and cultural development
- the very good relationships between teachers and yourselves and the care and respect you have for each other and adults in school
- the care, guidance and support you receive by all staff and the opportunities available that help you in times of need
- the excellent range of after-school activities you can take part in and say you enjoy that support the good curriculum
- the very good assessment information the school holds about your progress, such as the information in your mentoring files that some of you in Year 6 so proudly showed us.

We have judged that the standards you attain by the time you leave school in Year 6 are average. This represents good progress taking into account your starting points when you entered Key Stage 2. Mr Boddy and all of the staff are working hard to improve standards further and we agree that the school needs to do this, especially in mathematics. The teaching you receive is generally good but some of you are not always stretched to do your best. As a result, we are asking Mr Boddy to make sure that all teachers use the very good information they now have about how well you are doing to make sure that work matches your needs and challenges you, especially those of you who find learning easier, to always achieve your best.

Once again thank you for making Mr Potter and I so welcome and being so friendly and well behaved. Well done! You are a testament to your school and I wish you all the best during the rest of your time in Red Hall.

Margaret Farrow

Her Majesty's Inspector