

Reed First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117129
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	326531
Inspection date	3 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Marianne Harris

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.

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	55
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Nadine Fynn
Headteacher	Mrs Alison Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	3 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Jacksons Lane Reed Royston Hertfordshire SG8 8AB
Telephone number	01763 848304
Fax number	01763 848304

Age group	3–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school. They investigated the following issues:

- the progress pupils make in writing
- whether or not pupils are aware of their targets and know how to improve their work
- whether the school's positive view of the curriculum is justified.

Evidence was obtained from lesson observations, discussions with staff and pupils, looking at work and talking to representatives of the governing body. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the schools own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

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 there are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities varies considerably from year to year and is currently very low. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is in line with that expected for their age. The school makes provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, including part time places for those who are three years old.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Reed First School provides excellent standards of education, care and support for all its pupils. Parents comment very positively about the progress their children make and know that the staff include all pupils extremely well.

The standards pupils reach fluctuate each year because the number of pupils sitting the tests is so small and the performance of each child affects the overall statistics significantly. Over the recent past, standards at the end of Year 2 have been consistently above average and current standards are well above average. This represents excellent achievement for all pupils, whatever their ability. By the end of Year 4 standards continue to be well above average and pupils make excellent progress in order to maintain these standards. The excellent leadership and management of the school have ensured that pupils make outstanding progress writing and this has been a focus over the last year. Pupils are very confident when writing about a range of subjects, including creative stories and reports. Pupils report that they enjoy writing because they can use their imaginations and teachers give them many opportunities to write in lessons. This enthusiasm for writing spills out into other subjects and standards in subjects such as art and information and communication technology (ICT) are also high. Pupils in Year 1 are proud of the photographs they took during ICT day, uploading them onto the computer and displaying them for all to see. Pupils in Year 4 have explored Aboriginal art and have displayed their work alongside research they have carried out into the Australian way of life.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Each pupil has put much work into tending their plants, growing food to eat and understanding about how healthy it is to grow your own food. They have a great understanding of the importance of maintaining a healthy diet. They appreciate the many opportunities they have to participate in sporting activities due to the very effective sports partnership. Pupils say that behaviour is excellent and inspection evidence supported this view. They spoke about how well everyone gets along together and that the older ones look after the younger ones. Pupils know that there is always an adult they can turn to if they have a problem. They see their school as being at the heart of the community and they throw themselves into school life with maturity, organising sports day and eagerly anticipating the school performance. Attendance rates are above average because pupils enjoy school so much. Older pupils are looking forward to starting their new schools and talk about the friends they will be reunited with in September. Pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils make excellent progress because teaching and learning are outstanding. Work is planned to match each individual need in the class. Teachers are very skilful at providing work and activities that are appropriate for every age and stage in their class. Lessons move at a brisk pace and all pupils enjoy discussing their ideas and working together. Work is very well marked with plenty of encouragement and points on how to improve. Pupils say that teachers spend much time discussing individual work and talk to them about how to improve. There have been very successful links made between subjects, for example researching the work of Charles Darwin and using his sketches to create pictures of mixed up animals. The school has forged very good partnerships with other small schools and this has resulted in many joint activities, including residential visits and tennis tournaments. The school has a very positive view of the curriculum and it is outstanding. It is creative and based in the interests of the pupils. There are many visitors and visits into the local area that support learning and there are many extra activities for such a small school. Staff take excellent care of the pupils and make sure that the

school is a safe and welcoming place to be. Child protection systems are robust and staff are well trained. Pupils say that they feel safe and that school is an excellent place to be.

The leadership and management of the school have been extremely successful in improving provision since the time of the last inspection. The headteacher has created a dedicated and enthusiastic team. They all share in assessing how well the school is doing and their judgements are accurate. Standards have risen, attendance has improved and the successful partnerships have resulted in an excellent curriculum for all pupils. The issue identified at the time of the last inspection has been very successfully tackled. Pupils not only know their targets, but they can quote them, and say exactly how they are going to improve their work. The progress they make is carefully tracked and any pupil that is falling behind or experiencing difficulties is quickly identified and very effective strategies put in place so that they can make excellent progress. The school is seen as being at the heart of the community, both locally and in the wider context. The partnership with the church is particularly good at promoting pupils' spiritual development and the vicar is an integral part of school assemblies. Community cohesion is promoted extremely well. Pupils understand about various cultures and beliefs and know about the local area. Governors are extremely supportive of the school and are constant visitors in school. They know the school well and are very active in ensuring that high standards have been maintained. The strong sense of team work in the school and the very supportive parents and pupils who are very eager to learn mean that there is excellent capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make an excellent start to their school life. The well established induction procedures ensure that they settle into school quickly and make excellent progress in all areas of learning, particularly in their personal and social development. Outstanding leadership and management have been very successful in creating a vibrant and exciting learning environment, and the very best has been made of accommodation that is less than ideal. The outside area is used extremely well so that children can benefit from much outside play. They learn to grow their own food and to investigate insects and plants. Learning is very well planned, with a very good balance of activities that children choose for themselves and those that adults lead. Basic skills are taught excellently and children use these very effectively to begin to read and write. By the time they join Year 1 all have achieved excellently, many having exceeded the expected goals for their learning. Partnership with parents is very strong and many comment on the friendly approachable staff who care for their children. This care is excellent with every effort taken to ensure that children are safe and extremely well cared for. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage become confident learners with a thirst for knowledge that they take with them all through the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Work with the local authority to improve the accommodation for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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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?	1
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	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	1

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

6 July 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Reed First School, Reed, Hertfordshire, SG8 8AB

Thank you for being so helpful and welcoming when we visited your school recently. I am now writing to let you know what we found out.

You told us that your school is excellent and we agree with you. Your behaviour is outstanding, you are so friendly and polite, with the older ones taking care of the younger children with such confidence. The plants that you have all grown are very impressive and we hope that you enjoy eating them. They certainly looked very healthy and delicious.

We looked at your books as well visiting some lessons and thought that you make excellent progress. Your work is neat, you are keen to learn and your writing is very impressive. Thank you for allowing us to see what you can do. The fact that yours is a small school has not stopped your teachers planning exciting lessons that interest you. Nor has it prevented you from joining in many activities with other small and larger schools.

We looked carefully at the room that the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage use. It is very exciting with all the areas of learning, but it is old and quite shabby on the outside. We have asked your headteacher and governors to look for ways of finding better space for the children so that they can be more comfortable in the future.

Thank you once again for all your help and we wish you all the best.

Yours faithfully

Marianne Harris

Lead inspector