

Inspection of a good school: Richard Avenue Primary School

Hurstwood Road, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR4 7LQ

Inspection dates:

20 and 21 September 2023

Outcome

Richard Avenue Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils in this school treat each other with kindness and respect. They learn and play happily together. Staff show a genuine care for pupils. They know the pupils well and work with families to meet pupils' needs. This is a welcoming and inclusive school, with a true community spirit.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievements. These expectations inform a curriculum that provides pupils with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed. Pupils leave the school well prepared for secondary education. They work hard, show resilience and achieve well.

The school has established a clear set of routines for behaviour. Pupils follow these routines with high levels of consistency. This is a calm and orderly school. Pupils behave well and show sensitivity to the needs of others. As they progress through the school, pupils take increasing responsibility for their own behaviour.

Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and interests. There are several clubs, including art, music, sports and Spanish. Pupils take on roles as school councillors, reading buddies and well-being ambassadors. They also raise funds for charity and contribute to a local foodbank. Pupils learn what it is to be an active citizen.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has developed a broad and ambitious curriculum. From the early years, the curriculum is well sequenced so that pupils build their knowledge and skills in a coherent way. Pupils experience school project days that enrich and deepen their learning. On recent project days, they have learned about portraiture and the books of Roald Dahl. Staff celebrate pupils' work and encourage pupils to explore and express their ideas. The school identifies pupils' needs with skill and precision. A high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) complete the same work as other pupils. A few

pupils follow an appropriate alternative curriculum that meets their specific needs. These pupils join their peers for subjects such as physical education, art and music. Staff receive training so that they can meet the needs of all pupils, including pupils who speak English as an additional language.

From the start of Reception, pupils learn to read using phonics. Staff teach phonics well. The school provides extra help with reading for pupils who need it. This enables pupils to secure their phonic knowledge and develop their reading fluency. As pupils progress through the school, they develop their reading comprehension skills, and they read more challenging and diverse texts. Staff develop pupils' love for reading through events such as World Book Day, author visits and reading competitions. The school prioritises reading. Leaders understand its fundamental importance to pupils' educational success.

In the early years, the school provides a rich and purposeful learning environment. Children develop their language and communication skills. They gain the mathematical knowledge they need to prepare them for Year 1 and beyond. Staff develop children's understanding of the world in which they live. They provide suitable opportunities to promote children's physical development. At key stage 1 and 2, teachers show good subject knowledge. They revisit what pupils have learned before and build on this learning. Sometimes, however, teachers do not check pupils' understanding with enough rigour. They move on to the next stage of learning before some pupils have secured the essential knowledge they need.

Pupils learn without disruption. They listen and respond well to teachers' instructions. They maintain a focus on their work and cooperate well with their peers.

The school has established a comprehensive and age-appropriate personal development programme. Visits from external agencies enhance the quality of the programme. Pupils learn about relationships, equality and diversity, and physical and mental health. They are taught how to keep themselves safe, including online. Pupils take part in sport and well-being weeks that educate them further about the importance of staying healthy. In addition, pupils enjoy visits to places of cultural interest, such as museums and art galleries. The school shows a strong commitment to the wider development of pupils.

The school is providing pupils with a high-quality education. School leaders and governors share a vision of helping pupils realise their potential. They have developed strong, trusting relationships with parents and carers and the local community. Leaders prioritise staff well-being and ensure that staff workload is manageable. The school has created an open and inclusive culture in which staff feel highly valued. Staff enjoy working here. They work in collaboration with each other for the good of the pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some lessons, teachers do not check pupils' understanding with sufficient rigour. They move on to the next stage of learning too quickly. This means that some pupils find it difficult to apply new knowledge with appropriate accuracy and fluency. The school should ensure that teachers receive the training and development they need to identify pupils' misconceptions with precision and consistently secure pupils' knowledge and understanding over time.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2014.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	108819
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10289988
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	440
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Craig Hilton
Headteacher	Claire McKinney
Website	www.richardavenue.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher has been in post since April 2022.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, members of the leadership team, other school staff, members of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and art. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector also discussed the curriculum in science and history.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, staff survey, and to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Ian Rawstorne, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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