

Redbourn Infants and Nursery School

Long Cutt, Redbourn, St Albans, AL3 7EX

Inspection dates

3–4 November 2015

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Outcomes for pupils are outstanding. From the moment children enter the school, they are helped and encouraged to do their very best, whatever their starting points or individual abilities.
- Pupils make rapid and sustained progress through the school and reach standards by the end of Key Stage 1 which are consistently well above average and are continuing to improve.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged and looked after children are outstanding. These pupils achieve standards that are well above the national expectation for their age by the end of Key Stage 1. This is because their needs are thoughtfully considered and met by school leaders and staff.
- Children get off to a flying start in the early years classes. Adults get to know children quickly and respond well to their needs and interests. They plan exciting activities so the children develop a love of learning, both indoors and outdoors.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve from a young age. As a result, pupils are keen to do well. They enjoy being challenged to think deeply and participate enthusiastically in activities and lessons. On occasions, pupils could be challenged even further in other subjects such as physical education, to deepen their technical skills.
- The headteacher has an aspirational vision for the school and is extremely well supported by the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders, who work effectively together to continually improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are very caring. Pupils feel completely safe, secure and well looked after. They know their views are valued and that their opinions and feelings matter.
- Pupils are unfailingly polite, considerate and respectful of the views of others. Roles and responsibilities in daily school life help these young pupils to develop into thoughtful citizens. They are very proud of their school.
- Teaching assistants play a very valuable role in supporting pupils' learning in lessons, in small groups and with individuals. Their clear explanation and effective questioning skills enable the pupils they work with to make rapid progress.
- The curriculum is exceptionally well organised to develop a depth of understanding across different subject areas. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong and they are very well prepared for the next stage of education.
- Governors know the school extremely well and are regularly involved in school life. They provide strong support and challenge for leaders.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the high quality of teachers' feedback extends to all subjects, so that pupils know precisely how they can deepen subject-specific skills even further.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

is outstanding

- The headteacher has a strong and ambitious vision, and has created a highly cohesive learning community. She ensures that pupils and staff are given every opportunity to achieve their very best. Every pupil is treated as an individual, with care and consideration for their differing backgrounds and abilities. As a result, staff, pupils and parents are extremely proud of their school.
- The school has successfully completed its journey from good to outstanding and continues to make even further improvements. School leaders, governors and staff at all levels are fully involved in deciding areas for improvement on an annual basis. Teamwork is highly effective, together with a shared sense of responsibility which ensures a consistent approach and success.
- Leaders and managers at all levels adapt to change enthusiastically. They take the best from the current national and local initiatives together with statutory requirements, such as the new National Curriculum and assessments and weave them together into existing excellent practice. Leaders never lose sight of Redbourn's core values for every pupil of 'Loving learning. Respecting all.'
- An excellent approach to managing the performance of all staff, together with regular and rigorous quality assurance checks, underpins the consistently good and often outstanding teaching over time. Annual targets for improvement are closely linked to pupils' achievement both academically and personally.
- School leaders provide many rich and stimulating training opportunities for staff at all levels to excel in their roles and responsibilities. For example, middle leaders not only monitor the quality of the learning in their subject areas in school, but many participate in supporting other schools, sharing their knowledge, understanding and practice more widely. Staff are completely up to date with developments in education and encouraged to develop their professional skills continuously. As a result, staff are highly motivated and are immersed in a 'can do' culture.
- The broad, balanced and enriched curriculum is outstanding in promoting effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The whole-school termly topics are thoughtfully and carefully planned to ensure that all subjects are fully covered. Pupils choose some of the activities so that each year group deepens their skills and understanding and makes good progress as a result. Parents are regularly provided with curriculum information through additional workshops. High-quality displays of pupils' writing and art work showing their interpretations of their current topic, 'all in a spin', are all around the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. School leaders and other adults skilfully promote qualities such as empathy, respect for others and kindness, through many strategies such as identifying and promoting 'experts' in classes in a range of subjects. Older pupils have roles and responsibilities within the school, such as ambassadors, eco council representatives and, together with the younger children, as school councillors.
- Pupils learn daily about British values of respect and tolerance. As a result, pupils are considerate, kind to each other and developing into thoughtful and responsible citizens in their school community. They are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Senior leaders have a rigorous system of checking the progress that all groups of pupils make within each year and throughout their time at the school. Nothing is seen as a potential barrier to a pupil's successful learning. This, together with the school's excellent promotion of equality and inclusion, is the reason why all groups of pupils make consistently good or better progress year on year and in a range of subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils, and those who receive additional government funding, benefit from leaders' thoughtful planning and effective use of these funds. One parent told the inspectors 'you expect the big things to be done by a school, but here it is the little things that are provided that make all the difference'. As a consequence, these pupils achieve exceptionally well when compared with other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1.
- Additional sports funding is used successfully to enhance the quality of the curriculum. Additional staff are employed by the school to provide expertise in lessons and a range of lunchtime activities. More pupils are able to participate in extra-curricular activities as a result of this additional funding.
- The local authority has used some of the school's work as case studies of best practice. For example, the school's provision for looked after children and those from the Traveller community is celebrated because these pupils make excellent progress from their starting points.

■ The governance of the school

- Governors fulfil their core responsibilities and statutory duties very effectively. They have an in-depth understanding of their role and responsibilities. Governors visit the year group to which they are attached frequently, which ensures they know the pupils and children in the school and monitor the progress of individuals effectively. As a result, they are not reliant on the headteacher for all the information about standards in the school.
- Governors ask relevant and challenging questions of the leadership team to hold them to account for the ongoing success of the school. Minutes of meetings show that governors are fully aware of the school's strengths and areas for development and are successful in driving school improvement further still.
- Governors ensure that the school's resources are used extremely well to benefit individual pupils. As a result of their meticulous monitoring and evaluation of pupil premium expenditure the pupils that benefit from this additional support achieve extremely well.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Statutory information is compliant. Leaders, managers and governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements are implemented rigorously. Leaders check that e-safety has a high profile in everyday teaching. All safeguarding training is fully compliant and the school's work communicating safety messages to families is exemplary.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

is outstanding

- The quality of teaching over time is consistently good and frequently outstanding. This is shown by school records of lesson observations, work in pupils' books and information that the school holds on pupils' progress. Visits from external professionals and advisers to the school also confirm this view.
- Teachers plan work that fully meets the needs and interests of all groups of pupils. Teachers' evaluations of pupils' progress in lessons are meticulous and are carefully used to inform the activities necessary to extend learning. As a result, teachers are adept at spotting pupils who may need further support or who may need further challenge and provide this successfully.
- Teaching assistants make a highly effective contribution to learning, whether working one-to-one or with a small group during lesson times, or as part of additional support. For example, in one mathematics lesson the teaching assistant used subject-specific language about fractions extremely well. Due to the clear explanations given, all pupils in the group were able to achieve the task.
- Questioning skills used by all adults are highly effective and elicit articulate responses from the pupils. In one lesson, the teacher skilfully questioned and checked the pupils' understanding of complex language about remembrance. Pupils were encouraged to express their opinions and reflect on their discussions. As a result, the pupils were able to present their views respectfully, listening well to each other. The level of understanding in the work they produced subsequently was well beyond their years.
- Teachers use targets for both the younger children and older pupils very effectively. In every class there are 'learning owls', where individual targets and achievements are displayed. Pupils are very proud that they all know their targets and each one is individualised. Children in Nursery can explain their own target and proudly demonstrate when they achieve it.
- The school's own chosen approaches and teaching methods work excellently to keep pupils fully engaged. From the moment the pupils enter the classroom their learning time is maximised through established routines and visual prompts in place for pupils to start their learning. Pupils have excellent and supportive relationships with adults in the classroom so they are focused and begin their learning with no distractions.
- There are a large number of exciting extra-curricular opportunities for the pupils. Before school, some Year 1 pupils have further opportunities to develop their physical skills and abilities through participating in high-quality dance routines.
- All teachers use the school's policy for feedback exceptionally well in a wide range of subjects. Pupils enthusiastically complete the additional challenges given by teachers. One pupil commented, 'I want to try my challenge – you should always want to challenge yourself.' As a result, pupils are highly motivated and want to achieve even more in their learning.
- Teachers' feedback to pupils in a few subjects, such as physical education, does not always precisely help pupils to extend their skills even further.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils greatly enjoy their roles and responsibilities within school life. Year 2 pupils clearly and confidently explain their job roles as ambassadors or monitors for the school. They are very proud about how they look after the school environment. As a result, pupils are kind, thoughtful and contribute very well as caring citizens.
- Pupils are very polite and well mannered. They understand and choose the right course of action, kindly reminding or helping others who may not remember the Redbourn way. Consequently, pupils are settled and very happy at school. Almost all parents who contributed their views through the online questionnaire Parent View agreed that their children were happy and well cared for at school.
- The school's work to improve attendance is proving successful, with attendance for last year in line with national expectations. Currently, attendance is above average. The proportion of pupils who have 100% attendance is increasing and some of the pupils from the Traveller community have been recognised by the local authority for special attendance awards.
- Pupils have a clear and appropriate understanding of internet safety for their age. They know who to tell if they are concerned and have secure strategies for keeping themselves safe when using computers and other technological equipment.
- Through the termly 'Wealth of Health' newsletter, pupils' achievements are celebrated within the school community. Parents are kept informed and are part of these celebrations. For example, they are invited to have lunch at school on their child's birthday. As a result, pupils are being educated in a caring environment where the ethos of respect for all is consistently communicated.
- Pupils were adamant that any issues such as bullying, if they ever occur, are dealt with swiftly and well by adults. Parents and inspectors agree with them.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding, enabling all pupils to learn without disruption or distraction. Not one correction from an adult or even a gentle reminder was seen to be necessary over the two-day inspection from the Nursery classes through to Year 2. The school's own information, comments from staff, pupils, parents and governors provide evidence that this is the norm at Redbourn Infants' and Nursery.
- All pupils display excellent attitudes towards learning and take pride in their work and their school. In every class, pupils are praised as 'experts' for a variety of subjects. For example, there are science experts, technology experts, reading experts. The pupils thoroughly enjoy receiving these accolades and readily help their classmates to improve in those subject areas.
- The school's strong ethos, coupled with an excellent curriculum, ensures pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. From an assembly where the pupils were taught the significance of remembering, many of the pupils later extended their thinking further by making memorials from small bricks, writing prayers or making their own poppies. Their explanations showed great sensitivity and understanding.
- Behaviour at break and lunchtimes is exemplary. Pupils play well with each other, working out games and involving themselves in positive play. Additional indoor space includes construction equipment, which is provided for pupils who may find unstructured times more challenging, so that all pupils can be involved in activities that are of interest. Consequently, problems at breaktime and lunchtime are extremely rare. In turn, lessons begin on time and no learning opportunities are missed.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- Children enter the early years classes with knowledge and skills that are broadly typical for their age. From their individual starting points, children make at least good and often better progress in all areas of learning and leave Reception very well prepared for Year 1. Results from 2015 demonstrate that the proportion of children who achieve at least a good level of development is significantly above that expected nationally. Each child from Nursery and Reception knows their own next step in learning, and demonstrates pride in their personal and academic achievements.
- Pupils' outcomes in the Year 1 phonic screening tests remain a strength of the school, with pupils achieving well above the national expectations. The few pupils who are not successful at this stage all

catch up and usually pass their screening check by the end of Year 2. The school organises and provides a well-structured programme that teaches and promotes the use of phonics consistently across the school. Additional support is given to individual pupils so that everyone succeeds.

- By the end of Year 2, pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Standards are exceptionally high and the proportion of pupils who achieve the expected levels in reading, writing, mathematics, communication and science is significantly and consistently above the national average year on year. Evidence seen in books, school records and in lessons confirms this is still the case.
- The teaching of reading is well established throughout the school. Many parents volunteer and give their time to regularly hear readers. The school library is well resourced with a wide range of high-quality texts. As a result, pupils are developing a love of reading, together with skills and abilities that are significantly higher than expected for their age. They are well prepared for moving on to junior school.
- Disadvantaged pupils make exceptional progress from their individual starting points. This is because all adults ensure that they carefully and thoughtfully work with families to ensure that specific individual needs are met. Leaders have very good relationships with parents and often fund exceptional support that is unique, so these pupils can succeed at this early stage of education. As a result, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and children who are looked after is outstanding.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good or outstanding progress. This is because the school fully meets their needs, as it does for the small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The most-able pupils thrive on the additional challenges they receive and make strong progress that is sustained over time. The percentage of pupils who exceed the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1 is significantly above the national expectation.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- All the adults in the early years make a significant contribution to the outcomes of children. They take every opportunity, whether in class or outside, to skilfully question the children and extend their thinking and speaking skills. Everyone has high expectations of what this age group can achieve. As a result the children are very happy, safe and make better than expected progress.
- Children leave Reception with skills and abilities above those expected for children of their age. The proportion who achieve a good level of development is well above average. Where children, particularly those considered disadvantaged, have much lower starting points they too make exceptional progress because of the individual support they receive.
- Children enjoy and develop excellent attitudes to their learning in a highly stimulating environment. They are able to play well cooperatively, take turns and are developing into thoughtful members of the school community.
- Adults use excellent questioning skills to extend children's language skills. In one lesson where children were using torches in the darkened role play area, the adult asked them to consider whether using the torch helped them see better than without. The children responded using vocabulary such as 'reflecting' and 'shiny' before using shadow puppets to develop their skills further. Children are articulate, confident and use age-appropriate language extremely well to explain their views and opinions.
- The children's 'learning journeys' are meticulously recorded and show clear links to all areas of learning. Assessments are used exceptionally well to plan learning opportunities for children to extend their skills, particularly in phonics. During the inspection there were many times when small groups of children were practising their skills and phonetic abilities outside the formal curriculum. As a result, they are making rapid progress in their learning.
- The youngest children in the school know their personal targets. For example, one child in nursery proudly informed the group that her next step was to 'put her coat on all by herself'.
- The early years leader is accurate in identifying the strengths and areas for continued development within the early years classes. She has created a cohesive team of adults who are committed and who have high expectations of every child. All staff are involved in teaching and learning and consequently children receive a high-quality education from well-trained staff.
- The children develop their sense of risk taking and making informed decisions through their weekly

outdoor lessons in 'forest schools'. In one lesson they were encouraged to use their imagination as they walked through 'the whispering gate' before exploring and making 'cakes' in the mud kitchen. Through the teacher's highly effective modelling and high expectations, the children completed all activities successfully and made rapid progress in their skills and development.

- The curriculum is well planned and organised so that children across the classes receive the same rich experience. The teaching of science investigation is particularly strong in the early years classes, with children investigating and solving scientific problems exceptionally well. As a result, the proportion of children who achieve at least the expected level in understanding the world is above average for their age.
- The outstanding provision in the early years lays a firm foundation for children's future learning and means that they are extremely well prepared for Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	117236
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10001350

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	226
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Melanie Wooding-Jones
Headteacher	Jane Byrne
Telephone number	01582 792341
Website	www.redbourninfants.herts.sch
Email address	admin@redbourninfants.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 September 2010

Information about this school

- Redbourn Infants' and Nursery School is the size of an average primary school.
- A large majority of pupils are of White British Heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, who are eligible for the pupil premium, is growing, but remains below average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The school provides education on a part-time basis for Nursery age children.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 27 lessons. They observed the teaching of reading skills and listened to pupils read. Examples of pupils' work were scrutinised to gain a view of teaching over time. Inspectors observed and talked to pupils at lunchtime and during breaktimes.
- The inspectors held meetings with pupils, staff and members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority.
- During the inspection, the views of parents were gathered through informal conversations at the start of the school day. The inspectors also took account of 140 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View), a letter and an email from parents.
- Inspectors took account of 28 staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the most recent information regarding pupils' progress and attainment across the school, the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness together with plans for improvement. The minutes of the governing body and information relating to checks on the quality of teaching were also scrutinised.
- The inspectors checked the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the processes and procedures for recruiting staff.

Inspection team

Kim Hall, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Paula Masters	Ofsted Inspector
Janet Tomkins	Ofsted Inspector
Pauline Macmillan	Ofsted Inspector

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