

# Riddings Junior School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112497
<b>Local Authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	378498
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 October 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jeremy Spencer HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	190
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Chris Hurt
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Littlewood
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 July 2009
<b>School address</b>	Church Street Riddings Alfreton DE55 4BW
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 15 lessons, observing eight teachers. They also held meetings with staff, pupils and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at a variety of school documents including safeguarding arrangements, policies, minutes from meetings, data about pupils' progress, pupils' exercise books and the school's improvement plans. The inspection team also analysed responses on 33 questionnaires from parents and carers, together with 12 from staff and 176 from pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Is teaching good enough to secure consistently good progress for different groups of pupils across the school and raise attainment?
- How successful have leaders and managers been in implementing plans to accelerate pupils' progress in writing, particularly that of the boys, and in planning increased opportunities to develop writing skills across the curriculum?
- How well do teachers use assessment systems to shape learning to meet the needs of each pupil in lessons?

## Information about the school

Riddings Junior School is smaller than average. The large majority of its pupils come from the villages of Riddings or neighbouring Somercotes. The school building dates from 1845 and stands in extensive grounds. The proportions of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are broadly in line with the national averages. Most pupils are of White British heritage. Pupils start school in Year 3.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

Riddings Junior School provides a satisfactory standard of education. Staff are motivated to try and achieve the best for pupils and have worked hard to ensure that pupils receive a broad and stimulating curriculum, relevant to their needs and interests. The school cares for its pupils well and learners enjoy coming to school. This is reflected in their above-average attendance levels.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They begin in Year 3 with standards broadly in line with those expected for their age in English and mathematics. They make satisfactory progress as they move through the school and leave Year 6 with standards in line with those expected nationally. Boys have made slower than expected progress in writing. Inspection evidence confirms that the gap is beginning to close, although rates of progress vary significantly between year groups. Boys are making improved progress because the curriculum has been improved. There are more frequent opportunities to write extensively and the new topics more effectively engage their interest. Despite these improvements, boys' spelling and punctuation skills still lag well behind those of girls.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In the best lessons, pupils understand what they are learning to do and are clear about how they are going to achieve it because lesson objectives and success criteria are sharp and focused. Learning is pitched at exactly the right levels for pupils of differing abilities and the lessons run at just the right pace. These positive features are not embedded across the school and too many lessons are no better than satisfactory. This means that, even though the curriculum is strong, pupils make satisfactory progress, because there is not enough good or better teaching. In some classes, pupils spend too much time listening to the teacher at the start of the lesson. As the pace of learning slows, pupils often become fidgety and behaviour deteriorates. The time they spend working and learning independently is then limited. Teachers often ask pupils questions in lessons to assess how well they are learning. However, too often the questions they ask do not challenge pupils well enough, particularly the higher-ability pupils, because they do not promote the use of their extended thinking and speaking skills.

The leadership team has a clear sense of purpose and ambition, and staff and the governing body have demonstrated that they are willing, capable and have an appetite for improvement. They have implemented a number of systems and structures to overcome identified weaknesses. There have been some successes,

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particularly in improving indoor and outdoor learning environments and developing the curriculum. However, leaders and managers have made slower progress in improving the quality of teaching and in raising pupils' achievement. The achievements since the last inspection indicate that the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

The school works hard to encourage and enable parents and carers to support their children's learning. Many parents and carers engage effectively with the school. However, the school acknowledges that the potential of the school's learning platform/website is not fully exploited to support parents, carers and pupils.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress throughout the school by improving the quality of teaching so that 85% is good or better by December 2012, through:
  - developing greater consistency in the quality and clarity of lesson objectives and success criteria, so that all pupils better understand what they are learning to do and become more engaged in the learning process
  - increasing the pace of lessons by matching work more accurately to the needs of pupils and providing greater opportunities for independent learning
  - developing pupils' extended speaking and thinking skills through improved questioning by teachers
  - improving the accuracy of boys' writing, especially spelling and punctuation.
  
- Improve communication and further engage all parents and carers in their children's learning by developing an appropriate learning platform or website to inform, educate and unite all members of the school community.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**3**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. During the inspection, different groups of pupils were observed to be making satisfactory progress in their learning in lessons, and also showed a clear enjoyment of learning. Over the last three years, assessments at the end of Year 6 have shown that pupils' attainment is broadly average. More recent tests, ongoing assessment and work in pupils' exercise books indicate that attainment is improving. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose circumstances make them more vulnerable, make satisfactory progress, because teaching and a range of intervention strategies

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meet their needs appropriately.

Pupils’ behaviour is satisfactory overall. On occasions where teaching is good, standards of behaviour are sometimes better than satisfactory. Around the school, public spaces are safe and generally calm and orderly. Pupils report that they feel safe and well cared for in school. Some pupils report that a small number of individuals occasionally exhibit over-boisterous behaviour at lunchtime. However, they are confident that adults will quickly resolve any problems. Pupils demonstrate very good spiritual development and a strong awareness of other cultures. For example, they have great respect for the outdoor learning environment through their participation in the ‘Forest Schools’ programme. Moments of reflection are undertaken thoughtfully by pupils in assemblies and they sing together with pride. Visits to a Hindu temple, links with a Cambodian orphanage and a ‘chocolate’ topic have supported the pupils’ good cultural development well.

Pupils are fully aware of the importance of healthy eating and the need to exercise. They enjoy a broad range of after-school sports clubs, which are well attended. A healthy cookery club was well received by pupils in the previous academic year. Pupils generally socialise well together and make a good contribution to the school and wider community. Within school, pupils spoke with pride about the school council’s role in developing a new ‘trim-trail’ outdoor play area. Pupils were also observed during the inspection voluntarily helping lunchtime staff to tidy the dining hall. In the local community, the school links with local charities and organisations to distribute food parcels and clothing to those who are in need. By the time they leave the school, pupils are adequately prepared for the future. Although pupils’ attendance is above average, their ability to apply their basic skills is no better than satisfactory.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will</b>	<b>3</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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<b>contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Senior leaders have introduced a number of initiatives to improve the quality of teaching, including opportunities for teachers to observe and discuss each other's practice. However, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and has been slow to improve because, although there has been a focus on teaching, insufficient focus has been placed upon the progression and assessment of pupils' learning. Consequently, in lessons, pupils often focus in depth on the task they are trying to complete without understanding how their learning is developing. Their assimilation of skills and knowledge is slower than it could be as a result.

The curriculum is good and is enriched well through a broad range of extra-curricular activities and school trips. Pupils told inspectors how much they were looking forward to their annual residential trip to London. Pupils also spoke with great enthusiasm about their enjoyment of the 'chocolate' topic and the 'may the force be with you' science topic. Senior leaders and teachers have worked hard to produce an innovative curriculum, designed to raise pupils' aspirations and prepare them to live in a culturally diverse society.

The school provides good care, guidance and support for pupils. Pupils receive clear guidance on how to improve their work, through teachers' consistently good marking of work and the use of individual targets for pupils. Pupils who are experiencing social and emotional difficulties are cared for well. For example, the school operates a successful 'positive play' intervention to support their improved confidence and development of skills. Additional support for those whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable is secured through effective links with external agencies.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team and the governing body have high aspirations and are determined to develop and improve the quality of education provided by the school.

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However, increased rigour in existing systems to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and tracking pupils’ progress have not yet had a significant impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning and raising pupils’ achievement. Leaders and managers are aware of the areas in need of development and have begun to put appropriate plans in place to address them. The governing body knows the school well and provides a good balance of challenge and support to the headteacher. However, their success in tackling weaknesses identified in the last inspection has been no better than satisfactory. The school has developed a broad range of partnerships to promote pupils’ learning and well-being. The quality of these partnerships is satisfactory. They support the pupils’ well-being effectively. For example, drop-in sessions with the school nurse have been popular with families. A family resource worker has also supported families in times of need. However, partnerships have been less successful in improving pupils’ academic achievement.

The school’s commitment to equal opportunities and tackling discrimination is shown through its care for those pupils with social and emotional difficulties and the additional emphasis senior leaders have placed on tracking the progress of those pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable. Some inconsistencies remain between the rates of progress made by different groups of pupils, but the gaps are closing.

The school’s links with local, national and global communities are well developed and pupils show a high degree of tolerance and understanding for those coming from backgrounds different to their own. This is because senior leaders have conducted a thorough analysis of the school’s position in society and implemented successful plans to provide pupils with a broad range of new experiences.

Nationally required safeguarding checks have been undertaken by the school, and child protection arrangements are secure. All staff spoken to showed a sound knowledge of child protection processes and procedures. Appropriate risk assessments are in place for the school site and for activities; however, some of these lack rigour.

There are no major shortcomings evident in the school’s use or management of resources. As outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils are satisfactory, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>



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<b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who returned questionnaires, or who spoke with inspectors during the inspection, have a positive view of the school and are happy with their children’s experiences. One parent commented, ‘The care, support and guidance my children have received have been excellent and the curriculum is fun and exciting for them.’ Other parents and carers made similar comments. A few parents and carers raised concerns about the level of challenge for pupils in lessons. Inspection evidence confirms that, on some occasions, teachers’ questioning does not fully challenge pupils, particularly higher-ability pupils. The school has been asked to address this issue before the next inspection. A few parents and carers also said that the school could do more to help them support their children’s learning. Inspectors found that the school has organised a number of events for parents and carers, including information sessions to help them support their children’s learning in core subjects. However, many parents and carers are unable to attend these events due to their timing. The school has been asked to develop other ways to share information effectively with parents and carers. A small number of parents and carers raised individual concerns. All of these were considered during the inspection and, while preserving anonymity, discussed with the headteacher.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Riddings Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 33 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 190 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	14	42	19	58	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	13	39	19	58	1	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	7	21	23	70	2	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	30	20	61	1	3	2	6
The teaching is good at this school	13	39	17	52	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	11	33	16	48	4	12	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	24	25	76	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	6	18	22	67	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	6	18	20	61	4	12	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	4	12	22	67	4	12	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	12	24	73	2	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	12	36	19	58	0	0	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	10	30	19	58	3	9	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



6 October 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Riddings Junior School, Alfreton, DE55 4BW**

I visited your school recently with two other inspectors to find out how well you were doing. Thank you for being so friendly, polite and welcoming, especially those of you who gave up some of your lunchtime break to talk to an inspector. Your views were very helpful to us as we carried out the inspection.

You go to a satisfactory school. You like your teachers and other adults in school, and most of you always try to do your best. You behave sensibly for most of the time, come to school whenever you are able to, and you enjoy learning in your spacious school grounds. The teachers plan exciting things for you to learn about and they and other staff care and look after you well.

In order to help the school to improve further, I have asked the school's leaders and managers to:

- make the teaching better, so the work is at just the right level for you and you understand exactly what you are learning to do in every lesson and why
- make sure that lessons run at just the right speed for you so that you have enough time to do your work
- try to help teachers to think of better questions to ask you, so that you have to explain your thinking a bit more and think a bit harder to answer them
- make sure that you, and particularly the boys, are encouraged to write more carefully and improve your spelling and punctuation skills
- improve the school's learning platform/website so that your parents and carers can better see and understand what you are learning about in school and then maybe help you in your learning more at home.

You can help too by making sure that you continue to come to school as often as possible, and by working as hard as you can. Always enjoy your learning.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Spencer  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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