

The Ridgeway Primary School

Willow Gardens, Reading, RG2 7EL

Inspection dates 24–25 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Teaching is consistently good or better and this means that most pupils, in all classes, make good progress.
- Pupils enjoy school and talking about their work. Parents and carers praise the school and think it is doing a good job. Attendance has improved significantly and is now broadly average.
- Strong leadership has made sure that the right support and actions have been put in place so that all teaching is good or better.
- Some actions to improve the school have been started without establishing the detail of the change that was hoped for. This means that it is not always easy for the leadership to explain how effective they have been.
- Actions to improve behaviour have been very effective. An exclusion room is rarely needed because pupils understand what is expected of them and enjoy their lessons.
- The governors understand the challenges that the school has overcome. They give good support and challenge and know how well they are doing, what needs to be done next and why.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Although the teaching of mathematics has improved, progress in mathematics is not yet as fast as in English.
- The accelerated progress in all classes is very recent and not yet sustained over time.
- Sometimes pupils need to see the new words that they are using when they talk about their learning so that they can recognise them and write them.

Information about this inspection

- Observations of teaching in 11 lessons or parts of lessons took place and nine of these were joint observations with the leadership team.
- Inspectors observed the teaching of reading and heard pupils read. They visited before- and after-school clubs and attended an assembly. Books from all year groups were looked at to check how well they were marked, how well children were progressing and to understand the variety in the curriculum.
- Inspectors looked at a range of information which included minutes of meetings, school information, the school website, records of checks on the quality of teaching, local authority reports and safeguarding documents.
- Discussions took place with a representative of the local authority, the headteacher, the leadership team, governors, teachers and a group of pupils who read to the inspectors.
- Inspectors talked with parents and carers collecting their children after school and took account of the four responses on the online questionnaire (Parent View) and a recent survey conducted by the school.

Inspection team

Christine Fogg, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Christine Pollitt

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Ridgeway School is a smaller than average primary school with a Nursery class and one class for each year group.
- The school meets the current floor standards which set the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils of White British heritage is below the national average, with pupils of mixed heritage, Asian heritage and African heritage above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The proportion supported at school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is extra funding provided to support pupils eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority, is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils that enter at different starting points during the year is higher than the national average.
- The school provides a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school is part of a confederation of nine local schools and is used by the local authority as an example of good practice.
- The school does not use additional provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the teaching of mathematics so that all pupils make good progress.
- Ensure all pupils learn to speak and write new words with confidence by:
 - providing spellings as well as symbols and pictures to develop their reading and spelling of new vocabulary in all subjects.
- Involve all staff in checking the difference that new actions have made on the progress and well-being of pupils by:
 - being clear about the change that is expected at the start of any project and how this information can be measured and shared.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The work seen in pupils' books and during lessons shows that they are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This improvement in progress is recent and is a result of improved teaching and tracking so that no time is lost in spotting a pupil who needs extra help.
- Children join the Nursery with communication, literacy and numeracy skills well below the levels typical for their age. Good teaching prepares them well for Reception and they continue to progress well with good teaching improving their use of phonics by Year 2.
- In the past pupils did not make good progress. The school has tackled weaker teaching and used interventions in all classes, so that pupils catch up quickly. Sometimes they do better in reading and writing than mathematics. This means that by the end of Year 6 most pupils are making good progress and have caught up to where they should be. The support is so effective that some pupils make much better than expected progress. This prepares them well for their next school.
- Current school information shows that pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium make similar or better progress than their peers nationally. This means that the gap between groups of pupils is narrowing quickly, as seen in their improving average point scores in national tests. Similarly, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress, as do those pupils who join the school at different times.
- Pupils of mixed heritage, Asian heritage and African heritage make similar good progress.
- Standards in English and mathematics have risen faster than nationally over time. However, standards in mathematics did not rise last year. The school leadership, with support from the local authority, has planned actions that are being used to make improvements and these are making a difference, shown by current progress information.

The quality of teaching is good

- All the teaching observed was at least good. Lessons are interesting and are planned to meet the needs of the range of pupils. Good teaching engages the pupils. A Year 2 class was enthralled by a video message from the wolf in the Red Riding Hood story and this stimulated good conversations and writing.
- Teaching was satisfactory at the last inspection but strong leadership with staff changes and good training opportunities have improved the quality of teaching over time. Teachers make expectations clear; pupils are ready to learn and they behave well.
- Sometimes pupils would benefit from seeing the words that they are using in written form. In some lessons pupils were using new numbers or shapes and they would have made even more progress if they had seen the words on cards or part of a wall display.
- Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly with comments that help them to understand what it is they have done well and what to do next; this is consistent across all classes and of a high standard. There are examples where pupils have responded to teachers' comments and made improvements in their work showing good progress and clear understanding. Sometimes pupils mark each other's work and this is done knowing what good work should look like so it is just as helpful as a teacher's comments. Pupils take pride in their work and the books are neat and tidy.
- Teachers use additional adults well to support pupils who may be struggling. Small-group work ensures pupils make good progress because they are actively learning at all times. Sometimes the start of a lesson does not help less able pupils to start their work immediately because they need more help to understand what to do. However adult support ensures that they are quickly working with confidence.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour has not always been good. New leadership has developed consistent approaches, a caring atmosphere and put in place appropriate punishments. An exclusion room was used last year and this helped some pupils to understand how to improve their behaviour. The strong message that this gave to other pupils, along with the improvements in teaching and better support for individuals, means that there is no need for this room now and behaviour is good.
- Parents and carers think that behaviour is good and that the school keeps their children safe. The school is well regarded locally.
- During the inspection the pupils had had no outdoor play for five days because of snow. The school was calm and happy; the pupils were busy and cared well for each other. They moved safely around the school and kept the rooms neat and tidy.
- Pupils work well with each other and are confident talking to one another about their work. They are polite and friendly taking great delight to explain the health and safety issues about tending their school hens.
- The pupils understand the difference between falling out with a friend and bullying, they say there is not much bullying and they know that their teachers would deal with it quickly. Racist incidents are rare.
- Pupils say that they like coming to school and they like the school Emu that gives rewards for good attendance in assembly. Their behaviour was perfect and enthusiastic in the assembly where they listened attentively, sang and counted in French.
- Most pupils arrive on time for school and this has improved significantly over the last two years. The most recent figures provided by the school show a fall in persistent absence and a rise in overall attendance which is broadly average.

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership is strong and has made significant changes and improvements to the school in the last two years. The local authority has confidence in the school and because of the improvements that are evident has decided to reduce its support to the school. The school is now used as an example of good practice for other schools to visit.
- Strong leadership demands the best from all teachers and performance management and salary progression are now closely linked to pupils' progress. As a consequence of raised expectations staffing has changed over the past two years and this period of change meant that pupils' progress was not as rapid as staff had hoped. The staff currently in place are supported well by coaching, training programmes and mentors. This means that teaching is at least good in all classes and is expected to develop to outstanding. As a result of these actions, pupils' progress is now good.
- Resources have been used well to improve the poor progress of some pupils and additional resources were sought from the local authority. This has meant that the best teachers in the school have been able to give small-group support as well as coach other teachers and this has made a significant difference to the target groups as well as other pupils.
- The curriculum has been developed to include opportunities for more cultural activities. For example, pupils imagine that they are famous artists such as Matisse and make collages with colours to represent personal moods. The outdoor environment is used well and the extensive school grounds give opportunities for planting trees and keeping hens. Pupils built the hen coop as part of a personal development activity and all the pupils enjoy learning about the hens and take turns caring for them.
- The school has looked to other schools that are doing well and has chosen to take on board some actions to improve emotional well-being. It has been successful in a range of actions already, for example talk partners and no hands up, but has not always been clear about the detail of the changes expected. The leadership team needs to make sure that there are clear starting points and goals mapped out for new actions so that it knows how much difference they

have made and if anything should change.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance is good. The governors understand the challenges that the school has faced and fully support the leadership in having high expectations about improving the quality of teaching. They understand how the performance of teachers and pupils' progress are linked and are active in discussions about how to develop a system that will reward good teaching based on the evidence of pupils' progress gathered over time. The governors know that the school has not performed well in the past but that there have been significant improvements in the quality of teaching and the behaviour of pupils and that current information suggests that more teaching will improve to outstanding and consequently pupils' progress will improve further. They realise that recent actions will take time to become established but that there should be no let up in attention to detail and a focus on improving the progress of pupils. The governors know that the pupil premium is meant to make a difference to those pupils entitled to it and they ask questions that support the school's actions but also check on how well things are going. They understand how well the school's information on pupils' progress compares with local schools and nationally. New governors are quickly given induction training and more experienced governors engage with governing body training opportunities and attend courses to meet their individual development needs.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	109789
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	405253

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marion Livingston
Headteacher	Colin Lavelle
Date of previous school inspection	9 February 2011
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