

Riseley CofE Lower School

Church Lane, Riseley, Bedford, MK44 1EL

Inspection dates 1–2 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- Pupils make good progress throughout the school.
- Children join the school performing in line with age-related expectations. With good teaching they achieve well and reach above-expected levels in English and mathematics by the end of Year 4.
- Children make a good start to their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where carefully planned activities and the way teachers check children's progress helps them to achieve well.
- Teaching over time is good because most activities are carefully planned to meet pupils' needs. Teachers use skilful questioning to assess pupils' understanding so that they can move on to the next stage in their learning.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and parents responding to Parent View agree.
- Pupils speak enthusiastically about their school. They behave well and have positive relationships with teachers in lessons.
- Leaders encourage mutual respect and pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong. As a result, pupils treat adults and each other with great courtesy.
- Senior leaders know the school well and are aware of its strengths and areas for development.
- Governors make sure they are well informed and that they challenge the school's leaders as well as support them.
- The subjects and activities taught provide pupils with a wide range of opportunities to develop their skills in English, mathematics and communication. A particular strength is the wide variety of extra-curricular activities available for the pupils to participate in.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always challenge pupils enough so that they can make maximum progress, especially the more able.
- Marking does not always tell pupils how they can improve their work.
- In the process of monitoring teaching, leaders do not always provide teachers with clear next steps for improvement so that these can be checked at a later date.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons, three of which were seen together with the headteacher.
- Inspectors watched two school assemblies.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils, subject leaders, leaders in charge of special educational needs and the Early Years Foundation Stage, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at its evaluation of its own effectiveness, tracking of the progress and attainment of individual pupils and specific groups, records of governing body meetings, pupils’ work, and documents relating to behaviour and safety and the performance of staff.
- Pupils from Years 2 and 4 read to inspectors during the inspection.
- The inspectors took account of the 31 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also meet with parents and carers at the beginning of the school day and analysed 14 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors visited the before- and after- school club.

Inspection team

Lucy Maughan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Vreta Bagilhole

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than average.
- The large majority of pupils are White British; the remainder coming from a few other ethnic heritages.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after and those from service families) is below average.
- The school runs its own before- and after- school club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding by making sure that:
 - work set in lessons is challenging enough for pupils to make maximum progress, especially the more able
 - leaders set out for teachers clear steps to take to improve their teaching and follow these up in later lesson observations
 - all teachers write comments on pupils' work that shows the pupils what they need to do to improve.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children start in the Nursery with skills and knowledge expected for their age. They make a positive start in the Early Years Foundation Stage making good progress in phonics (linking sounds to letters) and counting. This level of good progress continues through the school so that, by the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils attain above-average standards. This level of progress is maintained through Years 3 and 4.
- The school has focused successfully on improving writing, with a clear approach to developing writing skills and provide opportunities for pupils to write at length. This has had a significant impact on the standards of writing across the school, with a higher proportion of children making good and better progress.
- Younger pupils are able to use their understanding of phonics successfully to help them read because they are taught well. Results in the phonics screening check for Year 1 were above national levels. This emphasis on reading continues throughout the school, where older pupils are enthusiastic about reading and are provided with opportunities to develop their skills further.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are given additional help in lessons and in small groups. Teachers make sure they adapt work for these pupils so that it is not too hard. As a consequence, they are making good progress.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively to pay for additional adult support in lessons, small groups and, for some, on a one-to-one basis. As a result, the progress of eligible pupils has improved and is good across the school so that the gap between these and other pupils is narrowing. In the 2012 national tests, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals were less than one term behind the others in English and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has been consistently good over time in reading, writing and mathematics, with examples of outstanding practice. There are positive relationships between teachers and pupils across the school. Pupils say they feel supported and confident to learn.
- Teachers carefully plan lessons that build on pupils' prior learning and make sure that pupils are able to use their learning and understanding to best effect. Teaching assistants provide effective support to groups of pupils so that they make good progress.
- Throughout the school, teachers skilfully direct questions to check on pupils' understanding and provide opportunities for pupils to work in pairs or small groups so that they can explain their learning to others.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and present their lessons clearly. There is a good balance of input from the teacher and time for pupils to get on with their own work. Resources are used well to support pupils' learning and help them build their knowledge and understanding.
- In the best teaching, teachers make sure that pupils know precisely what they are learning and exciting activities are well matched to ability levels. One example of this was in the Early Years

Foundation Stage, where children were investigating giant snails as part of their mini-beast theme. Skilled questions and encouragement from the teachers and teaching assistants enabled the children to discuss what they could see and then sound out words on their clipboards.

- At times, however, tasks do not provide a sufficient level of challenge so that pupils can make maximum progress. This is especially the case when work is too easy for more-able pupils.
- Marking is carried out regularly across the school, with the best examples of marking providing pupils with positive comments and clear guidance on how they can make their work better. This good practice is not fully developed in all year groups as marking does not always challenge and extend pupils' progress by guiding them on what they need to do to improve and the next steps they need to take to move their learning on.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and apply themselves to all tasks. They work well together in small groups and in pairs. They demonstrate resilience at completing tasks and improving their work. For example, Nursery children thoroughly enjoyed completing a collage elephant out of different materials while speculating on what a real elephant may feel like.
- Pupils are polite and courteous to each other and to adults. Their behaviour is good in a range of teaching groups and around the school. Pupils say behaviour is good in school and most parents agree. While there are a few isolated incidents of negative behaviour, the school is effective in supporting pupils who have had problems with their behaviour.
- Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities across the school, including as members of the school council and indoor monitors.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and talked clearly about ways to stay safe, including fire safety and staying safe when using the internet.
- Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare and they are confident that adults will help them if they have a problem. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and positive relationships are promoted.
- Pupils are punctual to school and to lessons and their attendance is consistently above average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior leaders know the strengths and areas for development in the school. They have made sure that a good quality of teaching and pupils' good achievement have been maintained.
- Assessment of pupils' progress is accurate and leaders check on this regularly. Meetings to discuss the progress of pupils enable staff to focus on individual pupils' needs so that appropriately targeted support can be arranged.
- Staff are positive about the level of support leaders provide and regular monitoring of lessons takes place. However, when leaders monitor teaching by observing lessons, their feedback does not always make it clear how teachers could improve, so that this can then be followed up in

later observations.

- The school gives priority to the development of pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Communication skills are taught effectively and are developed further through other subjects.
 - The broad and varied curriculum provides pupils with the opportunities to learn subjects through different topics, which they are keen to talk about. One example of this was a Year 2 physical education lesson, where a teacher from the local middle school taught the skills needed for the sport of curling. Pupils were enthusiastic and relished the opportunity to participate in this sport.
 - Pupils speak highly of the range of extra-curricular activities the school makes available to them such as Aslan Club (Church Club), Hotshots Basketball, chess and gymnastics. These contribute to pupils' overall achievement and enjoyment of school.
 - Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed well. Pupils reflect on moral issues and develop a deep spiritual understanding. They are given many chances to work in teams and small groups requiring co-operation to complete a task. They learn about different cultures and are given opportunities to experience special events such as Chinese New Year and traditional Turkish dress.
 - The local authority provides effective light-touch support for the school, including a range of meetings and guidance in subject leadership.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is keen to support leaders and has the very best interests of the pupils at the centre of all it does. Governors receive regular reports from the headteacher and other senior leaders on the progress of pupils, and they challenge leaders accordingly. They know the school extremely well, including about the quality of teaching, and they are committed to driving up standards. They have attended training to help them fulfil their role and receive external support for managing the performance of the headteacher. They know about the targets that are set for teachers and how the school tackles any underperformance and rewards good teaching. Governors have made sure that pupil premium funding is spent effectively. Safeguarding is given a suitably high priority, and the governors make sure that the school complies with all current requirements for safeguarding and child protection.
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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	109624
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	412854

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	168
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lynda Simister
Headteacher	David Dyson
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2006
Telephone number	01234 708218
Fax number	Not available
Email address	office@riseley.bedssch.co.uk

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