

The Ridge Primary School

Gregory Road, Wollaston, Stourbridge, DY8 3NF

Inspection dates 27–28 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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' achievement is good because pupils join the school with skills that are broadly typical for their age and leave with attainment that is above average.
- The headteacher, senior team and governing body take a strong lead in driving improvement. Rigorous checks on teaching, with good training and support where it is needed, maintain the quality of classroom practice and improve achievement.
- The good teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) means that pupils quickly develop good reading skills from an early age.
- Teaching is good with some outstanding. Staff use questions well, both to assess what pupils know and to encourage them to work things out for themselves.
- Pupils' behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils are polite and welcoming.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is at the centre of the school's work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some teachers' comments, when marking books, do not give pupils enough guidance on how to improve their work.
- Occasionally, work is not set at the right level of difficulty for pupils, making it too easy or too hard for them to complete.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 18 lessons, two of which were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors listened to several pupils read and looked at samples of their recent work.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, teachers and members of the governing body. The lead inspector had a discussion with a representative from the local authority. Discussions also took place with mixed-ability groups of pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised a variety of school documents, including: the school’s self-evaluation; the school development plan; behaviour records; and documents relating to the work of the governing body and the management of teachers’ performance.
- The views of the 64 parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account, together with an email from a parent. Inspectors also considered the views expressed in 20 questionnaires returned by school staff.

Inspection team

Steven Cartlidge, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sajid Gulzar

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average and there are no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. This is extra funding from the government for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards for primary schools, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A new deputy headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- A breakfast club and after-school club are provided by the school.
- A privately run playgroup on site is inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding by making sure that:
 - teachers' written comments in pupils' books shows pupils what they need to do to improve their work
 - work is set at the right level of difficulty for pupils so that it is not too easy or too hard for them to complete.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in Reception with skills typical of those expected for their age. They make rapid progress and reach a good level of development, so that they are well prepared for their move to Key Stage 1 at the end of the Reception Year. There is an especially good focus on the effective teaching of early reading and writing skills. The impact of this is evident in pupils' good performance in the Year 1 screening check in phonics (letters and the sounds they make).
- Since the previous inspection, standards have remained above average in Key Stages 1 and 2, with just one dip three years ago in Key Stage 2. In 2013, pupils were two terms ahead of pupils nationally at the end of Year 2. Pupils in Year 6 last year left the school around six months ahead of pupils nationally.
- Progress in Years 1 to 6 is good for all groups, including pupils of different abilities. Senior leaders have improved the use of assessment information to track the progress made by individuals and groups. This has helped to identify which pupils need support and, in turn, has improved the overall rate of progress made. The school's assessments of how well pupils are progressing indicates that pupils are on track to achieve better results in 2014 than in previous years.
- In recent years, standards in mathematics have not been as high as those in other areas. The school has tackled this by appointing a deputy headteacher who is also a specialist mathematics teacher. Recent school information on progress in mathematics, and confirmed from the work in pupils' books, suggests a much stronger picture, with the vast majority of pupils now achieving well in this subject.
- Pupils are well motivated and keen to achieve well. This contributes to their good progress. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils displayed great enthusiasm sharing with their classmates their mathematical skills in interpreting ratio and proportion.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs grow in confidence and make good progress. They benefit from well-targeted additional help in lessons, often supported individually by teaching assistants.
- The school is using its pupil premium funding to provide extra staffing, one-to-one tuition and additional educational resources for eligible pupils. In 2012, these pupils were two terms behind their classmates in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6. The gap widened in 2013; it was the equivalent of around three terms in reading, four terms in writing and nearly five terms in mathematics. This reflected the special educational needs of some of the eligible pupils last year.
- The situation was thoroughly investigated by the senior leadership team and well-directed measures were put in place to accelerate pupils' progress. Current information indicates that the small number of pupils supported by the pupil premium this year are making better than expected progress and narrowing the gap with their classmates.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good or better, borne out by pupils' good progress and achievement.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, effective use is made of both inside and outside areas to

promote good learning. Children make good or better progress in their ability to communicate and use language skills and begin identifying and writing letters and practising the sounds they make (phonics). During the inspection children had the chance to conduct an experiment using lemonade and raisins, which involved them working together in teams. The children were highly enthusiastic, and the activity contributed well to their developing language and communication skills.

- Throughout the school, teachers' subject knowledge is good. They set tasks for pupils that motivate them to work hard and to succeed. In a history lesson in Year 5, for example, pupils were set the task of investigating how the film industry evolved in the early 20th Century. The pupils gradually added increasingly complex details to their investigations and showed a clear understanding of how to develop their work to reach the highest level.
- In a Year 1 English lesson on finding out and recording information from a text, pupils made good progress in their understanding because the teacher used questions very well to prompt them to think of alternative ways of recognising how information can be recorded.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work together effectively. The help provided by teaching assistants is targeted well of individual pupils' specific learning needs. This means that pupils of all abilities, including the most able, and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make consistently good progress.
- Teachers tell pupils how well they are doing but the quality of written feedback, in the form of marking, varies. Where marking is most effective, teachers' written comments show pupils what they need to do to improve their work, and this contributes to the progress that pupils make. Older pupils, in particular, value this kind of feedback. However, this approach is not yet consistent across the school.
- Occasionally, pupils' work is not adapted sufficiently to meet their different abilities. On these rare occasions, the work set is too easy for some pupils and too hard for others.
- Homework builds well on what pupils learn in class. Pupils complete homework to a good standard and this prepares them well for tackling work in the following lesson.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils settle quickly in lessons. They are eager to learn and are always willing to have a go. For example, in an English lesson, Year 5 pupils were able to develop their personal writing skills to a very high standard by sharing their ideas and working in groups, following exactly the instructions from their teacher and teaching assistant.
- Exemplary behaviour was seen by inspectors at break and lunchtimes. Pupils were keen to point out that this was typical behaviour.
- Pupils show great pride in their school and treat their environment, their teachers and their classmates with respect and courtesy. Pupils' work is neatly presented, and they also take pride in their school uniform.
- The school works effectively to maintain good or better behaviour, and there are clear procedures to support pupils who find this difficult. Instances of misbehaviour are few, and are quickly resolved so that the learning of others is not disrupted.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Governors rigorously check safeguarding practice and, as a result, safeguarding procedures meet current legal requirements.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and their parents strongly agree with that view. Pupils say that there is almost no bullying and that they are very well supported on the rare occasions it occurs. They are well informed about different forms of bullying and other aspects of safety, including the importance of keeping safe when using the internet.
- Attendance, over the last three years, has been above average. Leaders have ensured good attendance by focusing work with those families who struggle to get their children to school, making clear to them the effect absence has on their children's progress and attainment.
- Behaviour and safety are not outstanding because there are occasions when not all pupils apply themselves fully to their work.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides very determined leadership and offers teachers and parents a clearly articulated vision for an even better school.
- The school's self-evaluation is based on an accurate analysis of what works well and what is needed to raise attainment even higher. The headteacher's rigorous analysis of pupils' progress and her accurate evaluation of the school's work provide all teachers and the governing body with a clear understanding of the school's performance, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Improvement planning is sharply focused on identified weaknesses seen, for example, in the successful action recently taken to raise attainment in mathematics. The school's track record, reflected in pupils' good achievement, shows its capacity for continued improvement.
- Subject leaders and other staff with leadership responsibilities are well supported so they can carry out their roles effectively.
- The leadership of teaching is good and the school places a high priority on improving teaching through high-quality training. Teachers' performance is checked and information is used from lesson observations and from information about pupils' progress to set teachers' targets for improvement. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are holding teachers rigorously to account, and the help they have given teachers is accelerating the rate of learning. There is a clear understanding that decisions about pay increases will be based on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress.
- School leaders make sure that different groups of pupils have an equal chance to succeed, and they tackle effectively any instances of discrimination. Pupil premium funding is used effectively. It has been used to help to develop the role of the teaching assistants. Pupils identified as in need of additional help, including those supported by pupil premium funding and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are well supported. These pupils are now making similarly good or better progress to that of their classmates.
- Teachers use a broad range of topics to make learning stimulating and exciting across different subjects, and pupils say they find the work they are set interesting. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very effectively promoted by a broad range of arts, drama, music,

science and sports activities, as well as by visits and visitors.

- The school has used the new primary school sports funding to employ a physical education teacher for one day per week to coach staff and work with pupils. It is too early to evaluate the impact of this initiative on developing healthy lifestyles and better physical well-being for pupils.
- The local authority has worked well with senior leaders to provide well-targeted support for the school to improve.
- The Parent View responses indicate that parents have a very positive view of the school, with a very large majority of those who responded saying they would recommend the school to another parent.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is well informed. It challenges school leaders and holds them to account for pupils' achievement. It compares the school's performance with that of schools nationally. Governors strongly support the school and its leaders. They share the headteacher's vision for the school's further improvement. They visit the school regularly during the day and talk to both teachers and pupils about their work. This gives them a clear insight into the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning. The governing body oversees the management of finance and resources expertly. Governors check carefully, for example, that the pupil premium funding is having the impact it should in improving the achievement of eligible pupils. Explanation and action from school leaders and managers are called for when initiatives do not show the improvement expected. Governors maintain oversight of the performance of staff and ensure that salary increases are justified by pupils' good progress and achievement.

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	103805
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	431495

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Wrigley
Headteacher	Deborah Hudson
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2009
Telephone number	01384 818800
Fax number	01384 818801
Email address	info@ridge.dudley.sch.uk

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