

Ridgeway Primary Academy

Park Avenue, South Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE34 8AB

Inspection dates

6–7 November 2014

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Not previously inspected as an academy | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--|----------|
| | This inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Leadership and management | Good | | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | Good | | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | Good | | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | Requires improvement | | 3 |
| Early years provision | Good | | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The attainment of pupils in Key stage 2 and their progress was below the expected minimum in the national tests in 2014.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2 did not match that in reading and writing.
- Pupils with a disability or special educational needs have not done as well as similar pupils nationally.
- The most able in Key Stage 2 do not achieve as well as they should in some lessons.

The school has the following strengths

- The achievement of pupils in Key Stage 1 and of the children in the early years has improved dramatically over the past two years.
- The academy has narrowed the gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school.
- Teaching has improved, because of careful monitoring of standards. Teachers plan lessons that interest and motivate pupils so that they enjoy learning. Teaching staff now provide good support to those who need extra help to learn.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are proud of their school and their attendance has improved.
- The headteacher and deputy, along with middle leaders, have put in place policies and procedures which are improving pupils' performance. Leaders have high ambitions for the school and for pupils. They have created a staff team keen to take the school forward quickly and provide what the pupils need.
- The Board of Directors supports and challenges the headteacher of the academy to ensure that pupils' progress is at the heart of everything they do.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 17 lessons or parts of lessons taught by eight different teachers and two teaching assistants. Two lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, talked to them about how much reading they do and looked at their work in class.
- Discussions took place with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- Documents were examined, including those relating to safeguarding, the school's improvement plan, records of the school's checks on teaching and learning, as well as its own assessment data.
- Not enough parents responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for the results to be analysed. However, the school's own questionnaire, which surveyed 72 parents was studied.
- Seven members of staff completed questionnaires about their view of the school.
- On the morning of the second day of the inspection all pupils from the Reception class to Year 6 were out of school.

Inspection team

Frank Cain, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

James Hannah

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ridgeway Academy is a smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children that are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action and the proportion at school action plus, or with a statement of educational need are both well above average.
- Almost all pupils are from white British communities.
- In 2014 the school did not meet the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to accelerate progress in order to raise attainment, particularly in mathematics in Key Stage 2, by:
 - setting work that always matches the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs
 - ensuring that the targets set for pupils are used to help them make greater progress and so that pupils are fully involved and motivated to try hard and do their best
 - allowing pupils time to reflect more and correct their mistakes after their books have been marked
 - developing more opportunities which inspire an enthusiasm for learning amongst the most able to boost pupils' performance.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and the deputy have the full support of staff and have put in place robust procedures to monitor teaching, which is improving strongly because teacher performance is carefully measured.
- The behaviour of pupils has improved dramatically over the past two years because of the well-understood behaviour policy which all staff enforce rigorously.
- On the establishment of the academy all pupils were checked to establish an accurate measure of their attainment. Since then, the very competent tracking system shows that pupils' progress through the school in mathematics has improved to be broadly average and even better in reading and writing.
- In the last year the identification of pupils with special educational needs has been overhauled, so that more pupils are identified quickly and alternative provision and targeted support are put in place so that their achievement is rising.
- The leaders of the different key stages have, in a short time, made a very effective start in tracking their areas of responsibility with visits to lessons and in studying the quality of pupils' work.
- Parental support for the school is good and the school responds to their concerns when they reply to annual questionnaires.
- The curriculum has been successfully planned along themes that motivate and interest pupils so that they are keen to learn and so that work builds on their previous knowledge. On the afternoon of the first day of the inspection all Key Stage 2 pupils were in the hall to hear a speaker from the Durham Light Infantry talk about the First World War. This is their current topic and all pupils listened thoughtfully. Pupils were encouraged to think and express their ideas and feelings about the war and remembrance.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development has been enhanced by regular assemblies, which stress fairness and the rule of law in Britain, the latter for example, through a visit from a local magistrate.
- Pupils understand about being a good person. In an English lesson, for instance, they were identifying characteristics of a good character, such as kindness.
- The local authority has provided useful support for the school to check how well it is performing.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet current requirements.
- The extra money for sport funding has been used well for new activities and it has attracted more pupils to compete compared with previously, when no pupils attended external competitions.
- The funds from the pupil premium have allowed disadvantaged pupils to start to catch up on other pupils in the school because of the extra targeted support they receive. This is a good example of how committed the leadership is to providing opportunities for all to do well.
- **The governance of the academy:**
 - The Board of Directors of the academy has an excellent understanding of how well pupils are doing and know precisely areas for further development. They recognise the important improvements that the academy has made in helping disadvantaged pupils to improve their performance. They are passionate about making the academy outstanding in every respect. They ensure that finances are targeted towards improving pupils' achievement, by questioning and challenging the headteacher to justify spending. The Directors are well informed about the performance management of teachers and without question they make sure that career progression for staff is linked very closely to their performance in the classroom.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is now good because of the high standards and routines set by staff. In Reception the noise from a 'shaker' was a sign that an adult needed to speak and all the children stopped what they were doing immediately, putting their hands up.
- Children in Early Years move around calmly and tidy up after their play very promptly. Very little learning time is lost.
- Pupils have a very positive attitude towards their work and they quickly become absorbed in their lessons, which helps them to learn well.
- Pupils' class work is generally neat which shows they take a pride in what they do.

- There is no litter around the school and pupils are respectful towards teachers and teaching assistants. Doors are held open for visitors, who are greeted with a smile and lots of inquisitive, but polite, young people.
- Parents think that behaviour is good in the school and they contributed towards writing the school's behaviour policy and so fully understand how the school is taking care of their children.
- Pupils are considerate to others. One pupil said that if she saw someone upset she would sit next to them and have a chat to cheer them up.
- The pupils are proud of their school and are keen to help out as monitors in assembly and to help to tidy up at lunchtime.
- There is very little misbehaviour, but when it does occur it is dealt with promptly and effectively by staff and pupils are fully aware of the consequences of poor behaviour.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils understand by visitors' different colour coded badges that some are 'cleared' and they can safely be turned to for help.
- Pupils feel safe in school and they are involved in devising the behaviour rules for the school.
- Pupils are taught about road safety and to be 'smart' on the computer. They are confident that there are people to turn to if they have a problem.
- School attendance has improved as the school has very robust procedures to deal with absentees and pupils who are late to school.
- Pupils are well supervised at break and lunchtime by vigilant staff.
- The school maintains good records on pupils who might be vulnerable.
- Pupils say there is no bullying in school and they realise the different ways in which bullying can happen, which is endorsed by the vast majority of parents.
- The Board of Directors has a dedicated person to oversee and monitor safeguarding.

The quality of teaching is good

- The school records on the quality of teaching show that teaching is good and the scrutiny of work carried out by inspectors confirmed that.
- Both pupils and parents think that teaching is good and 100% of the latter in a questionnaire in 2013 thought that staff had high expectations.
- Teaching has been strengthened with new staff and a large increase in new teaching assistants.
- Teachers' planning for their lessons is thorough and is consistent across the academy.
- All lessons have clear objectives for pupils so that they understand what they need to do to succeed.
- While work is usually adapted to many pupils' needs, it does not always provide challenges for the most able nor adaption for the less able to improve their achievement.
- The teaching of mathematics is now organised well. For example, in a mathematics lesson the pupils were able to do mental arithmetic questions quickly. One pupil commented 'I've found a way how to do it' showing good progress and understanding.
- Nearly all lessons keep pupils interested and keen to learn. The teachers in Key Stage 2 have used the theme of the First World War to very good effect and linked it to the book being read by pupils, 'One Boy's War' to engage pupils fully in reading and learning about their local area as well as remembering today's wounded soldiers.
- In an English lesson on writing a script for a play, the teacher was making the pupils think hard about the setting to create a suitable atmosphere for the play. Good questioning and examples from the teacher helped the pupils become aware of how to create 'anger' or 'happiness' by expression and a careful choice of words.
- Teaching assistants, as with teachers, demonstrate good subject knowledge and they support pupils appropriately so that little learning time is lost and pupils who need extra help are able to make good progress.
- Pupils' work books are thoughtfully and accurately marked across the academy, but pupils would be able to learn and achieve more if they were given time to follow up their teachers' marking advice more regularly.

The achievement of pupils**requires improvement**

- The attainment of pupils in Key Stage 2 in 2014 was well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. While it is clear that these pupils made faster progress in the academy than in the predecessor school, many had not been able to catch up on the lack of learning of previous years.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress from below average starting points, and the proportion of them reaching higher levels of attainment has improved dramatically over the past two years. They are now attaining broadly average results in writing and mathematics, although still slightly below in reading.
- Currently the school is improving achievement in Key Stage 2, and the school's competent tracking shows that the current Year 6 are on track to be broadly average in 2015 in reading writing and mathematics.
- Pupils get involved in assessing their own progress in their 'big writing' books, but are not involved in establishing appropriate targets or measuring their own progress towards them in other areas and so the spur to achieve is slightly diminished.
- Pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs, have done less well than similar pupils nationally. The academy has now put in place measures which have started to address this and currently gaps are reducing significantly. In a mathematics lesson, one assistant had a small group of pupils needing extra help who were bubbling with excitement and learning well, as they tried to score points by getting their answers correct when learning how to multiply numbers mentally.
- The most-able pupils are often given more challenging work. In a mathematics lesson, for example, the most able were given extra planned work to sort out a complex problem about how many coins were in four different piles and then had to explain how they had worked it out. However, sometimes work is not demanding enough for them and not enough opportunities are planned to boost their achievement.
- The gap between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school has reduced in reading to under two terms, in writing it is nearly 3 terms and in 2014 they did better in mathematics than other pupils. There is still a gap between the disadvantaged in the school and nationally, equivalent to more than three terms, but it is reducing quickly.
- Pupils' reading skills are developing well and in the recent Year 1 national screening test for phonics (the sounds that letters make) the school's results were above the national average. Pupils spoken to in Year 6, use not only the school library, but also the local public library and they enjoy reading.

The early years provision**is good**

- Most children enter the nursery with weak skills across all areas of learning, including in their communication skills. By the time they enter Reception they have made good progress in most areas, although development in literacy and numeracy have been identified as areas for further improvement.
- Children make good progress in the Reception class so that by the time they are ready to move to Year 1, an increasing proportion has reached a good level of development which represents a considerable increase on previous performance.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good. In the Early Years this enables the children to learn phonics well.
- Effective use in the Nursery of a wide range of resources means that children are able to learn well. One child was able to pick out and name the many different coloured shapes mixed in with the sand.
- Relationships with parents are good and they are welcomed in school to learn about phonics and write comments in children's learning journals.
- Children are safe in the early years area because the staff make sure that the provision is looked after well and checked daily for obstacles and dangers.
- The learning environment is well organised to help children to learn well. There are areas providing opportunities for children to explore and learn about numbers and words.
- Children's activities are linked well to themes such as 'bonfire night', to engage them in active learning by using pictures of fireworks to help them learn about numbers.
- Evidence of early writing skills was seen in Reception around their 'pirate' theme and communication skills were encouraged with their role play on being a vet, following up from a visit to a veterinary practice.
- Despite the rain, children were still able to enjoy and learn in the outdoor environment.
- The head of the early years provision provides good leadership and this is helping children to be ready to start Year 1 reading well.

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 | 139124 |
| Local authority | South Tyneside |
| Inspection number | 447854 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 210 |
| Appropriate authority | The Board of Directors |
| Chair | L Whiterod |
| Headteacher | M McCarthy |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected as an academy |
| Telephone number | 0191 455 2865 |
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