

The Ridgeway Primary School

Hillbrow, Reading, Berkshire RG2 8JD

Inspection dates

5–6 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and her leadership team have led rapid improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in every key stage.
- The headteacher, together with other leaders, and governors have high expectations and aspirations for the success of their pupils.
- Leaders have taken effective action to improve the teaching and learning of reading, writing and mathematics. Consequently, current pupils make much stronger progress than in previous years.
- Governors hold the headteacher and her leadership team to account effectively. They ask probing questions about the progress of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge and high expectations of their pupils.
- From their different starting points, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make good progress across the curriculum.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make strong progress. Through tailored support, they are able to access the curriculum with confidence and success.
- The early years setting is a strength of the school. Children in both Nursery and Reception develop strong skills, knowledge and understanding of the world around them.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are courteous, helpful and respectful of the needs of others. They are attentive in class and behave well at breaktime and lunchtime.
- Pupils thrive at the school and are kept safe. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, both online and in the outside world.
- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is effective. Pupils learn about the importance of democracy, free speech and tolerance.
- Although the teaching of reading, writing, mathematics and science is strong, teaching in history and geography is not as strong.
- Although leaders have identified gaps in pupils' knowledge about vocabulary and grammar, teachers do not help pupils to develop their language skills effectively in all areas of the curriculum.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, by:
 - ensuring that pupils develop strong skills, knowledge and understanding in history and geography
 - ensuring a systematic approach to the teaching of vocabulary and grammar.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, alongside her leadership team, has ensured that teachers and teaching assistants receive high-quality professional development. Consequently, staff feel well supported to deliver high-quality lessons to all pupils. In the Ofsted staff survey, staff were unanimous in agreeing that the school has improved since the last inspection.
- Leaders have established accurate assessment systems in all year groups which enable staff to plan lessons to meet the needs of all pupils. Leaders therefore have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They analysed the issues underpinning pupils' underperformance in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 in 2018, and took swift and appropriate action. As a result, pupils' outcomes in these subjects are improving quickly.
- The leadership of English is strong. Through insightful analysis of pupils' assessment information, leaders have adapted and strengthened the English curriculum. Leaders are reflective. They source curriculum approaches rooted in evidence-based research to enrich and extend pupils' reading and writing skills and knowledge. To complement the changes to the English curriculum, leaders ensure that staff receive tailored support.
- The leadership of mathematics is effective. Leaders have established a well-designed curriculum to match the needs of all pupils. Leaders recognise the importance of ensuring that staff develop strong skills in delivering the revised mathematics curriculum. Across most year groups, teachers work collaboratively with other schools within the local Whitley Excellence Cluster. Consequently, staff have opportunities to enhance the teaching of mathematics.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils develop strong understanding of British values such as tolerance, democracy and free speech. Across the school, pupils discuss their views about many subjects with perception and respect. Pupils also develop understanding of the institutions of democracy through elections for the student council.
- The school is very inclusive. Pupils with SEND receive bespoke support that meets their needs well. Leaders ensure that these pupils have the same access to the curriculum as their peers. As a result, current pupils make strong progress in many areas of the curriculum.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have access to a broad curriculum. For example, pupils have many opportunities to conduct investigations in science. Pupils also study many sports in physical education (PE). However, pupils do not develop strong skills, knowledge and understanding in history and geography.
- Pupils have many opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding through extra-curricular visits and clubs.
- Although leaders have identified issues pertaining to some pupils' limited language skills and knowledge, the teaching of vocabulary and grammar is not yet fully

embedded across the curriculum.

- Leaders use pupil premium funding to good effect. Additional funding provides both extra support in class and extra-curricular opportunities to develop pupils' social and emotional well-being. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils make strong progress in all year groups.
- The use of the primary PE and sport premium has been very effective in engaging pupils in a broad range of sports such as cricket, football, swimming and athletics. Through sport, pupils also have many opportunities to strengthen their self-esteem and boost their confidence.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They gather pertinent information through discussions with leaders, staff and pupils, visits to the school and reports. Governors ask incisive questions to challenge and support the school's drive for improvement.
- Governors bring a breadth of expertise to their roles. Their work complements the school's improvement priorities.
- Governors review the expenditure for disadvantaged pupils and the sports premium funding to ensure that pupils access additional support.
- The governing body is led well by the chair. Governors ensure that they attend regular training to fulfil the requirements of their roles. Governors also ensure the physical and emotional safety of pupils at the school through reviews of the school's safeguarding arrangements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders are tenacious in ensuring the physical and emotional well-being and safety of pupils. They are highly alert to changes in pupils' behaviour and attendance and respond swiftly and appropriately. Leaders also ensure that pupils receive the support they need from external agencies.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Pupils state unequivocally that they feel safe and that staff care for their welfare.
- School leaders ensure that all staff undergo up-to-date and appropriate safeguarding training. Staff know the critical importance of keeping pupils safe and the processes by which they can make a referral.
- The designated teacher for children looked after is very effective in providing tailored social, emotional and academic support. She is vigilant about ensuring that the school curriculum meets their needs.
- Through the curriculum, pupils learn how to keep safe on the internet and the importance of doing so.
- Checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are fit for purpose. Governors review safeguarding documentation regularly.

- Parents who responded to Parent View unanimously agreed that the school keeps their children safe. Similarly, all staff who responded to the Ofsted staff survey agreed that the school keeps pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils and staff have very positive relationships which create a harmonious learning environment throughout the school.
- Teachers use accurate information about pupils' starting points to plan sequences of lessons that both excite and challenge pupils. Consequently, pupils are making much better progress in all year groups.
- The focus on improving the quality of teaching in English has led to better outcomes for pupils across the school. Using high-quality texts, such as Michael Morpurgo's 'Kensuke's Kingdom' in Year 5, pupils develop understanding and knowledge of how writers use language to structure narratives. Pupils study a breadth of genres which inform the development of their writing skills. Consequently, pupils in all year groups make strong progress in reading and writing.
- Pupils relish reading for pleasure. Throughout the curriculum, pupils are immersed in a range of texts. As a result, there is a 'buzz' about reading in all year groups.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Pupils make clear links between sounds and letters, enabling them to access the curriculum well.
- The teaching of mathematics is effective. Pupils in all year groups receive teaching that meets their needs. Pupils develop knowledge about abstract mathematical concepts through concrete resources, pictures and symbols and make strong progress. Pupils have many opportunities to consolidate their understanding and knowledge to ensure that it is secure before progressing to new topics.
- Teaching assistants provide very effective support to pupils, particularly pupils with SEND. They receive regular training which enables them to pose challenging questions that help pupils to develop understanding.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and conscientious learners. They use collaborative talk well to extend their understanding. This was seen in a Year 2 lesson, where pupils were eagerly discussing the different mathematical questions that would result in the answer 'five'.
- Pupils are highly enthusiastic about science. Work in pupils' books demonstrates the strong development of their ability to formulate hypotheses, conduct experiments and draw evidence-based conclusions. Year 6 pupils talked knowledgeably to an inspector about an experiment that enabled them to study the DNA of a banana.
- The teaching of PE is strong. Through carefully structured activities, pupils develop strong physical coordination and an understanding of the importance of leading physically healthy lives.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Through carefully planned monitoring activities, they are able to provide tailored feedback to staff, complemented by additional support if required.

- Pupils demonstrate pride in their learning. Their handwriting is neat and well presented.
- The teaching and learning of history and geography are not as well developed as in other subjects in the curriculum. Topics are not studied in sufficient depth and are not well sequenced.
- Although teachers are aware of the language needs of some pupils, the teaching of vocabulary and grammar is not yet systematically embedded across the curriculum.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Many parents state that their children are well supported emotionally and pastorally by the school. One parent stated, for example, that the school 'puts the needs of each child before all else'.
- Pupils are confident and articulate. They know who to go to if they have a problem, and are confident that staff will resolve issues quickly.
- Through the curriculum, pupils have many opportunities to talk openly about their perceptions of the world. An inspector observed Year 3 pupils taking turns to articulate their views and demonstrate respect for the views of others.
- Pupils are highly inclusive of others. For example, pupils with SEND are included in every part of school life.
- Through the curriculum, pupils learn about different faiths such as Judaism and Christianity. Pupils articulate their understanding with insight and respect.
- Pupils are well prepared for life as 21st-century British citizens through the process of elections for the school council.
- Throughout the curriculum, pupils develop strong, positive relationships with each other and adults. Consequently, pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is strong. Pupils are attentive and courteous. They are very supportive of each other in lessons.
- Pupils can define bullying accurately. Pupils are confident that if bullying occurs staff resolve it swiftly and appropriately.
- Pupils' attendance has improved markedly and is, overall, in line with the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders have acted swiftly and effectively to reverse the decline in achievement that resulted in below-average progress and attainment in writing in Year 6 and Year 2 in 2018. Leaders and staff have revised the writing curriculum to ensure that pupils draw on their study of high-quality texts to inform their writing. Scrutiny of pupils' books, visits to lessons and in-school data provide evidence that the school is addressing pupils' weaknesses in writing well.
- Pupils use talk very well to support each other's learning. They discuss the books they read with insight and understanding about characters, themes and settings. Through the curriculum, pupils are immersed in a culture of reading. Consequently, pupils currently make good progress in reading.
- As a result of the revision of the teaching and learning of mathematics, pupils currently make better progress than previously. Pupils have many opportunities to extend and consolidate their understanding through additional activities and tasks.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress and attainment in many areas of the curriculum has improved markedly as a result of the monitoring of leaders and staff. Consequently, pupils receive tailored support to enable them to make strong progress.
- Pupils currently make strong progress in science at both key stage 1 and key stage 2 due to a challenging curriculum that promotes pupils' curiosity about how the world works.
- Pupils develop strong skills, knowledge and understanding in PE through participation in a broad range of sports.
- Year 1 pupils' phonics achievements were just above the national average in 2018. Most pupils are able to apply their phonics knowledge successfully to a range of reading texts. Consequently, Year 1 pupils are well prepared for study in Year 2.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress from their variable starting points. Tailored support designed to address their learning needs enables pupils to access the curriculum with success and confidence.
- Pupils do not make strong progress in the development of their knowledge, skills and understanding in history and geography.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders and staff in both the Nursery and Reception classes have structured an exciting, stimulating and enriching curriculum within which children thrive. Activities and tasks are carefully designed to develop children's knowledge, skills and understanding about the world. For example, inspectors observed children experimenting with a range of different materials such as jelly, sand and mud and evaluating the effects of these materials.
- Children have many opportunities to develop their scientific understanding of the world, for example through observing the impact of gravity on the flow of water.
- Staff support the development of children's language skills very well through targeted questioning, prompts and clear explanations. The activities and tasks enable children to extend their vocabulary and grammar well. For example, Reception children create

plays using the puppet theatre and puppets.

- Children respond very well to staff's expectations. Consequently, children are kind, helpful and welcoming. Children also learn to maintain their attention and to be resilient in their learning. From starting points that are typically low for their age, children make strong progress in the development of their knowledge, skills and understanding. Consequently, children are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Children make strong progress in the development of their phonics skills through well-structured activities. As a result, children are enthusiastic about reading and texts.
- Children have many opportunities to develop their writing skills through mark-making in many different mediums. Children relish the opportunity to practise their writing skills, on paper as well as in sand.
- Children's early mathematical skills and knowledge develop well through the well-designed activities. Adults intervene where appropriate to extend children's understanding.
- Children develop strong social skills through well-constructed activities. For example, boys were observed baking 'birthday cakes' out of mud, decorated with leaves, for the other children.
- Staff liaise well with parents. As a result, parents respond well to the online learning journal, enabling staff to link home and school learning.

School details

Unique reference number	109789
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	10088112

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	431
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Kayes
Headteacher	Jacky Steele
Telephone number	01189 375530
Website	www.theridgewayprimary.net
Email address	head@theridgeway.reading.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7–8 March 2017

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most primary schools.
- The school operates a Nursery for five days a week.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of education, health and care plans is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a range of lessons, many jointly with senior leaders, to observe pupils' learning. Inspectors also made short visits to lessons and looked at pupils' books.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of pupils from various year groups. Discussions were held with school staff, including senior and middle leaders, and three governors.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation, information on pupils' outcomes, and records relating to monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment, and behaviour and safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of 43 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, alongside 41 text responses and 13 staff responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Susan Aykin, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Helen Johns	Ofsted Inspector
Kevin Parfoot	Ofsted Inspector

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