

Inspection of a good school: The Ridge Primary School

Gregory Road, Wollaston, Stourbridge, Dudley DY8 3NF

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 October 2023

Outcome

The Ridge Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school and get a good education at The Ridge. They work hard and achieve well, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because teachers adapt tasks to ensure all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), can complete the work set. Staff ensure higher-attaining pupils have the opportunity to think hard and excel in their learning.

Pupils know and follow the school rules, to be 'ready, respectful and responsible'. They know what these mean and live up to the school's high expectations. Many take on additional responsibilities, such as reading ambassadors and school council members. Older pupils proudly act as 'buddies' for children in the early years. This demonstrates the high levels of maturity that pupils have.

Pupils feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. The curriculum and exciting events are used to ensure that pupils understand relevant dangers. For example, pupils learned about internet safety through a drama performance from a visiting theatre group. Forest school activities, residential visits and learning to play the clarinet all add to pupils' enjoyment of school and enrich their personal development.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

There was a higher than usual turnover of staff last year. The school endeavoured to manage this as effectively as it could. While changes in staffing did not affect outcomes, some parents feel that the number of temporary teachers pupils had in some year groups, including in Kindergarten, unsettled their children. Some are also concerned about the inconsistency in the leadership of special educational needs provision. The school is committed to working closely with parents to regain their confidence and ensure that all pupils' needs are fully met.

The school has identified ways to improve its curriculum and recently adopted a new approach. Many subjects are now covered in greater depth. Pupils draw on prior learning effectively because of links they make to what they already know. Subject content is clearly defined and well sequenced. Staff question and check pupils' learning effectively during lessons. However, systems are not yet established to check where gaps exist and how well pupils embed the planned curriculum.

Staff are proficient in identifying pupils with SEND early. Resources are carefully selected to meet pupils' individual needs. Adaptations in lessons support pupils with SEND to learn alongside their peers. This enables them to achieve well.

Reading is a strength of the school. Pupils read from a wide range of books and enjoy the 'poem of the week'. Children in the early years learn songs and rhymes to develop their early language skills. The phonics programme lays strong foundations for the reading curriculum. Pupils take home suitable books to practise what they learn in school. Staff's assessment of reading is regular and accurate. The school provides effective support to those pupils who struggle. Classrooms and libraries are well stocked with high-quality books which encourage pupils to read. Their reading supports their writing and work in other areas of the curriculum.

Staff manage pupils' behaviour fairly and consistently. Clear routines and high expectations are introduced in the early years. Pupils listen carefully to instructions and conduct themselves well in lessons and at breaktimes. They are keen to learn and take pride in their work. Pupils care about and treat others with respect. Learning partners are the first port of call if someone gets stuck with their work. Playground buddies are also on hand to help resolve any minor issues that arise.

Pupils are active citizens. They contribute positively to the school community. After-school clubs provide opportunities for pupils to extend and develop individual talents. The school arranges educational visits and visiting speakers to strengthen pupils' knowledge of the world and to broaden their horizons. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of cultures and traditions. They understand what fundamental British values are and how these apply in school and later life.

Governors are experienced and well informed. They understand the school's priorities. Some visit school to gain a fuller insight into the quality of education provided. This enables them to provide greater levels of support and challenge to staff. However, occasionally, they do not work strategically enough with senior leaders to minimise the impact of staff changes on pupils' welfare.

Staff are proud to work at The Ridge. They are overwhelmingly positive about the support they receive around their workload and well-being, for example changes made to the school marking policy and the introduction of the new curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not yet developed an approach to assess how well pupils recall and retain what they learn in some foundation subjects. This means that gaps in pupils' knowledge are not identified or addressed. The school should ensure that they are able to check that pupils embed the key knowledge from the planned curriculum.
- A number of parents are concerned about the lack of consistency and disruption due to the higher than usual proportion of staff changes affecting several year groups. This instability has caused some parents to lose confidence in the school and impacted on provision for pupils with SEND and sense of security for children in Kindergarten. The school should work strategically to minimise further disruption, regain the support of concerned parents, and ensure that all pupils' needs are fully met.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2014.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	103805
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10290536
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	225
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Julia Simmonds
Headteacher	Deborah Hudson
Website	www.ridge.dudley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 May 2018 under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The senior leadership has remained stable since the previous inspection but there have been several class teacher changes. Many subject leaders are new to their roles.
- Kindergarten provision, managed by the governing body, is now run by a qualified teacher.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and senior leaders. She met with the chair of governors in school and three governors through an online meeting.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited

a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.

- The inspector met with all teaching staff to talk about curriculum, staff workload, and the behaviour and personal development of pupils. She also met with groups of pupils to talk about their learning and well-being.
- The inspector looked at curriculum documents and observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 reading to a member of staff.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: checked the school's single central record; spoke to senior leaders about safeguarding procedures; took account of the views of staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector considered a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement. Records of attendance were checked.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at playtime and talked to pupils about behaviour, bullying and welfare.
- The inspector talked to parents after school and considered the responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and their free-text responses. She gathered the views of pupils and staff on site through discussion with these groups, and also obtained staff views from their online questionnaire responses.

Inspection team

Heather Simpson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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