

Inspection of Riders Junior School

Kingsclere Avenue, Leigh Park, Havant, Hampshire PO9 4RY

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 May 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a caring and inclusive school. The vision of 'standing together with our community to unlock opportunity and secure achievement for all' reflects aspiration for everyone. Pupils are happy and welcoming. They feel valued and know how well the school keeps them safe. Staff show kindness and dedication. Ambitions for pupils' success are high, but not realised. Pupils do not achieve well enough, including the very high proportions of disadvantaged pupils. While behaviour has improved for many, expectations for learning behaviour are not always high. Lessons can be disrupted by pupils who are less motivated to learn.

At the time of the last inspection, there had been turbulence with leadership. That uncertainty continued until recently, further affecting the quality of education. However, current leaders are now driving some successful improvements. Their shared ambition and values are increasingly bringing out the best in everyone. Personal development is the school's strength. Pastoral care is impressive, from the nurturing gardening club to a whole range of mental health and well-being provision across the school. Pupils learn to be responsible citizens through a diverse offer of extracurricular experiences. Visitors with physical disabilities have been particularly inspirational. They regularly visit to share their sporting and artistic accomplishments, empowering pupils to overcome challenges.

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

The school provides effective help for the high proportions of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff sharply assess pupils' individual needs before adapting support, activities and resources, so everyone can access the school's broad curriculum.

At the last inspection, teachers sometimes lacked subject knowledge to teach the curriculum successfully. This has improved as a result of effective support from leaders. The school has developed its approach to help pupils to practise and recall essential knowledge better. The curriculum is planned well, but the quality of teaching is not always consistent. In the strongest lessons, pupils concentrate and contribute positively, and teachers check their understanding precisely. This means that in mathematics, more pupils are working closer to expectations for their age including the many pupils who are disadvantaged. However, subjects are at different stages of development. In geography, many pupils securely learn and remember key content over time. Other subjects, such as religious education, have not been consistently well taught. This causes gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. In 2023, pupils achieved significantly below national averages by the end of Year 6. Current pupils' achievement is stronger than it was but is not yet consistent across the curriculum.

Reading has been prioritised to help pupils feel more positive about books. Pupils enjoy reading the diverse texts in the school library. The school has provided training

to upskill staff, but phonics teaching is not consistently strong. Pupils who struggle to read with fluency and comprehension need more effective support to catch up.

Staff help pupils to manage their emotions using patience and expertise. This enriches many pupils' well-being and helps their behaviour. However, some pupils show less engagement in learning. This can distract others, and teachers do not always address learning disruptions consistently. For too long, attendance has been low. However, improvements have recently been secured. Attendance is high priority for leaders, and persistent absence has reduced as a result of their effective actions, including impressive pastoral work.

Assemblies and curriculum activities provide pupils with a valuable understanding of modern Britain. Relationships are respectful, and pupils are passionately opposed to discrimination. Pupils' cultural development is enriched through celebrations including Chinese New Year and Holi. Pupils learn about democracy when electing team captains and school councillors. Other leadership roles include junior police community support officer, reading ambassador and road safety officer. Talents are nurtured through a range of sport and music opportunities, including singing in a major arena. Leaders make certain that the high numbers of disadvantaged pupils never miss out, ensuring their high involvement in a rich variety of free clubs, from cookery to football.

Leaders are committed, compassionate and reflective. They care deeply about the school community, and their focussed efforts are beginning to have positive impact. Governors provide suitable support and fulfil statutory duties with diligence. Despite uncertainty over leadership in recent years, staff feel highly supported and are proud of their school. They value how recent curriculum and pastoral improvements are benefiting pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Phonics teaching and reading support are not consistently strong. As a result, too many pupils struggle to read with accuracy, confidence and comprehension. The school must ensure that support for weaker readers is consistently effective to help them catch up and read fluently by the end of Year 6.
- Some variability exists in the quality of teaching across different subjects and classes. This means that pupils do not learn and remember key content successfully. The school should continue supporting teachers to equip them with the required skills so they provide clear explanations, design effective tasks and accurately check pupils' understanding. They should use this information to

inform future teaching to help pupils achieve consistently well across the curriculum.

- Attendance has been too low for too long. Pupils are missing out on important learning and social time at school. Leaders have achieved some progress, and must re-double their efforts to reduce absence further, especially for disadvantaged pupils.
- Expectations for learning behaviour are not consistently high. Sometimes, pupils show low engagement and distract others from their learning. The school must ensure that high expectations are consistently met in lessons to help all pupils achieve their best.

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.

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	115908
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10296203
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Carolyn Owens
Interim executive headteacher	Anthony Markham
Head of school	Kati Dawkins
Website	www.ridersschools.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 September 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Riders Junior School is federated, and shares a site with, Riders Infant School.
- Since the last inspection, there have been further changes in senior leadership, including a period of time without an executive headteacher. The current interim executive headteacher was appointed in February 2024. The infant and junior school have heads of schools who work across both schools.
- The school currently uses one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school offers a before-school club, overseen by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the interim executive headteacher, heads of school, assistant headteacher and inclusion leader (SEND), teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with four governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography, history and English. For deep dives, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed and evaluated pupils' work in religious education and art and design.
- The lead inspector listened to a range of pupils read. The inspector observed catch-up interventions to learn how staff provide extra support to pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, 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.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the pupil survey and spoke to a range of pupils to learn their views about the school.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of parents and took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the free-text responses.
- Inspectors evaluated the responses to the staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.

Inspection team

Scott Reece, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Catherine Cottingham	Ofsted Inspector
Debra Anderson	Ofsted Inspector

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