

# Inspection of a good school: Ripley Junior School

Poplar Avenue, Ripley, Derbyshire DE5 3PN

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Inspection dates: 19 and 20 June 2024

## **Outcome**

Ripley Junior School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy coming to this school. The school's motto, 'Inspiring Children - Moving Forward - Learning Together' is exemplified in the school's woodland learning. Pupils say they learn to look after themselves, work with others and solve problems there.

Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They behave well in lessons. The school's, 'Attitudes to thrive - I can do it! Aiming High! Dare to be different! Thinking for Myself! More than just me! How well did I do?' approach guides pupils in their actions and deeds. Pupils enjoy being challenged, and challenging themselves, in mathematics, for example.

Pupils are polite and well mannered. They greet visitors warmly and with a smile. Pupils learn to be tolerant, caring and respectful. They understand their roles as future citizens. For example, pupils organised a sponsored football match to raise money for a charity which supported someone they knew.

This is an inclusive school. It has high expectations and is ambitious for all its pupils to succeed, especially those who are disadvantaged and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Its work with a mental health charity provides support for pupils and families. This school cares about everyone who are associated with it.

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

Pupils talk positively about reading. They liked the opportunity to choose the quality books for their new library. Teachers make story time fun. If pupils fall behind in phonics or reading they receive the help they need. Skilled staff provide support in a timely manner to help pupils to catch-up.

The school has acted swiftly to address the recent decline in published performance outcomes in mathematics. The curriculum has been redesigned, which means that pupils have more opportunities to revisit their prior learning. This has helped pupils to be able to recall what they have been taught in the past. They apply mathematical concepts, such as

percentages, to help them understand taxes and salaries. Work in pupils' books is of high quality. Pupils say that the instant feedback teachers offer helps them to get better at mathematics. However, these improvements have not yet come through into published outcomes.

The wider curriculum is well sequenced. The school weaves themed events into the curriculum such as Greek and Roman days. This helps pupils understand more about life in those times. Furthermore, the use of an indoor space dome helps explain the universe in science. In a few subjects, connections between key knowledge have not been made explicit enough with the wider curriculum. This means that learning does not build as well as it could over time and pupils cannot recall all prior learning. The school has responded well to the decline in pupils' progress recently. Written work is now of good quality. Pupils take pride in their work. The school is still developing some aspects of its leadership, particularly checking how well the curriculum is being implemented.

Staff are united in their ambition for all pupils to do well. The school ensures that it identifies pupils' needs. Staff are provided with clear guidance on how to provide appropriate support for pupils. This is particularly the case for pupils with SEND. These pupils and their families typically say they receive the support they need.

This school has a strong sense of moral purpose. New strategies to ensure pupils attend school regularly have reduced rates of absence. Recent changes to the way the school manages poor behaviour has improved considerably. Low-level disruption in lessons is rare. Pupils are confident the school deals with misbehaviour. However, a small number of pupils still struggle with managing their emotions. The school supports these pupils well. Over time, the number of incidents of poor behaviour has declined.

The school's personal development programme helps prepare pupils as future citizens. Visits to local care homes help pupils to be compassionate and caring of others. Pupil 'games makers' plan games and activities at break and lunch times. 'Thrive ambassadors' look out for those who may need cheering up. Pupils learn how to look after themselves, when learning online and at times when they are in the community.

Staff know the school cares about their well-being. Changes to the way staff provide feedback to pupils has helped with workload. There is a real sense of unity at Ripley Juniors. As one member of staff commented, typical of many: 'I have never felt more supported.'

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, connections between key knowledge have not been made explicit enough across the curriculum. This means that staff are not highlighting prior learning as well as they could, and pupils are not able to recall knowledge as well as they should. The school should revisit these curriculums and make strong connections to build knowledge over time and ensure that more pupils remember more of what they have been taught.
- The school is still developing some aspects of its leadership, particularly checking how well the curriculum is being implemented. As a result, the school is not yet providing clear guidance on how to improve the teaching of the curriculum in a few subjects. The school should ensure that all leaders have the skills and expertise they need to evaluate more sharply the impact of their work and make any necessary improvements.

## 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 an ungraded inspection. However, if we find 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2018.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112611
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10313221
<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	331
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Martin Donaldson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jennifer Clarke
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ripley-jun.derbyshire.sch.uk">www.ripley-jun.derbyshire.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	5 and 6 June 2018 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative providers.
- The chair of governors took up their role in September 2023.
- The school runs a breakfast club managed by the governing body.
- There is a before- and after-school club managed by the school.

## 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO).
- The inspector carried out deep dives in three subjects: reading, mathematics and history. To do this, they met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at samples

of pupils' work, listened to pupils read and met with teachers and pupils. They also looked at curriculum documentation for design and technology, geography, music, physical education (PE), religious education (RE), and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education.

- The inspector met with five members of the governing body including the chair.
- The inspector met with a local authority representative.
- The inspector took account of the responses to the Parent View, including free-text responses, and Ofsted's survey for school staff. The inspector spoke informally to parents and carers at the beginning of the school day.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector 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.
- The inspector considered pupils' behaviour at various times of day, including in lessons, around the school site and at lunchtime. They scrutinised the school's records for attendance and behaviour.

### **Inspection team**

Mark Anderson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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