

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Riddings Junior School

Church Street, Riddings, Alfreton, Derbyshire DE55 4BW

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 October 2024

Outcome

Riddings Junior School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is David Cates. The school is part of Embark Federation Multi Academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Matthew Crawford, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David King.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school encourages pupils' wider development. Pupils learn and play in the school's wonderful outdoor space, whatever the weather. They receive meaningful opportunities to learn to respect the environment. Pupils are taught resilience and independence. They appreciate the many outdoor opportunities that they experience. They said that this is what makes Riddings Junior special.

Pupils reflect the school values of 'PRIDE'. The expectations of pupils' behaviour, achievement and conduct are high. Pupils are taught the importance of good manners and respect. In class, they show each other kindness. They share, co-operate and learn together. Pupils said that they feel happy and well cared for in school. Achievement has improved.

A love of reading is promoted. Books are at the centre of the curriculum. The school selects texts that help pupils to learn about the wider world around them. For example, pupils read about the lives of people of different faiths and cultures. Pupils said that they love hearing their teachers read to them. They said that their teachers 'bring adventures to life'.

The school ensures that all pupils go on exciting trips and residential. The seaside trip is particularly popular. The trust widens these opportunities further. Pupils' talents are hugely celebrated.

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

The curriculum is well structured. It is ambitious and reflects the demands of the national curriculum. In some areas, such as writing, there is clarity about what pupils should know. Pupils return to important learning so that it is remembered long term. They get time to practise. Pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are becoming more confident writers. The curriculum in a few subjects is at an earlier stage of development than this.

Some pupils still have learning gaps as a result of COVID-19. This is particularly the case in mathematics. Some pupils underachieve in this subject. The school has taken the correct action to address this issue. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are quickly gaining the knowledge needed to catch up.

The school now has systematic checks in place to ensure that pupils learn as they should. This has been a whole school priority. Staff value this change. They have particularly valued the support from the trust. Even so, sometimes in lessons, including mathematics, opportunities are still missed to check pupils' understanding. This can hinder some pupils' learning.

There is a well-planned reading curriculum in place. Pupils, including pupils with SEND, learn the knowledge needed to become accurate readers. They receive effective support to catch up if they need to. Pupils read regularly in school. The school makes sure that reading books match pupils' ability. This promotes reading fluency.

Staff receive effective professional development. This includes access to expert subject networks. The school has some talented leaders, including subject leads. They make a significant contribution to the school and to the wider work of the trust.

Parents and carers are full of praise for the high quality of the provision for pupils with SEND. The needs of pupils with SEND are swiftly identified. In class, pupils receive high-quality help to access the curriculum and to achieve. Many parents said that the school went 'above and beyond' what is expected to ensure that their child's needs are met.

The school prioritises pupils' attendance and punctuality. Staff welcome pupils to school daily. The well-being mentors are a fantastic asset to the school. Their work with pupils and their families is tireless. Along with all staff, they ensure that pupils are in school and learning effectively. Pupils' attendance is good.

Staff are incredibly proud to work at the school. They value leaders' actions to consider workload and to respect their health and well-being.

Trust governance is excellent. The school receives expert challenge and support. The local governing body successfully conducts its role. Governors show great loyalty and commitment. They are knowledgeable and passionate about the school.

Riddings Junior School is at the heart of the community. Parents are extraordinarily appreciative of the school and the impact it has on lives. Leaders have taken appropriate action to continue the school's improvement. They have an accurate view of the school. They have identified the correct school priorities to move the school further forward in its journey.

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, the curriculum is not as well developed as in others. In these few subjects, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to revisit previous knowledge so that it sticks. The school should ensure that the curriculum across all subjects is consistently well planned and is focused on the key knowledge that pupils need. It should make sure that pupils gain a greater depth of knowledge and that they achieve well.
- At times, opportunities are missed to check if pupils are learning as well as they could. Sometimes, pupils' starting points are not well enough understood or built on. This includes in mathematics. As a result, pupils' learning can be hampered. The school should continue its work to suitably check that pupils' learning gaps are known and expertly addressed across all subjects studied, so that pupils achieve as they should.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 predecessor school, Riddings Junior School, to be good for overall effectiveness in May 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

Unique reference number	148787
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10347706
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	233
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David King
CEO of the trust	Matthew Crawford
Headteacher	David Cates
Website	www.riddingsjuniorschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined the Embark Federation Multi Academy trust in November 2021.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- 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.

- During the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher and senior leaders. She met with the CEO of the trust, the chair of the trust and three trustees. She also met with three members of the local governing body. She spoke with the primary school improvement lead for the trust.
- The inspector met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector met with the well-being mentors and discussed pupils' attendance and welfare. She observed pupils at the start of the school day and during social times. She visited pupils involved in outdoor learning.
- The inspector considered the response to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the surveys of staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Jayne Ashman, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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