



Riddings Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112497
LEA DERBYSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 278944
Inspection dates 2 November 2005 to 3 November 2005
Reporting inspector Ms. Joanne Harvey LI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Church Street
School category	Community		DE55 4BW
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01773 528492
Number on roll	215	Fax number	01773 528489
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Ian Bamford
Date of previous inspection	20 November 2000	Headteacher	Mr. Stephen Booth

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a junior school of average size which sits in extensive grounds and serves the communities of Riddings and Somercotes which are suburbs of Alfreton. Pupils come from a broad catchment area and range of socio-economic backgrounds. Almost all pupils are of white British ethnic origin and have English as their first language. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is just below the national average, as is the number known to be eligible to claim free school meals. Pupils' attainment on entry is similar to most other children of their age.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. The school has some strengths: the caring and nurturing ethos strongly supported by all in school; the positive attitude and good behaviour of most of the pupils and the efforts made by the staff. However, a pattern of weaknesses exists in: leadership and management; the quality of teaching, and standards of achievement. The school judges its overall effectiveness to be satisfactory. Inspectors do not agree because the school's monitoring and self-evaluation are overly generous and not sufficiently rigorous. The senior management of the school has not clearly identified a strategic view of the key areas where improvement is needed nor taken effective action to remedy these weaknesses. Staff are beginning to come to the right conclusions and identify the need to do things, but it is too early to measure the impact of new initiatives. For example, the expertise of staff as subject leaders has not been sufficiently developed. Though teaching observed was satisfactory overall at the time of the inspection, historically its impact on learning has been inadequate as evidenced by the fact that children have not made enough progress in their four years at the school. Too many lessons move too slowly and assessment systems are not robust enough to ensure work is always set at appropriate levels. Although standards of achievement have shown some improvement in some areas in 2005, the trend for the last five years has been for them to generally remain below those in most schools. The school has made inadequate progress since the last inspection and therefore does not provide value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve the quality of leadership and management at all levels so there is a clear direction. Use rigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures to identify areas where improvement is needed and take effective action to remedy the shortcomings - raise standards, particularly in mathematics and writing - improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring lessons are well planned and have good pace and challenge for all - develop a rigorous target setting, assessment and tracking procedure to inform planning and regularly monitor pupils' progress through school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

The school judges achievement and standards to be satisfactory but inspectors disagree. Although standards have changed little since the last inspection and remain broadly average overall, too many pupils do not make as much progress as they should. The standards achieved in the 2004 Year 6 national tests were above average in English, but below in science and particularly low in mathematics. Some improvements were

made to the number of higher grades achieved in 2005 but overall, results were lower than in 2004, and dipped considerably in English. Achievement over time is not good enough. For example, in 2004 and 2005, almost half the Year 6 pupils did not make the expected amount of progress between Year 2 and Year 6. Boys did not perform as well as girls in the writing tests. A general low expectation of pupils' performance means that learners are not offered and do not meet challenging targets. The school has recognised this as a priority for improvement, but so far there has been limited impact on pupils' achievement because of weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make similar progress to other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Inspectors disagree with the school's assessment that pupils' personal development is good and consider this aspect to be satisfactory. Pupils often sit passively and are not given enough chances to be independent and to think for themselves which restricts their overall achievement. Pupils say that they enjoy school and their behaviour is good. Relationships are good and pupils feel safe at school and incidents of bullying are very rare. Attendance levels are similar to the national average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. They learn to get on well with others and contribute to the school through acting as playground buddies, ringing bells, organising the 'Healthier Break' scheme and collecting registers. They appreciate having a 'voice' in school life via the school council which has made many sensible suggestions for improvements. For instance, they suggested and now run a 'Listening Team' at lunchtime for children who feel lonely or upset and need someone to talk to. After school clubs have been offered to pupils at other times of the year, but pupils regret that few are available to them at present. Pupils have a good awareness of the world community and are currently filling Christmas boxes to send to children in Africa. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles because of the school's keen involvement in the Healthy Schools Award. They know the importance of eating fruit and vegetables and drinking water daily. Most pupils acquire satisfactory literacy and numeracy skills to help them in the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

The school judges the quality of teaching and learning to be satisfactory. However, whilst teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory overall, the impact of teaching on learning over time has been inadequate. Relationships in class are good, discipline is effective, children behave well and engage willingly with what their teachers want them to do. Some tasks lack imagination, pace or challenge with the result that opportunities to make children think hard, engage in discussion and develop independence in their learning are lost. The records that teachers make of assessments of individual pupils' attainment and progress are not consistent and rigorous enough

to be used effectively to accurately plan further work. Consequently, there are times when activities do not build well enough on pupils' knowledge and understanding and work is not matched well enough to the needs and abilities of different children. This is particularly evident for more able children who often find their work too easy. The school does have a range of assessment data but agrees that it is unable at present to track pupils' progress well enough. Marking is supportive but often does not help pupils progress. Pupils themselves are not clear about their individual targets and what they need to do to achieve them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with adequate time devoted to each subject. It provides a reasonably broad and balanced range of activities. The support for pupils with learning difficulties is satisfactory and good for pupils with physical disabilities who are helped to enjoy all aspects of school life. Through its lessons in citizenship and personal and social and health education the school is successful in developing pupils' knowledge of safe and healthy living and in particular their understanding of living in and contributing to the community. The school makes adequate provision for visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum. The school council reported to inspectors that pupils appreciate opportunities they are offered to attend out of school clubs. However, they would like a greater range of clubs with provision not being restricted by the time of year.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school judges care, guidance and support to be good. Inspectors found this aspect to be satisfactory. Although the school has a caring ethos which effectively supports pupils' personal development, it does not support pupils in their learning well enough. For example, assessment information is not used rigorously enough to help all pupils achieve higher standards. Not all pupils have personal learning targets or receive sufficient guidance on what they should do to achieve them. Pupils are confident that there is always someone to turn to if they have any problems or concerns. The school works closely with other agencies to make sure that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are quickly identified and supported. Child protection arrangements are satisfactory and pupils feel safe and free from bullying.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The school judges leadership, management and governance of the school to be satisfactory, but inspectors do not agree. Strategic management of the school is inadequate, as are the monitoring and evaluation of provision. Staff work hard and are committed to doing their best for the children in their care. However, because there is no clear strategic direction for the school and its work, it fails to have a

satisfactory impact on pupils' progress. The governors support the school and hold it to account in some ways. However, they do not have sufficient knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school to provide adequate support and challenge to the school leadership in their role as critical friend. Care needs to be taken to ensure all stakeholders are involved in a meaningful way in the process of self-evaluation. The role of the subject coordinators is not sufficiently developed. New subject leaders have been appointed and whilst they are enthusiastic and hardworking, they are only just beginning to monitor standards and to consider tracking how well individual pupils are progressing. Weaknesses such as the lack of challenge and low expectations for progress are apparent. Subject leaders have not had the opportunity to look in detail at the quality of pupils' work, the balance of curriculum provision or the quality of teaching within their subject area. Observations of the quality of teaching by senior managers have failed to focus on lesson outcomes: they have been insufficiently evaluative and overly positive. Lesson observations inform individual teachers' development but do not contribute to an accurate picture of the school's overall strengths and weaknesses. Though school improvement planning has recently introduced a range of initiatives, these have yet to impact on the quality of the curriculum, teaching and learning. The leadership of the school has failed to demonstrate an adequate contribution to school improvement since the last inspection. Consequently the school has not yet demonstrated the capacity to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	No	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for the way in which you made us welcome when we visited your school. Everyone was very friendly and polite. We enjoyed watching your lessons and talking to you in school. We think that you are all well mannered and polite. Now we want to share with you what we thought about your school. These are the things we thought were going well. - Your teachers care about all of you and work hard to look after you. - Most of you say you enjoy coming to school and want to do your best. - You behave well. You are friendly, polite and look after each other. But we know everyone wants to do better and we have suggested a few things that we think will help. - We have asked those who help to run the school to check how well the school is organised and managed and to make sure the things that need improving are done quickly. They are keen to make sure it all works well. - Your teachers need to make more of your lessons interesting, helpful and move a little more quickly. - We think that many of you are not doing as well as you could. We have asked your teachers to check closely on your progress to see what you need to do to make sure you all do as well as you can, especially in maths and writing. They are going to make sure that you all know exactly what you have to do to get better.