



# Ridgeway Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 124214  
**LEA** Staffordshire  
**Inspection number** 281662  
**Inspection dates** 17 January 2006 to 18 January 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Doris Bell AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Grange Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Burntwood
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Staffordshire WS7 4TU
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01543 510470
<b>Number on roll</b>	279	<b>Fax number</b>	01543 510475
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Jill Moore
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11 September 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Lydia Tibbetts

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 17 January 2006 - 18 January 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 281662
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This large primary school serves a slightly disadvantaged area of Staffordshire. Children's skills are below those expected for their age when they start school. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is average. There have been difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff in recent years and the leadership team is relatively new. The school has a permanent ECO award for its work on education for sustainability.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Ridgeway is a satisfactory and improving school. It is rapidly recovering from a decline in standards and achievement in the last two years, caused mainly by staffing difficulties and a lack of sharpness in assessment. The recent tightening up of assessment procedures has tackled this effectively through well-focused target setting. Consequently, all pupils are making better progress than they were. Satisfactory teaching means that pupils make steady progress throughout the school. However, teachers provide pupils with too much direction and pupils have too few opportunities to find things out for themselves. This slows progress, particularly for more able pupils. The quality of education and standards are satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and are improving under the new leadership.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The impact of the recently constituted leadership teams has not yet shown through in all aspects of the school's work, although a good start has been made on improving assessment. The school's self-evaluation is generally accurate and is well focused on the main areas for improvement. The school's view that this is a good school has had to be modified in the light of the latest test results. Morale is high and staff are working hard to bring about sustained improvement. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory and the school provides satisfactory value for money. The staff's enthusiastic responses to new initiatives and the recent track record of improvement mean that the school is in a position to move forward securely.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Give pupils, and especially more able pupils, more opportunities to work independently so that they make faster progress.
- Check that the work of the new leadership teams is effective in bringing about sustained improvement in all aspects of the school's work.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

After a difficult period when pupils made slow progress, the situation has improved, and standards and pupils' achievement are satisfactory. Children start school with below average skills in all areas of learning. Those currently in the Reception class are making good progress, though few are likely to meet the standards expected for the end of Reception. All other pupils make satisfactory progress. However, progress is accelerating through the improved use of assessment information. This, combined with a rigorous analysis of all test results, was the school's well-considered response to the lack of progress shown by last year's Year 6 pupils. The underachievement of some of that group had resulted from a lack of sharpness in assessment and some well-documented inadequate teaching in earlier years, which has now been resolved.

The school's targets are adequately challenging and usually met. All pupils now have individual targets and successfully move step by step towards them. One pupil proudly shared a book with an inspector showing the achievement of some twenty 'small-step' targets in one term. The school's relatively recent approach to evaluating how much value it adds to pupils' learning each term is a further significant factor in the improving progress evident throughout the school. However, more able pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable. Their progress is hindered by a lack of opportunity to work faster and more independently on more demanding tasks, especially in mathematics and science.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The pupils' enjoyment of school, their good attendance and their very good behaviour are all the result of the good attention the school pays to their personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Reception children very quickly learn to value each other and work together, as was seen in an uplifting assembly where they were encouraged to 'Keep their light burning inside all day.' Pupils are confident that their worries will always be sorted out. They appreciate how hard the school works to ensure that bullying is 'prevented rather than having to be cured'. Older pupils really enjoy caring for and playing with the youngest children at playtimes and lunchtimes, both of which are harmonious social occasions. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and fit and they work very well together. They very successfully contribute to the school and wider community and they have a sound understanding of cultural diversity. They are effectively prepared for future economic well-being through their well-established work on education for sustainability.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The good teaching observed in some classes during the inspection shows the recent impact of the school's focus on improving progress. Some outstanding teaching in Reception greatly increased the children's understanding of how to use language to re-tell a story. Overall, however, teaching and learning are satisfactory because learning is often too teacher-directed. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to undertake activities that require them to think and find things out for themselves or to solve real-life problems. However, teachers now mark and assess pupils' learning well and use the information to set targets with the pupils. This is a key factor in the improved rate of progress noted throughout the school. It successfully ensures that pupils understand how to improve their work. Teachers' consistently good management of pupils' behaviour contributes to pupils' learning and usually results in good levels of concentration in lessons. Occasionally, teachers do not check well enough that all pupils understand what they have to do in lessons, and this hinders progress for some. Nevertheless, key staff appointments and the astute deployment of staff have resulted

in improved teaching. Good attention is paid to the needs of pupils who find learning difficult for whatever reason. Support staff are used effectively to help these pupils.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

While the curriculum is satisfactory overall, it does not always provide enough challenge for more able pupils. The school recognises this and an overhaul of curricular planning has just started with a clear intention to ensure that the needs of all pupils, including the more able, are fully met in a creative curriculum. Skills in literacy and in information and communication technology are promoted well through other subjects, and numeracy skills are developed satisfactorily. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is satisfactory. Pupils' learning and their personal development benefit from the good range of well-attended extra-curricular and extension activities. These include sporting and cultural activities in and outside of the normal school day. 'Focus weeks' on, for example, ecology, healthy eating and cultural diversity bring learning alive for pupils and draw well on a range of regular visitors. The school has good links with the local community and with other schools, including the local sports college. These links aid learning and ease the pupils' transition to secondary school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils work and play in a safe and healthy environment because good attention is given to promoting healthy lifestyles and to ensuring their health, safety and well-being at all times. Risk assessments are detailed and thorough and child protection procedures are rigorous. Vulnerable pupils are clearly identified and well supported by the school and its good links with external agencies. Very good relationships exist throughout the school. Parents and pupils are successfully involved in decision making and appreciate the way the school seeks and acts on their views. For example, parental concern about rough play at lunchtimes led to the appointment of additional supervisory staff and the successful use of support staff to promote games and other activities. Pupils receive good academic and personal guidance. This contributes well to their clearly improving progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher and governors have led and managed the school satisfactorily in recent years. They took appropriate steps to minimise the impact of some inadequate teaching in the past. However, until relatively recently, instability in staffing prevented them from successfully tackling all of the underlying issues. The headteacher provides good educational direction for the school. She acted decisively with staff and governors to minimise the effect of any further instability by setting up cross-age-group leadership teams to avoid dependency on individual teachers. These teams have successfully improved assessment procedures and behaviour management. All teachers

have worked very effectively together, willingly contributing to and implementing the new initiatives. As a result, standards and achievement are improving. However, staff are at different stages in their implementation, and the new pupil tracking systems are not yet fully in place throughout the school. The school is keeping a close check on this.

Governors are committed, well informed and effectively involved in the life of the school. They drive the school forward through regular visits and by questioning the headteacher closely about standards and provision. The headteacher and other managers regularly and accurately check and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. They provide good in-class support for individual teachers. In its broader evaluation of its work, the school has accurately identified its strengths and weaknesses. Areas for improvement are prioritised and presented clearly in a well-constructed plan, which is kept under constant review. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The work done to improve provision, particularly in the last two years, demonstrates that the school has the capacity for further improvement.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	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	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	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	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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 making us so welcome in your school and for talking to us about your work. While what your school is doing for you is satisfactory overall, there are a number of good points and also some areas that need more work.

The good points:

Your teachers make sure you enjoy school – this is clear from what you told us and from your good attendance, your very good behaviour, and your hard work in lessons.

Your teachers help you to improve your work – we know you appreciate this and you certainly achieve a good many of your targets each term.

You are well cared for and, in turn, you care well for your school and for the environment.

Your work in the ECO committee is impressive.

We have asked your school to help you to do even better by:

Giving all of you more opportunities to solve problems and find things out for yourselves.

Checking that all the work that different groups of teachers are doing to improve your learning are making a real difference for all of you.

We hope that you will make even better progress in the future and that you will develop a lifelong love of learning.