



Ripley Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112612
Local Authority DERBYSHIRE
Inspection number 289344
Inspection dates 25–26 January 2007
Reporting inspector Rajinder Harrison

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Kirk Close
School category	Community		Off Highfield Way, Off Highfield Way
Age range of pupils	4–7		Ripley, Derbyshire DE5 3RY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01773 743354
Number on roll (school)	111	Fax number	01773 512638
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr C Eley
		Headteacher	Mrs C Lodge
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2003		

Age group 4–7	Inspection dates 25–26 January 2007	Inspection number 289344
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Ripley Infants is a small school where almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Lower than average numbers of pupils are identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities.

The numbers on roll in the school have declined by over a third since the last inspection due to the profile of the local area changing. This has resulted in some pupils being taught in mixed age classes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils achieve well. Their personal development is good. They feel happy and secure in school, forming good relationships with their classmates and with all the adults that help them. Children starting in the Reception class quickly learn the routines that help them get the most out all the activities teachers plan for them and develop good levels of independence as they do their 'jobs for the day.' Behaviour is good and pupils are quick to help each other during lessons and out in the playground. Older pupils take care of the new starters, showing them where to go and what to do. Pupils have a good understanding of living healthy lifestyles and how to keep safe.

Provision in the Reception class is good and as a result children reach standards that are slightly above average at the end of the Foundation Stage. Good teaching and learning lead to pupils making good progress so standards at the end of Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Because the school has good tracking and monitoring procedures and teachers know their pupils well, any that need additional help are quickly identified and supported. The curriculum is satisfactory and ensures pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are supported successfully. However, in the mixed age classes, teachers do not plan the curriculum carefully enough either to meet the needs of all the age groups successfully or to deploy the good quality teaching assistants effectively enough. Additional activities and experiences that enrich learning are good and add to pupils' enjoyment of school. The school takes good care of its pupils and provides them with good guidance and support. Parents are confident that if problems arise the school will deal with these promptly.

Leadership and management are good. Through a relentless focus on raising achievement and standards, so that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, all staff have worked hard to improve provision and ensure consistent practices. The senior management team and governors monitor the work of the school carefully and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. For example, strategies to improve writing across the school have resulted in standards rising steadily. The school is better than their self- evaluation suggests because the staff and governors still feel they have more to do to make the school as good as they wish. This indicates that there is good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop curriculum planning to meet the range of needs of pupils in the mixed age classes more effectively.
- Deploy teaching assistants more effectively to support learning in the mixed age classes.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

On joining the Reception class, most children have levels of skills and knowledge that are expected at this age in all the areas of learning. Children's skills in communication and literacy and their calculation skills are slightly weaker. Because the school is very good at identifying individual needs, suitable steps are taken to guide those children who need help in these areas so that they all achieve well. Most children leave the Reception class having reached all the early learning goals and a significant minority having exceeded them.

With continued good emphasis on these basic skills, progress in Years 1 and 2 is good. Good teaching results in pupils achieving standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are above average. Because more focus has been given to literacy in the last year or so, mathematics is slightly weaker. The school has plans to address this immediately by providing extra support in mathematics for identified pupils in Year 2. Pupils with learning difficulties also achieve well through good individual help.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

While attendance is satisfactory, pupils' enjoyment of school reflects their positive attitudes to learning and good personal development. Relationships are very good and behaviour is good. Older pupils are protective towards younger children, as they say, 'We have to look after them when they fall over.' This caring sensitivity and respect extends to pupils knowing that some children need time in the 'magic room.' They develop a good level of independence by checking their work to see if they have met their targets.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They celebrate joyfully in assemblies and are fascinated as images appear on computer screens. Through the 'cool club,' the young councillors consider how to improve the school, for example, by having music in the dining room. They contribute to the community by taking harvest gifts to old people. Through many cultural events and by collecting gifts for pupils in Uganda they learn about traditions in the wider world. Regular visits and many visitors introduce pupils to life and work beyond the school. Pupils know how to keep safe by playing sensibly, lead healthy lives as they enjoy physical activities and choose healthy lunch options. With a confident start to their learning they are well prepared for their next school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well because teaching and learning are good. Pupils who have learning difficulties are fully involved in all lessons and also achieve well. Effective use of interactive whiteboards captures pupils' interest and particularly benefits those who find it hard to understand things without pictures to help them. Lessons are generally lively and challenging, and pupils are encouraged to discuss things with each other. Relationships are very good so pupils are happy to seek help and are willing to have a go. Most lessons start with a reminder of what pupils already know and end with teachers asking pupils to consider how well they have done and this helps pupils think about their achievement. Teachers use the very good assessment information they have to group pupils effectively. Occasionally, where the ability and age ranges are very diverse, work is not always accurately matched to suit everyone's needs. While some finish very quickly, others need more help to complete the task. Teaching assistants are not deployed effectively in these situations. Marking is generally good. Teachers praise pupils for what they have done well and explain what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Provision to support pupils' basic skills in literacy, number and information and communication technology is good, hence they achieve well. Activities such as 'mood writing,' allow pupils to extend their writing skills and relevant intervention strategies support pupils who need specific help to achieve well. Topics that link learning across subjects have begun to make learning fun but have not been developed fully. However, within mixed age classes, not enough is done to check that pupils of different ages have work that suits them in all lessons or that teaching assistants are used as effectively as possible. For example, some lower attaining Year 1 pupils move into the Year 1 curriculum, while they would benefit from continuing to work through aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

A well planned personal, social, health and citizenship programme underpins pupils' good understanding of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles and stay safe. Visits to places of interest and regular visitors such as puppeteers and musicians enrich pupils' cultural experiences. The popular after school clubs extend the curriculum and promote pupils' personal development well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good care, guidance and support pupils receive contribute effectively to their personal development. Pupils feel safe and well cared for and trust the adults they work with, confident that any problems that arise will be dealt with promptly. 'Our

teachers help us,' said one pupil. Systems to promote pupils' health and well-being are robust and requirements to safeguard pupils are fully met. The school is aware of the few matters of health and safety that need attention. Where appropriate, pupils receive good individual attention and there is good support for vulnerable pupils. Pupils understand that 'bubble time' can be used to tell teachers or other adults that are 'special' what is worrying them.

Guidance for pupils' academic development is good and any pupils not making the expected rate of progress are quickly identified and given additional support. Occasionally more able pupils are not challenged enough in their targets but this is improving. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported well and external agencies consulted when necessary. All pupils have individual targets to help them improve their work and they refer to these when checking how well they have done at the end of lessons.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, well supported by the senior management team, is very committed to the school and to ensuring pupils' good achievement. Evaluation procedures are rigorous. Effective monitoring has resulted in improving the quality of teaching which is now good. A review of pupils' attainment in writing and calculation skills in mathematics led to the effective implementation of strategies that have improved standards in Year 2. Rigorous monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress have resulted in early identification and close support of groups of pupils who need additional help. The school recognises that mixed age classes poses new challenges in terms of curriculum planning and the effective deployment of teaching assistants to help all pupils achieve equally well in every lesson.

Governance is good. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school through regular monitoring visits and review of pupils' performance. Money is spent wisely to provide valuable resources such as interactive whiteboards to support teaching and learning. Parents are very supportive. Their views are often sought and acted upon, for example in improving curriculum information through letters and workshops. Partnerships with other schools and agencies are good and benefit staff and pupils through shared training and social events.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

5 February 2007

Dear Children

Ripley Infant school, Kirk Close, Off Highfield Way, Ripley, Derbyshire, DE5 3RY

I am writing to tell you what I found out when I came to your school recently and looked at the work you do and talked to your teachers. It was lovely meeting you. Thank you for making me feel so welcome and for being so friendly and polite. Please thank your parents for filling in a form that gave me their views about the school and I am pleased that everyone likes the school so much. I am sorry I sat at your 'special table' for lunch when I was not special but I did enjoy talking to you about the 'magic room' and the really healthy dinners you get at school. I particularly liked the way you all get on with each other and look after each other in the playground.

Here are some of things that make your school good:

- You enjoy being there, work hard and get good results.
- Your teachers really listen to you and the headteacher makes sure everyone does their best to help you do well.
- Your teachers work hard to plan nice things for you to do.
- The school takes good care of you and you have many friends to help you.
- You behave well and know so much about staying fit and healthy.
- The school organises so many activities and visits and you meet lots of interesting people who help you learn new things.

Your school is good but there are a few things that could be better. I have asked your teachers to:

- Make sure that in every class you always have work that you can really do well at.
- Make sure that all the grown ups that help you in your lessons are there when you need them.

You could help by making sure they know when you need help so that you always do the best you can.

It is lovely that you enjoy school so much and I hope that you continue to do well.

Yours sincerely

Rajinder Harrison

Lead Inspector