



Ridgeway Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112757
Local Authority City of Derby
Inspection number 289399
Inspection date 7 February 2007
Reporting inspector David Simpson HMI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Uplands Avenue, Littleover, Derby DE23 1GG
School category	Community	Telephone number	01332 760770
Age range of pupils	4-7	Fax number	01332 760770
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Chair	Ms Penny Sutton
Number on roll (school)	246	Headteacher	Mrs Pat Rolt
Appropriate authority	The governing body		
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2003		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Ridgeway is an average size infant school. Approximately half of the school's population are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ridgeway is a very good school which has continued to improve since the last inspection. The adults who work there have high expectations and value individual pupils. One parent described how their child had become more confident because they had 'been progressively nurtured and encouraged to develop and learn'. Pupils are encouraged to demonstrate independence and initiative in their learning. As a consequence of the school's family ethos, pupils grow in self-esteem and take pride in their work. A notable strength of the school is the very effective involvement of parents and carers in their children's education, including opportunities to regularly read together early in the morning and to take part in lessons and special events, such as a tea dance.

There is a strong sense of teamwork and common purpose, with teaching assistants and administrative staff well represented on the senior leadership team. The headteacher is widely respected by the school community and is ambitious for improvement. Academic targets for pupils are challenging and are closely monitored. Consequently while attainment on entry is below average, the pupils make good progress and the proportion of pupils reaching expected levels or higher at the end of Key Stage 1 is above national averages. The Foundation Stage is good, providing a stimulating learning environment which helps the children to make rapid progress and establishes good procedures to monitor their personal and social development. These are currently being extended into Key Stage 1 classes. However, the headteacher is not complacent and recognises the need for the lowest attaining pupils in the school to achieve higher levels, and gifted and talented pupils to be challenged further.

The pupils' education is enriched by many visitors, learning activities which include their parents or carers, and a wide variety of visits. Their day to day classroom experiences are enlivened by enthusiastic and well planned teaching and the thorough involvement of teaching assistants. The headteacher recognises that this could be further improved by ensuring that lesson observations provide clear targets to support teachers' professional development. However, the school's self-evaluation is accurate and staff have taken effective action to address areas for development, such as improving the quality of pupils' writing. The recent changes to the senior leadership team and the high quality of the governors' monitoring of the school's work demonstrate that the school has a good and increasing capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the progress of some groups of pupils by planning more carefully to challenge the well above average and well below average achievers.
- Improve the monitoring of teaching so that teachers have clear personal targets to focus upon.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The children enter Reception with below average attainment, most notably in communication and their ability to calculate. As a result of good, well planned teaching the children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and almost all pupils start Year 1 having met or exceeded the early learning goals. The pupils continue to make good progress and by the time they leave, more attain the expected levels than is the case nationally and a significant proportion attain the higher Level 3 in the end of Key Stage 1 assessments. However, the range of ability of pupils in the school is broad; the headteacher is rightly ambitious to see more of the lowest attaining pupils reaching higher levels in the end of Key Stage 1 assessments, and for pupils identified by the school as gifted and talented to receive greater challenge in lessons. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve better than similar pupils nationally.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Not only are their basic skills well developed but they also acquire confidence, the ability to work cooperatively in teams and to help one another in their learning. Pupils respond positively to the opportunities to participate in sporting activities and they know what a healthy lunchbox should contain. They feel safe and know that any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly. The school benefits from the pupils' good suggestions, such as the school council's decision to establish a quiet area for break and lunchtimes. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own welfare, for example deciding when to wear coats and hats or use sun cream. Some are 'playground pals' and help to resolve any conflicts that may emerge between pupils. Pupils enjoy their learning; their attendance is good and they are enthusiastic to get on with their work in lessons. Their spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is good and pupils appreciate and respect the different backgrounds of one another. 'Global weeks' are a good opportunity to extend their understanding further and last year pupils actively raised funds to buy goats as part of their participation in food aid for Africa.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good because teachers and teaching assistants place a strong emphasis on providing pupils with active learning experiences, often based on real-life situations, and building effectively on the pupils' prior learning. Pupils are frequently asked to discover for themselves appropriate solutions to problems and to decide which resources they need to complete tasks. However, although planning does take account of the different abilities of pupils, at times it does not fully meet the needs of the very highest

and lowest attaining pupils. Classrooms are attractive and stimulating environments. Assemblies are well used to allow pupils to share what they have learnt with the school and their parents or carers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with some outstanding features. Topics are used effectively to help pupils to see the connections between their work whilst emphasising the specific vocabulary of subjects. A wide variety of visitors contribute to the enrichment of the curriculum enabling pupils to experience, for example, ballet or African drumming. Pupils benefit from a range of visits into the local community which also contribute to their healthy lifestyles as they walk to the library, churches, shops, allotments and conduct traffic surveys. The headteacher is keen to extend the links between subjects by fully integrating the teaching of literacy and numeracy into the school's topic based activities. The pupils have opportunities to be involved in a wide variety of clubs ranging from art and gardening to sport and religion, which they participate in well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are very good and are a strength of the school. Most notable are the opportunities for parents or carers to take a full part in their children's education. One wrote that the school 'really gives children, parents and teachers a positive way in which to collectively learn, and to feel part of our children's learning'. All classes are involved in three 'come and do days' a year, which involve parents or carers in activities, such as making a memory box or a treasure chest. Targets for improving reading are well shared with pupils and their homes but further refinements are needed so that writing and mathematics targets are similarly effective. Procedures for risk assessment and monitoring children's welfare are thorough. The school's motto is 'learn to love, love to learn' and this ethos is evident throughout its caring and inclusive approach which promotes teamwork, respect for one another and enjoyment of learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads with purpose, ambition and enthusiasm. She has a good track record of identifying and addressing areas for development, for example, improving standards. Through extensive consultation with all parts of the school community she has established an appropriate three year vision for the school's improvement which is in turn helpfully broken down into yearly actions. Judiciously the school has established teams which involve staff from across year groups with specific responsibilities related to the school's vision and this is strengthening the sense of common purpose and cohesion. The senior leadership team

appointed from September 2006 strengthens the capacity of the school to improve and also ensures that change is introduced manageably and carries the support of staff. They have good procedures to monitor and evaluate the school's work but recognise that they are still learning to delegate responsibilities and define the boundaries of their role. Governors work closely with the school and have had a significant impact on the restructuring of the senior leadership team and the recently revised school vision. Their monitoring impressively includes lesson observations, talks with pupils and attendance at team meetings.

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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	2
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?	2
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

7 February 2007

Dear Children,

Ridgeway Infant School, Uplands Avenue, Littleover, Derby, Derbyshire DE23 1GG

Thank you for welcoming me into your school. I appreciated how keen you were to talk to me. I enjoyed the opportunities I had to see you learn and be involved in your assembly which celebrated the work of one of your classes. I was pleased to see that parents and carers were able to share such events with you. I was also impressed that they came into school early in the morning to read with you and took part in events such as a tea dance.

Ridgeway is a very good school. The adults work hard to give you a lot of interesting learning opportunities and you respond very positively. You are enthusiastic, independent and you cooperate well with each other in lessons. You make good progress and leave the school with better results than lots of children in the country. I was impressed by the way that you were involved in making decisions and thought that the quiet area for lunch and break times was a very good idea.

I've made two suggestions to make your school even better. First that in your lessons some children could be given harder work to help them to do even better. Secondly that your teachers could be given more ideas about what they could improve after they've been watched teaching your lessons.

Thank you again for making my day with you so enjoyable. Good luck.

Yours sincerely

David Simpson HMI