

Ridgemedede Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116006
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	290392
Inspection dates	11–12 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Olson Davis

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	262
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Steve Haines
Headteacher	Mrs Geraldine Marsh (acting)
Date of previous school inspection	29 January 2001
School address	Oak Road Bishops Waltham Southampton SO32 1EP
Telephone number	01489 892368
Fax number	01489 896815

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is located in an area of socio-economic advantage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. There are no pupils at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above the national average. The deputy headteacher took over as acting headteacher a week before the inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good quality of education for its pupils. There are also outstanding aspects to its work. This is recognised by the vast majority of parents. One wrote, 'We are very impressed by every aspect of Ridgemed, in particular the pupil self-evaluation, the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, the enthusiasm and commitment of the staff, the celebration of all levels of achievement ... I could go on and on'.

The school works hard to ensure that pupils have full access to everything that is happening in school. As a result, pupils feel included and valued. Excellent links with outside agencies and strong partnerships with parents enrich the curriculum and benefit pupils' learning. The school provides a stimulating range of opportunities for pupils within its excellent curriculum and enrichment programme. These activities contribute greatly to pupils' outstanding personal development. Behaviour is good. Pupils have a good understanding of how to help those who have specific needs through well thought out strategies such as the 'circle of friends'. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their school and this is reflected in their good attendance. As one child commented, 'We enjoy school because in this school every child matters, it gives every child a chance to do as well as he or she could do'.

Outstanding provision for care, guidance and support ensures that pupils feel very well cared for and know what they need to do to improve their work. The detailed tracking of pupils' progress and individual and group target setting ensure that underachievement is identified early and that prompt action is taken to bring about improvement.

Standards at the end of Year 6 are well above average and a good proportion of pupils are working at levels which are in advance of those expected for their age. Pupils achieve well because of good teaching. Central to pupils' good progress is the skilful use that teachers make of assessment information to set work that is well matched to pupils' varying needs and abilities. Although teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve they do not always insist that pupils present their work to a high enough standard.

Good leadership and management drive the school forward. School leaders and governors know the school well and have selected initiatives which have a direct impact on pupils' standards and personal development. The acting headteacher provides good leadership and maintains a strong focus on raising achievement and providing high standards of care for pupils. She includes all the staff and there is a strong sense of teamwork. Inspectors agree with the governors that the school is in safe hands until the substantive headteacher takes over next term. Governors are effective and support the school well. Leadership roles are distributed well across the school. Subject leaders offer good support and guidance to colleagues. However, in some cases, their role in monitoring the quality of teaching is underdeveloped. The school has a good capacity to sustain and extend the good improvement since the last inspection and is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of presentation of pupils' work.
- Provide more opportunities for subject leaders to monitor the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and attain standards which are well above average by the end of Year 6. In most years they start school with broadly average levels of skill, knowledge and understanding. In 2006 standards at the end of Year 6 were well above average in English, mathematics and science. A high proportion of pupils attained the higher level 5 in these subjects. Pupils were more successful in English and science than in mathematics. However, the school has tackled this shortcoming well and as a result of prompt and effective action the achievement in mathematics has improved. Pupils of all abilities make good progress throughout the school and the current Year 6 are set to achieve challenging targets. The school is anticipating a slight dip in this year's test results. This is due to the lower attainment on admission of this cohort. Inspection evidence and the school's tracking show that this group have made good progress since they started at the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because of the very well organised additional support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. The school uses visitors, its link with a school in the Gambia and specific areas of the curriculum such as religious education to raise pupils' awareness of cultural diversity. Assemblies offer pupils excellent opportunities to reflect on global issues as well as on the feelings and emotions of others who are less fortunate than themselves.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy life styles. The 'young governors' have instigated a healthy eating campaign and pupils are encouraged to eat healthily during break and at lunch times. There is high degree of participation in the outstanding range of physical activities including after school sports and clubs. Pupils make an excellent contribution to both the local and wider community. This is through fundraising activities like 'water aid' as well as involvement through specific groups such as the 'Get Healthy Group' and 'Ridgemed Against Waste' where pupils care for the environment, produce travel plans and recycle waste. Pupils' good basic skills, along with their very well-developed skills in co-operation and tolerance, prepare them well for their future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. One fifth of teaching observed was outstanding and no teaching observed was less than good. Lessons are well organised and tasks are challenging, enabling pupils to learn quickly. Objectives of lessons are shared and reviewed with pupils so that they have a good understanding of what is being learnt, what teachers' expectations are and how well they have achieved. Good use is made of well-informed teaching assistants to support group activities. As a result, the progress of all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties, is good. Relationships are very good and teachers build successfully on the very positive attitudes which pupils display towards learning. Pupils respond particularly well to lively, engaging teaching. In an outstanding literacy lesson the pupils played the part of interest groups and argued persuasively about the merits and drawbacks of having a new skate park.

Teachers mark work thoroughly and set helpful group and individual targets, which enable pupils to take responsibility for their learning. However, they do not always place sufficient emphasis on encouraging pupils to take pride in producing high quality presentation of their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding, and is enhanced by excellent opportunities for enrichment. The curriculum is very well planned with excellent links between subjects. Pupils are very motivated by the exceptional breadth and balance of the curriculum and their outstanding enjoyment has a positive impact on the progress they make. The support for gifted and talented pupils, in a wide range of subjects, through the 'Ridgemed Rockets' initiative is outstanding. Pupils benefit very well from the outstanding range of lunch time activities run by teaching assistants and pupils. The provision for extra-curricular activities is also outstanding. Pupils and parents appreciate the time and effort given by staff and volunteers to run these clubs. One parent perceptively wrote, 'The clubs are excellent. There is an impressive choice and variety'. The school has recently achieved 'Healthy Schools' status. All pupils learn to swim and the school successfully competes in local and national galas. Residential visits in Year 5 and activity weeks in Year 6 give very good support for pupils' academic, personal and social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils are very well cared for and pastoral support is very effective. Pupils feel very safe because they are confident that there is always an adult they can turn to if they need help. There is an excellent assessment system that keeps all staff fully informed of the progress of individual pupils. This helps teachers to provide excellent academic guidance. As a result, pupils are fully aware of what they need to do to improve, particularly in their reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils honestly and accurately evaluate their own work and are proud when they achieve their targets. One pupil said, 'It's good to self-evaluate to be able to move on. We do this with everything. We get more help if we use red. Green means we understand it all'. Pupils with learning difficulties have their needs quickly diagnosed and receive effective and prompt support. Excellent links with outside agencies ensure that the needs of vulnerable pupils are met.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and all staff share in the drive for higher achievement. Good day-to-day management ensures that the school runs smoothly under the leadership of the acting headteacher. The school has worked well to develop the role of English and mathematics leaders by involving them in subject teams which include representatives from each year group. Under this good leadership these teams are strongly focused on improving standards and providing good guidance for all staff. Teaching is consistently good because school leaders regularly monitor its quality and the outcomes are set as targets for improvement. Subject leaders play an important role in raising standards by scrutinising pupils' work and checking teachers' planning. However they do not have enough opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching. This means that some of them are not fully aware of the strengths of

teaching and those aspects that need improving within their areas of responsibility. The well-focused improvement plan shows that leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done to bring about improvements. Purposeful action has led to good improvements in achievement, provision and leadership and management since the last inspection. Recent initiatives to improve pupils' writing have proved particularly successful in raising standards in English. Governors are effective. They are very supportive and also challenge the school to do its best for all pupils.

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Annex A

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?	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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.

Annex A

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

21 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ridgemedede Junior School, Southampton, SO32 1EP

Thank you for all your help when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and took careful note of what you and your parents had to say about the school.

Your school is good. There are some outstanding features too, namely the curriculum, your personal development and the care, guidance and support that the staff provide for you. Here are some of the many things that we consider are good about your school:

- you work very hard and get on very well with each other
- you enjoy school very much, particularly the 'Ridgemedede Extra'
- your behaviour is good in lessons and around the school
- your teachers are skilful and help you to learn well in your lessons
- the adults look after you very well and you say that you feel safe in school
- you take lots of exercise and know a great deal about healthy living
- your acting headteacher, staff and governors run the school well and are continually trying to make it even better for you.

I have asked the staff and governors to work on some areas. They include helping some of you to improve the presentation of your work. You can help by always doing your best. I have also asked them to give teachers who are in charge of particular subjects more opportunities to check that you are being taught well and that you are making good progress.

I hope that you will help your teachers as they work hard to make your school even better for you.

Yours sincerely

Olson Davis

Lead Inspector