



Redditch, Ridgeway Middle School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116971
Local Authority Worcestershire
Inspection number 290688
Inspection dates 7–8 March 2007
Reporting inspector Kevin Sheldrick HMI

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary	School address	Evesham Road
School category	Community		Astwood Bank
Age range of pupils	9–13		Redditch B96 6BD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01527 892867
Number on roll (school)	443	Fax number	01527 893909
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Paul Harrison
		Headteacher	Susan Richards
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2003		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
9–13	7–8 March 2007	290688

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average size middle school that serves a community with lower than average levels of deprivation. Pupils enter the school with above average levels of attainment. Most pupils are of White British heritage and the remaining 4% are from a range of backgrounds. The school has a below average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Prior to and since the last inspection the school has had four different headteachers in seven terms and operated without a deputy headteacher for over a year until January 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. Pupils enjoy their learning and are confident, articulate and well behaved. This good personal development is the main reason why virtually all parents expressed strong support for the school. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Pupils start and finish school with above average attainment. Although achievement is satisfactory overall, pupils do not make enough progress in Years 5 and 6. Weaknesses in the curriculum have resulted in subjects not always effectively developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The curriculum is satisfactory overall because there is a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities and pupils like the opportunities they have to experience different specialist subject teaching in Years 5 and 6. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In good lessons, particularly in Year 8, teachers successfully match learning to pupils' needs. In weaker lessons, particularly in Years 5 and 6, not enough attention is given to helping pupils achieve higher levels by setting them challenging work. These weaknesses in teaching and deficiencies in pupils' literacy explain the disappointing results in the tests at the end of Year 6 in 2006, especially in English. Progress made by Year 6 pupils has increased this year because of the much improved monitoring of pupils' learning. However, the school has not gained enough evidence from the analysis of pupils' work and until recently has not had the performance data to identify the progress pupils make in year groups. These weaknesses explain the school's overly optimistic view of its achievements. Furthermore, the governors' effectiveness has been limited because they do not always have the information they need to fully hold the school to account. Year 8 pupils speak well about the school's recent improvements, particularly the better learning environment and enhanced use of computer technology. Recent improvement confirms the school's satisfactory capacity to improve and that leadership and management are also satisfactory. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Effective arrangements ensure all pupils are well cared for and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) make good progress. Pupils are very positive about how safe they feel and the fact there are adults around school who will listen to them if they have a problem. Child protection arrangements are well understood and the school meets government safeguarding requirements. Academic guidance is inadequate because the school is not using targets consistently. Most pupils are making healthy choices about the food they eat. Although the school has responded well to some pupils' views, the opportunities to listen to pupils are infrequent.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teaching is better matched to pupils' needs in order to raise standards by the end of Year 6.
- Improve the curriculum by ensuring all subjects focus on pupils' literacy and numeracy targets.
- Ensure more consistent use of performance data in setting targets and in monitoring the work of the school.
- Listen to and act upon pupils' views more frequently.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Work seen in Year 8 was above average in all subjects. The school's records confirmed the above average standards, particularly in mathematics. On entry to the school standards are above average. Pupils make expected progress so achievement is satisfactory. Although progress is satisfactory overall, in the first two years it is too slow. The majority of pupils in the current Year 6 are achieving as expected. This was not the case in 2006, when not enough pupils achieved Level 5 in all core subjects, but especially in English. Underachievement in Year 6 was caused by weaknesses in pupils' writing, mathematics and science. The school has successfully improved standards achieved by Year 8 and levels of enjoyment have been increased. The effective use of teaching assistants and good adaptations to lessons result in pupils with LDD making good progress. Looked after pupils make good progress as a result of the good care and guidance they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. On leaving school pupils are mature, confident and articulate. They behave well. They enjoy school and this shows improved attendance which is now satisfactory. Pupils relate well to each other and to adults. For example, Year 6 pupils supported each other effectively as they evaluated personal physical performance in the gymnasium. Pupils feel safe and secure. An effective programme of personal and social education teaches them what to do if they are worried or bullied. They are safety conscious, as seen by their careful behaviour in the science laboratory. Pupils' knowledge about how to be healthy is good and most put this into practice. Many participate in the good range of physical activities provided both during school time and after school. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the community, for example through the School Council and the Eco group. The school is not listening well enough to pupils. Pupils would like increased opportunities to express their ideas about how the school should develop. Some pupils feel that the School Council meets too infrequently to be really effective. Year 8 express some frustration that action does not always follow after their views are sought. Pupils demonstrate good cultural and moral awareness in expressing their views about racism. Pupils' good basic skills and their good levels of confidence prepare them well for the next stage of their education and eventually for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Good routines are established to ensure that the pupils settle to their work quickly. Lessons have a clear focus and learning is usually reviewed at the end. In classes, work is usually well matched to pupils' needs. Pupils feel that they are sometimes expected to listen for too long and this makes concentration difficult. Inspectors observed examples of this. Some lessons, particularly in mixed ability groups and in Years 5 and 6, are not planned well enough to ensure that the needs of all learners are fully met. In too many lessons teachers have only one outcome in mind and this is sometimes pitched too low. In addition, insufficient attention is given to improving writing and the development of information interpretation skills. This explains the lower levels of achievement in some parts of the school, particularly for higher attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6. Local authority (LA) consultant support has been used well to improve teaching, particularly in Year 6. The needs of lower attaining pupils are well met by suitable adaptations and through good use of support staff. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the subjects where they use information and communication technology (ICT) to present their ideas. Some lessons involve self-assessment, enabling pupils to recognise how well they are progressing towards meeting their targets. Pupils are unaware of how they are getting on in different subject areas.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum and other activities that the school provides are satisfactory. The school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme provides good opportunities for pupils to learn about staying safe, healthy lifestyles and how to deal with risk-taking behaviour. Pupils indicate that they particularly enjoy physical education and their PSHE lessons. A satisfactory range of activities outside lessons, including clubs and sporting activities, is provided by the school. The curriculum is enriched with a range of trips and activities that take place. These include dance and music festivals and visits to the Black Country Museum and outdoor activity centres. Provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection and standards have risen as a result. Younger pupils like the specialist teaching they receive, although this does result in them receiving less formal English and mathematics teaching compared to pupils in many primary schools. Despite significant strengths, the curriculum is satisfactory because opportunities are lost in the school to improve literacy and numeracy skills. Although pupils write a lot in subjects other than English, this does not lead to better writing because insufficient attention is given to enabling them to address their writing targets. An exception to this was the Year 5 'Forge Mill' history project. Literacy was integrated, making learning more active, interesting and challenging, leading to improved progress. Strong mathematics teaching in Years 7

and 8 has helped compensate for previous deficiencies in the development of numeracy skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school gives satisfactory care, guidance and support to its pupils. Pastoral care is a strength. Pupils feel safe and good procedures for ensuring child protection are in place. Pupils with LDD make good progress as a result of the effective support they receive in classrooms. Good guidance is given to pupils to enable them to cope in a range of challenging situations. They know how to stay safe amongst strangers. Academic guidance is still not having enough impact, although it is now improving more rapidly. Increasingly reliable information about pupils' previous attainment is now being used to set challenging learning targets. However there is some inconsistency in the way these are shared with pupils. Not all teachers discuss them with pupils or give effective guidance as to how they might be achieved.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher's clear vision has won the support of staff and parents. One parent wrote, 'The new headteacher has really made a difference; the school really listens to our views.' The vast majority of parents think the school is doing a good job. There is still a way to go in embedding the vision of 'every pupil excelling' because expectations of what pupils can achieve in their first two years at school are still not high enough. The school works well with its pyramid of schools to ensure good transitions with first and high schools. There are effective partnerships with a range of LA departments to enhance care and guidance and to support school improvement. The new tracking system is not yet being exploited fully to manage performance and monitor the work of the school. There is evidence that the school has recognised the benefits of setting challenging targets and monitoring these much more regularly but this is not consistently put into practice. The school's leadership team has recognised that weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation have prevented governors from undertaking their roles well. That said, governance is satisfactory because governors have challenged the school. Questions were asked about the recent disappointing performance in the end of Year 6 tests. In addition, governor expertise has been used to liaise with the LA to improve the school's financial position. On a day-to-day basis the school manages its budget well, resulting in good levels of support for pupils and improved resources. A new senior leadership team is in place and it has ensured middle leaders have improved teaching where this will have the greatest initial impact. The school is increasing accountability by moving to a structure in which key staff are directly responsible for the achievement of particular year groups. Despite the weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation, the school has largely identified the right priorities. Effective action has been taken to improve the school in important areas. The school's awareness

of what needs doing and the improvements so far indicate a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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	3
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?	3
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?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

- We were very impressed with the confident way you welcomed us to your school. You spoke very well about your school and you gave honest answers to our questions. We found many good things about Ridgeway School:
- The vast majority of you enjoy school and you mature into confident young people who reach higher than average standards.
- The quality of your resources has improved and we recognise that you particularly like the opportunities you have to be actively involved using ICT to communicate your ideas.
- Your teachers care for you very well and pay particular attention to ensuring those of you experiencing any difficulties achieve well.
- We recognise that you like physical education and your personal, social and health education. There are things to improve. We think all of you need challenging targets and that it is important that you are involved in self-assessment. This helps you to become good independent learners. We want your teachers to enable those in Years 5 and 6 to make greater progress by having more work at a higher level. We think that more can be done to reinforce the important learning in English and mathematics though the other subjects you are taught. Finally, we agree with you that you should have more frequent opportunities to express your opinions and that action should follow when this is needed. Once again, thank you for your part in helping us really understand your school. We wish you well for the future.