

# Riddings Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112497
<b>Local Authority</b>	DERBYSHIRE
<b>Inspection number</b>	302495
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Andrew Cook HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	214
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Helen Littlewood
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 November 2005
<b>School address</b>	Church Street Riddings Alfreton Derbyshire DE55 4BW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01773 528492
<b>Fax number</b>	01773 528489

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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Riddings Junior School was inspected in November 2005 and was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give children an acceptable standard of education and the leadership and management of the school did not have the capacity to make improvements. Since that inspection the school has had regular monitoring inspections. The headteacher took up post at the end of September 2006.

Children who attend the school come from a wide catchment area. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is above average. Just fewer than 4% of children are from an ethnic minority group the remainder being White British. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with special educational needs are below average. Most children start school in Year 3 having attained broadly average standards.

## 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 an improving school which provides children with a satisfactory education. Over the last few months it has been led by an outstanding headteacher who has provided both challenge and direction. All staff have responded extremely well to her leadership and there is a tangible surge of confidence and optimism throughout the school. In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

The amount of progress children make is at least satisfactory and in a number of lessons it is good. In Year 6 the rate of progress children make is accelerated so that they reach standards that are broadly average. Good teaching across the school is beginning to have a similar effect. This is especially so in English and mathematics which have been the focus for improvements. In these subjects good and outstanding teaching results in lively engaging lessons. Teaching competently takes into account children's different abilities and throughout lessons teachers keep checking on how much progress children make. Adding to this the use of academic targets is very effective and children know what level they are working at and what they need to do to progress to the next level.

The school has successfully improved standards by improving the way English and mathematics is taught. Other subject areas have benefited from general improvements in teaching. However curriculum planning in some areas is only satisfactory. For example children do not have enough opportunities to learn about, experience, and get involved in their local and wider community. As a result they do not have a good enough understanding of different cultures and ethnic groups.

Children's behaviour and attitudes in school are good and reflects their good personal development and the satisfactory care and support they receive. The good range of sporting clubs help children adopt healthy lifestyles along with the healthy tuck shop which serves up very tasty potato scones!

The governors are playing an increasingly important role in leading and managing the school and have set up ways of effectively finding out how well the school is doing. Governors have taken on board the breadth of their responsibilities and, for example, begun to monitor health and safety issues and ensure that regular checks are made. Governors have not yet influenced fully the direction of the school but recognise that they should provide both support and challenge in order to maintain standards and further improve them.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the good work in developing the English and mathematics curriculum to other subject areas.
- Improve the children's understanding of the diversity of traditions and cultures within the local and wider community and extend their opportunities to make a positive contribution.
- Continue the work of the governors in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school so that it influences the school's future plans.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Children's achievements over time and the standards that they attain are satisfactory. In recent years, results in the national tests for children at the end of Year 6 have been below the national average in all core subjects. In 2006, the proportion of children attaining the expected standard for their age was similar to that in schools nationally, but the proportion exceeding national expectations was well below average, especially in writing, mathematics and science. Children's overall achievement was barely adequate and there was evidence of underachievement on the part of boys and average ability pupils.

However, staff have successfully identified and tackled many of the causes of underachievement, such that the impact of the drive to raise standards is now clearly evident throughout school, but especially in the performance of pupils in Year 6. The majority of children throughout school are now firmly on course to meet the challenging targets that the school has set for them. In Year 6, overall standards have risen to a level that is in line with schools nationally and there have been particularly good gains in the proportions of children already attaining the above average Level 5 in reading and mathematics. Most children have made at least the progress that they should during Years 3 to 6 and for many, progress and achievement in Year 6 has been good, because they have successfully made up 'lost ground' from earlier years. There are currently no significant differences in the achievements of boys and girls or of children of differing abilities.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Children's personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy school and as a result, attendance has improved and is currently in line with that in schools nationally. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is generally good. Most children get on well, behave well and act on a clear understanding of right and wrong. Older children are capable of mature reflection and show insights into issues that affect them. There is an increasing uptake of healthy lifestyles, exemplified by good levels of participation in extra-curricular sport. Children understand many of the hazards that face young people and know how to keep safe. The work of the school council enables children to make a positive contribution to the school community but their involvement in the wider community is limited. Positive attitudes to learning and sound basic skills equip children satisfactorily for their on-going education and for the future world of work. The school gives children some understanding of the lives of others and in this respect, the recent project on the Gambia has been a success. However, the school could do more to prepare them for life in a culturally and ethnically diverse society.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

There has been a significant shift in the quality of teaching. Teaching is now good and is helping children to overcome past underachievement. A range of effective strategies are used to help children learn quickly, including very good use of interactive white boards, and teachers confidently manage lessons and know how much progress children make. In some lessons teaching is outstanding and has an incredible impact on children who thoroughly enjoy what

they are learning and make rapid progress. Teaching is well thought out, especially in English and mathematics, and careful consideration is made of the children's different abilities. One child explained 'we are put in groups of the same levels. Then we have targets which tell us what to do to get to the next level'. Teaching assistants are effective in the way that they support the work of the teacher. In the few lessons where teaching is satisfactory the constant challenge for children is missing.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. In the recent past the school has focused on improving the English and mathematics curriculum and has done so very effectively. This has been done by carefully planning how skills, concepts and knowledge are taught. There is also good use made of assessing how well children learn and a range of activities to engage children in what they do including drama, practical work and work linked to expressive arts. Other areas of the curriculum have not been focused on in the same way and the amount of time given to them and the way in which they are planned and managed is satisfactory.

There has been a significant improvement in the number of extra curricular activities that take place which are now good. These clubs are very popular with children. Parents also appreciate how clubs extend the learning opportunities children have.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The school provides satisfactory standards of care, guidance and support. The school makes the necessary checks on the suitability of all adults who work with the children. The Child Protection policy meets current requirements and the person responsible for this important provision has had recent up-date training, as have the staff as a whole. The school is a generally safe environment. However, there are shortcomings in formal procedures for assessing and minimising potential risks to children and staff. The headteacher is taking satisfactory steps to address this matter and to ensure that governors' monitoring is more robust. Pastoral care is effective. Relationships between children and staff are good and as a result, children are confident to approach adults if they have concerns. Supervisory staff are properly trained, for example in first aid. They are vigilant and respond promptly to minor incidents or accidents. One positive outcome of this, which children confirm, is that bullying incidents have declined. Effective academic guidance for children has been an important contributory factor in raising children's achievement. Children of all abilities have individual targets which they know, understand and are really well motivated to achieve. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive satisfactory support, including one-to-one support and specific teaching tailored to their needs.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Over the last six months the outstanding leadership of the headteacher has revitalised the work of the school following a period where it was failing to improve. She has been able to challenge, support and guide teachers and governors so that all share the same vision and determination

to improve the school. The school has an accurate view of its effectiveness and has good capacity to improve further.

The subject leaders for English and mathematics provide good leadership which is making a difference. Having grown in confidence they now monitor teaching and learning, make evaluations and then decide on what next to do so that further improvements can be made. This cycle of activity is undertaken by other subject leaders although currently with less emphasis.

The governors have begun to play a key role in helping the school look forward. They have evaluated how effective their work is and have drawn up a good action plan. This plan clearly outlines how they will keep informed of what is happening in school and how they will challenge school. Governors have recently relied on the headteacher's leadership and recognise the need to further develop a working partnership.

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## Annex A

## 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>
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	3

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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

8 May 2007

Dear Children,

Inspection of Riddings Junior School, Church Street, Alfreton, Derbyshire, DE55 4BW

I am delighted to tell you that your school no longer requires special measures because things have improved so much. Since I started visiting your school in May 2006 I have seen lots of things change for the better. I remember Mrs Littlewood arriving in September 2006 and since then everything has been better organised and everyone knows what they need to do. Your teachers are doing a good job because they are making lessons interesting and are helping you to make progress. In some lessons you make good progress and the targets you have in English and mathematics make sure you know what you need to do to improve. As well as lessons there have been other improvements in your school. For example there are many more clubs for you to join.

You have all played your part in improving your school. Your behaviour is good and you have good attitudes when it comes to work. The school council is working well.

Now your school is on the way up we have left your headteacher with some more things to improve.

- We have asked your teachers to make all of the subjects you learn as exciting and well thought out as your English and mathematics lessons.
- We think you should learn about your local and wider community so that you can understand what is important to different people. We also think you should get more involved in making your local community a better place.
- We have asked the governors to keep checking on how well the school is doing and to make sure they get involved in improving your school further.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Cook HMI