

Ridgeway Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112546
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE LA
Inspection number	310922
Inspection dates	8–9 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael Best

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Lynne Powdrill
Headteacher	Mr James Connolly
Date of previous school inspection	16 October 2001
School address	Main Road Ridgeway Near Sheffield Derbyshire S12 3XR
Telephone number	0114 2486249
Fax number	0114 2513975

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The number of pupils on roll is just below the average for primary schools. Pupils, predominantly from White British backgrounds, come from a mixture of privately owned and rented homes both in the local village and across the nearby county border in Sheffield. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is low and the number of pupils joining the school other than at the usual time is below average.

When they start in the Reception class, children's skills and experiences are broadly similar to those expected at this age, but for a significant minority, early writing skills and understanding of sounds and letters are less developed. The proportions of pupils identified by the school as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities and with statements of special educational need are below the national averages. The school has expanded since the previous inspection and remains oversubscribed. The headteacher took up his post in September 2007 following a period during which an acting headteacher had charge of the school. The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark and Healthy School Standard awards.

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, which provides pupils with an enjoyable and purposeful start to their full-time education. In this friendly and supportive atmosphere, staff and pupils work well together. The new headteacher, who has rapidly gained the confidence and respect of pupils, parents and staff, provides clear direction for the school's future development. It has made good progress since the previous inspection and has a good capacity for further improvement. The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is good and the school correctly identifies its overall effectiveness as good. It provides good value for money.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. This is demonstrated by their excellent attendance, which has improved still further now that parents are trying not to take their children on holiday during term time. Pupils' contribution to the community is outstanding. They are actively involved in a wide variety of activities in school, the local community and with other schools. Pupils take on responsibility very well, such as being a prefect or a monitor, and highly value the trust that the school puts in them. One pupil commented: 'It makes me incredibly proud to be seen as a help to others and I aim to do really well.' Staff care well for their pupils and all safeguarding requirements are met. Pupils know how to stay safe, and have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles. The school provides a good range of learning and other activities, which make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development and prepares them well for the future.

Achievement is good. Children in Reception make good progress and most meet the standards expected by the time they start in Year 1. Pupils make good and steady progress in Key Stage 1 and reach above average standards by the end of Year 2. At the end of Key Stage 2, overall standards are above average. In the 2007 National Curriculum tests, pupils at the end of Year 6 achieved very well in mathematics and well in science. However, in English, achievement was satisfactory, primarily because fewer boys than expected reached the higher levels in writing. Although pupils make good progress overall in Key Stage 2, it is uneven between classes. Procedures to monitor and track pupils' progress are rigorous but not all teachers make good enough use of the information available in planning their lessons, particularly to challenge the more able pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge and want their pupils to do well. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because work is well matched to their needs and adults provide good support. However, in a small but significant minority of lessons in Key Stage 2, there is too much emphasis on passing on knowledge and this reduces the accuracy and spontaneity of pupils' independent work.

The school enjoys a high level of support from parents and has good links with other schools and outside agencies. Although the governing body is very supportive and keen to develop the school, the governors' role in holding the school to account for the provision it makes and the standards achieved by pupils is not rigorous enough.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress and most achieve the expected standards in all the areas of learning by the time they start in Year 1. Teaching and learning are good. Children quickly settle into school routines because of the strong links between home and school. Children get on very well with adults and each other. They are confident and happy in their work, and keen

to take responsibility for their learning. Staff provide a rich and varied range of activities. Good one-to-one support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities helps them make good progress. There is a good balance between activities led by adults and those the children choose themselves. There is a fenced area for outdoor learning and an appropriate range of large equipment but its use has to be timetabled as it is not easily accessible from the classroom. Leadership and management are good. There are good systems for checking on how well children are progressing and staff use this information effectively to plan children's next steps in learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' achievement in writing in English, especially for the boys.
- Improve teachers' use of assessment information to ensure that pupils, particularly the more able, make more consistent progress as they move through Key Stage 2.
- Develop the role of the governing body in evaluating the work of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are consistently above average. The school is particularly successful in helping lower and middle ability pupils to achieve at least the national average by the end of Year 2. In the 2007 statutory tests and assessments, standards in reading were above average, although the proportion of pupils gaining the higher level was broadly average. Boys reached above average standards in writing but girls made even more rapid progress and achieved high standards. In mathematics, boys and girls achieved similar above average standards. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards have returned to above average, following a dip in 2006. In the 2007 statutory tests at the end of Year 6, standards in mathematics were significantly above average and exceeded the school's already challenging targets. Standards in science were above average. Although standards in English were above average, fewer pupils than expected reached the school's higher-level target because results in writing were lower than expected, particularly for the boys. The differences in standards and achievement between boys and girls in English, particularly writing, at the end of both key stages are not evident in mathematics or science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Pupils behave well and move sensibly around the school. They are polite, helpful to visitors, and extremely caring towards each other. The older pupils who help at lunchtime contribute especially well to the school's caring, family ethos. Pupils' awareness of different cultures, while satisfactory, is less developed. The School Council and 'Green Gang' provide good experiences of Citizenship, identifying and promoting initiatives, which benefit the whole school community. Pupils strongly approve of the school's zero tolerance approach to bullying and its very clear expectations of good conduct. Pupils' good attitudes to schoolwork and their school community grow as they move through the school. When they are ready for transfer to secondary school, pupils are confident and mature learners with the skills necessary to take full advantage of future opportunities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils are keen to learn and rise well to teachers' high expectations of behaviour and work. Pupils respond well to the purposeful pace of lessons and teachers' good use of the interactive whiteboards. Teachers' explanations are clear and they make good use of questions to check pupils' understanding. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils. In most lessons, learning objectives are shared and reviewed, and pupils know what they have to do to succeed. However, in a small proportion of lessons, introductions are too long and pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to take an active part in learning. Where the quality of teaching and learning are outstanding, pupils take responsibility for working together. Their enthusiasm, drive and determination flow directly from their teachers' excellent preparation and logical development of the skills they need.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and events in place to enrich pupils' learning opportunities and extend their skills. For example, 'Dracula Day' in Year 6 inspired pupils to produce a splendid compendium of extended spine-chillers. Staff and pupils make good use of information and communication technology to support learning in all areas of the curriculum. All pupils speak enthusiastically about the interesting activities opening up to them, such as learning to speak a modern foreign language.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care and support for all its pupils, including those who need special help with their learning, and vulnerable pupils. As a result, pupils' self-esteem and confidence develop well as they move through school. The school successfully creates a family atmosphere, which provides a safe, caring learning environment. Parents are appreciative of the level of care the school provides for their children. Pupils feel secure and happy in school and are confident that an adult would help them if they had any difficulties. Staff monitor pupils' standards and progress regularly. Pupils are familiar with class targets and most know what they need to do to reach these. Their work is regularly marked, but teachers' use of written comments to highlight what individuals need to do to improve is inconsistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. Working closely with staff, the headteacher is building on the secure foundations of previous years. He has accurately evaluated the school's strengths and identified where action is needed to further raise standards and improve the quality of provision. Staff with subject leadership and other roles have a good understanding of their responsibilities and carry these out successfully. Improvements in systems for monitoring and tracking pupils' standards and progress have increased the rigour and effectiveness of the school's target-setting process. Day-to-day routines are established and

the school runs smoothly. The governing body has worked diligently to improve the school's accommodation and meet the demand for places. It oversees the school budget regularly and reserves are appropriately allocated. However, governors are not sufficiently involved in the school's self-evaluation procedures or in contributing to its plans for improvement.

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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	2
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?	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.

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	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

12 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ridgeway Primary School, Main Road, Ridgeway, S12 3XR

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school earlier this term. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing you at work in lessons. We are delighted to hear how much you enjoy school and congratulate you on your excellent attendance. Your behaviour in and around the school is good too and we are pleased that you appreciate the importance of keeping healthy.

You make good progress during your time in the school and do well in the tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Both boys and girls do well in mathematics but in writing in English, girls do better than boys. We have asked your teachers to help you close this gap. We are pleased to see from the very colourful and descriptive 'Dracula Day' stories written by Year 6 pupils that you are already doing something about this. All your teachers want you to do well and we are pleased that you all get on well with each other. They make regular checks on how well you are doing but not all of them make the best use of this information when planning their lessons. As a result, the work some of you are given is not always hard enough. We want them to improve this to make sure that you all make the best possible progress from year to year.

The staff take good care of you and provide you with a wide range of interesting activities in lessons and after school. Those of you who need extra help in school get good support. We were particularly impressed by your involvement in so many different activities in school and in the local community. You new headteacher and the staff are working well together to make the school even better. We are delighted that you are playing your part in this by discussing improvements, such as the changes to the behaviour policy, and helping to make the changes work. The governors are very supportive of the school and have worked hard to get your extra classrooms and create the computer suite. We want them to play a bigger part now in checking on how well the school is doing with other things. This is also something you can help with; for example, by discussing your work with governors and explaining to them how you learn.

Keep working hard and enjoying school.

Yours truly

Mike Best

Lead inspector