

# The Ridge Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103805
<b>Local Authority</b>	Dudley
<b>Inspection number</b>	323898
<b>Inspection date</b>	10 July 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Lois Furness

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	199
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Marc Crump
<b>Headteacher</b>	Deborah Hudson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 May 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Gregory Road Wollaston Stourbridge DY8 3NF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01384 818800
<b>Fax number</b>	01384 818801

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- If standards and pupils' progress were rising fast enough in Years 1 and 2.
- The effectiveness of the school's strategies to raise the standards attained by girls in mathematics, especially in Years 3 to 6.
- The impact of the school's work on developing pupils' understanding of community cohesion.

Evidence was collected from the school's self-evaluation form, nationally published assessment data, the school's own assessment records, relevant policies, observations of the school at work, including visits to lessons and analysis of parents' questionnaires. Discussions were also held with staff, a member of the governing body and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence that the school's own assessments of these aspects, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

## Description of the school

In this smaller than average primary school, the vast majority of pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, although the number of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs is above average. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is provided in a Reception class and extended school provision is offered through before and after school clubs.

There is a privately run playgroup onsite which is inspected separately.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The Ridge is a good school. There are many outstanding strengths, including pupils' personal development and sense of well-being, the curriculum and aspects of leadership and management. Parents are very appreciative of the school's work, including the provision offered by the before- and after-school clubs. Comments such as 'I could not expect anything more from a school' and 'What a wonderful, friendly place - my children are having a fantastic time' reflect the positive replies from the vast majority of parents who replied to the inspection questionnaire. Pupils also share their parents' views, saying their school is 'brilliant' and 'Learning here is lots of fun!' Pupils are particularly appreciative of the curriculum, and the way staff successfully make their lessons more exciting by involving them in visits, having visitors into school, and by linking subjects together to make them more meaningful. For example, in Year 4, pupils were able to write knowledgeably about their feelings when seeing a steam train, as result of a visit to Bridgnorth station. This visit allowed them to learn more about rail travel in the past, while developing their literacy skills.

The outstanding curriculum is one of the reasons pupils enjoy school so much. Above average attendance confirms pupils' very positive attitudes. Pupils are well motivated and behaviour is outstanding. They collaborate well and are very eager to help each other with their work. As pupils in Year 6 worked together to construct kites, they willingly shared ideas and made suggestions to each other about how to best complete their work. They spoke with enthusiasm about their visit later in the day, to the park, to see their kites fly! This love of learning, coupled alongside good teaching, ensures pupils make good progress and reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Achievement overall is good. Although standards by the end of Year 2 have not been as high over time, in 2008 the results of teachers' assessments show a marked improvement on previous years. More pupils than in the past are attaining the levels expected for their age, especially in writing and mathematics. Writing has been a focus for school improvement and shows good evidence of the impact of leadership in improving this aspect of English. Even so, although standards are rising, the headteacher recognises that the tracking of progress and setting of targets for pupils in Years 1 and 2, based on assessments at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, has not been rigorous enough to ensure all pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the good support given to them, ensuring they are included effectively in all lessons.

Although care, guidance and support are good overall, pastoral guidance is outstanding. Child protection and safeguarding systems meet current national guidelines. Pupils say they feel safe in school and adults will always help them if they are upset or worried about anything. Bullying, they say, is rare, but if it does occur they are confident it will be sorted out quickly and fairly. The school deservedly holds Healthy School status and the Activemark. This reflects how clearly pupils understand the importance of diet, personal hygiene and physical activity for leading a healthy lifestyle. They know how to keep safe and show a good understanding of road, water and fire safety. They know the importance of helping others and are proud to be members of the school council. They willingly support charitable work to help worthy causes both locally and farther afield. As a result of the school's work on promoting community cohesion, pupils have good opportunities to work with other schools, the local and global communities. Links are being established with a school in a contrasting United Kingdom locality, in order to increase pupils' understanding of the diversity of life in this country. Pupils' very strong social

development and their well developed basic skills prepare them very effectively for their future lives.

A key factor to this school's success is outstanding leadership. The headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher, has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in provision. Governance is also outstanding with governors providing both effective support and challenge to the school. Challenging targets are set for Years 3 to 6 pupils and now this practice is rightly to be extended into Years 1 and 2. Self-evaluation is accurate and the outcomes of any evaluation are used rigorously to improve provision. For example, the leadership identified that girls did not perform as well as boys in mathematics. This was particularly evident in one year group. However, as a result of strategies implemented, the difference between girls' and boys' attainment is no longer evident. This success, alongside the improvements in writing, the curriculum and pupils' personal development and well-being since the previous inspection, shows this school has outstanding capacity to improve further.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children start school with skills and abilities that are broadly typical for their age. Teaching is good, and there is a good balance between teacher-led activities and those chosen by the children. This means children make good progress and, by the time they enter Year 1, most are demonstrating above average standards. Their personal, social and emotional development is outstanding. Children are very eager to learn and behaviour is excellent. They 'bubble' with excitement as they tell adults about the things they have found on their trip to a nearby allotment. One child excitedly showed 'magic beans' which are just like those in the 'Jack and the Beanstalk' story. Although the indoor curriculum is good, the outdoor environment is too small to enable staff to provide an effective outdoor curriculum. However, good plans are in place to develop an improved outdoor area. The school council speaks informatively about its ideas for the 'ruby garden' and how this will improve learning for the Reception children. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good, and all welfare requirements are securely in place. The leader knows that children's knowledge of the names of letters and their sounds, writing and calculation in mathematics have been weaker aspects of children's development. However, as a result of strategies implemented, these are improving. Parents are very pleased by the way their children settle quickly and happily, and say staff are approachable and always willing to listen to them.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Make rigorous use of the assessment information provided at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, to ensure all Year 1 and Year 2 pupils make the progress of which they are capable.

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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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

**Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	2

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	2

## 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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	1
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



**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

13 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Ridge Primary School, Stourbridge, DY8 3NF

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed meeting you and wished we could have gone with you on your exciting trips. A special thank you goes to those of you who met with us to tell us about your school. It was wonderful to see such polite and well mannered pupils and your behaviour is outstanding. Your parents and carers should be very proud of you. We think you go to a good school which is getting better and better. These are the main things we found out.

- By the time you leave school in Year 6, you attain standards in English, mathematics and science which are higher than those found in most schools.
- Those of you in the Reception class get a good start to school life, and the trip to the allotment seemed great fun. We would love to know if you planted the magic beans and if a beanstalk actually grew!
- You clearly enjoy school very much and this helps you to achieve well. Another reason you achieve well is because of good teaching.
- You are very considerate of one another and very willing to help each other with your learning. Keep this up!
- You are exceptionally well cared for and you told us that you feel safe in school. You also know all about leading a healthy lifestyle.
- You have interesting things to do in lessons and you have an excellent range of special events to make learning exciting. We think your teachers do an amazing job in making your lessons fun and taking you out on so many trips and visits.
- The headteacher, staff and governors work very well together and are always trying to find out ways of making things better for you.
- Although we think the school is doing a good job, we have suggested something that will make it even better.
- Use the assessment information provided at the end the Reception Year very carefully to make sure all Year 1 and Year 2 pupils make the best possible progress.

Thank you again for your help. We hope you keep on working hard and will continue to enjoy learning for the rest of your lives, as much as you do now.

Yours faithfully

Lois Furness

Lead inspector