

The Ridge Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109026
Local Authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	337201
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Michael Merchant

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Max Reed
Headteacher	Philip Boulton
Date of previous school inspection	11 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons and observed nine teachers. They held meetings with a governor, staff and groups of pupils. They also talked to some parents and carers who were present at the start and finish of the school day. They observed the school's work, and looked at its improvement plan, minutes of governors' meetings, data on pupils' progress, records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching, and a range of school policies. They also analysed questionnaires received from 69 parents and carers and 99 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well the teaching promotes the attainment of more able pupils and how well teachers help all pupils to improve their work
- the effectiveness of the curriculum at motivating and inspiring all pupils and providing challenge for the more able
- the effectiveness of middle leaders and governors in checking attainment, progress and teaching and contributing to improvement.

Information about the school

This school is an average-sized primary school. The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much lower than is typically found. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, mainly behavioural, emotional and social learning difficulties, is average but the number of pupils with a statement of educational needs is lower than is typically found. The school achieved the Healthy Schools award in 2007; this was awarded again in 2009. A new headteacher joined the school in September 2009.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

The key strength of this outstanding and improving school is the exemplary pastoral care that it offers. By the time pupils leave in Year 6 they are confident, well-rounded young people, ready to play their full part in the world beyond school.

Strong and clear-sighted leadership and management are at the heart of the school's success. Pupils enjoy school greatly and develop well as articulate, courteous and considerate young people, extremely well aware of how to lead safe and healthy lives. By the end of Year 6, standards have risen considerably and have been very high in national tests for the last three years. Pupils' progress by the end of Year 6 is good overall, and outstanding in science given their starting points. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the school's outstanding provision for them in many ways. Pupils' high standards and good progress means that achievement overall is outstanding.

A very positive atmosphere permeates the school, relationships are exceptionally strong and this, together with excellent care, guidance and support, results in very happy learners. One pupil spoke for many when saying, 'It is like one big family here.' Pupils' joy of school is palpable and they enjoy attending. Pupils' personal development aspects are outstanding because they are encouraged to see their potential and are given the self-confidence to work hard and aim high. Pupils have a high regard both for their classmates and for the adults who work with them. They display an enviable generosity of spirit, support a range of national and global charities and are always concerned to take care of the environment. Pupils feel extremely safe in the school due to secure safeguarding procedures and consistent and effective behaviour management.

One of the most striking features of this successful school is its exciting and extremely well-planned curriculum that brings together topics and subjects to enliven learning and make it highly relevant and engaging. Lessons are typically well taught so pupils are very well motivated. Marking is regular and helpful. Where teaching is occasionally less effective, some pupils do not work independently enough and the more able are not always sufficiently challenged to extend their learning. Classrooms glisten with wonderful displays. Although already outstanding, there is scope to develop the curriculum further so as to boost the school's existing good work on community cohesion and lift further pupils' outcomes in relation to their awareness of others from contrasting backgrounds.

Even though the school already has many outstanding features, staff and governors know that there is still more that can be done to lift pupils' good progress even further. They know exactly what actions to take next as a result of thorough systems for school

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self-evaluation. In view of the rapid improvements made in the last three years, outstanding leadership and management, the good teaching, excellent curriculum, and exceptionally high levels of care, guidance and support that pupils receive, the school is extremely well placed to improve even further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on current good practice to further increase the proportion of outstanding lessons in all year groups by:
 - giving pupils more responsibility for their own learning by encouraging them to be more active and inquisitive in class
 - ensuring that teachers specifically plan for and extend the learning of the more able pupils.
- Extend pupils awareness and understanding of different cultures and ways of life by:
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to gain first-hand experience of culturally diverse communities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils achieve very well, academically and personally, because learning is so enjoyable and because they feel so secure in the school's highly supportive and encouraging atmosphere. Pupils' behaviour is excellent, in lessons and when using the school grounds that pupils and parents appreciate greatly. Attendance is above average and no pupils are persistent absentees. There have been no recent exclusions. The pupils' work seen by inspectors confirms the overall picture of good and improving progress.

Progress is accelerating rapidly in mathematics where pupils in Year 6 attain standards that are significantly above average. Pupils achieve well overall because most teachers expect much of their pupils and explain complicated ideas well. In an outstanding literacy lesson taught in Year 6, pupils learned at an exceptional pace because of the imaginative and challenging task set, developing deep insights into the use of language through using paired work to explore dialogue. The school sets challenging targets and most pupils are making good progress towards them, or even exceeding them.

There is very little difference in the progress made by the various groups of pupils, because the school is very conscious of their individual needs. For example, the work is made interesting for boys and the school works very effectively to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and to support fully those who enter the school with particularly low levels of attainment.

Pupils enthusiastically and knowledgeably explain the value of adopting healthy lifestyles and the need for exercise, reflecting the Healthy Schools award the school has gained. Pupils have an excellent understanding for their age of how to be safe in the community. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, in many ways. Pupils have a very well-developed understanding of right and wrong

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and an appreciation and enjoyment of the wonders of life around them. There are some exemplary outcomes, as seen in samples of written work, that show the depth of pupils' feelings movingly expressed, in the work of the school council, for charities, and in the respectful conduct of pupils, for example. They eagerly take advantage of the many opportunities to participate in the community and are well informed about other people's needs. The school is aware that even more can be done to raise pupils' understanding of life in a multicultural society and is seeking to do so. Pupils develop impressive social and interpersonal skills and relish working collaboratively. This, together with high standards in the key skills in English and mathematics, means that they are very well prepared for the next stages of their lives.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The excellent curriculum plays a huge part in enabling pupils to achieve well. Through it, knowledge, skills and understanding are developed progressively to build well on what pupils can already do. The way subjects are seamlessly linked together is a significant strength and contributes strongly to pupils' learning. In particular, sport is very well

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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promoted and some pupils are to be congratulated on becoming national champions in gymnastics. The curriculum supports pupils' personal development through very effective personal, social, and health education. Teaching includes much good and outstanding practice but there is some less effective teaching on occasions. High quality teaching, such as that seen in a Year 5 mathematics lesson on Venn diagrams captivates and enthuses pupils and keeps them on their toes with skilful questioning and challenging tasks. Teaching in all lessons makes clear to pupils what is expected of them and includes good preparation and use of resources. Lessons are orderly and many are also great fun. Tasks and concepts are clearly explained, and adults ask perceptive questions, and these help pupils to think and use more varied vocabulary in their answers.

Where some teaching falls short of motivating some pupils, opportunities are missed to challenge pupils through active learning that is matched carefully to their abilities. In these lessons, teachers' explanations are overly long, which limits the time that pupils are actively and independently learning. This results in slower progress and less time for pupils to articulate what they have learnt. The school has set up thorough systems to check on pupils' progress and these are used well to ensure that none is in danger of falling behind and also to enable teachers to consistently set the next steps for each pupil's learning. Pupils are growing in confidence as to how to improve their work.

Care, guidance and support are exemplary and parents and carers agree that children are looked after very well. Child protection procedures are rigorous and the care for vulnerable pupils is outstanding. Excellent links with specialists help pupils with their learning, social skills and emotional development. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is especially strong and helps them to make similar progress to their peers.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, very ably supported by his deputy, has directed improvement extremely well to improve pupils' educational opportunities. He communicates his high expectations persuasively to staff so that all have a shared sense of direction and feel part of a successful team. Leaders check the school's performance rigorously and offer constructive advice and training. In this way, the quality of teaching and learning is steadily improving. A climate has been created where everyone is working towards

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making the school even better. Consequently, teamwork is strong, staff morale is high and pupils' progress is accelerating. Members of the senior leadership team and the subject leaders fulfil their responsibilities very well. There is no hint of complacency and there is a determination from staff at all levels to sustain and build upon the many gains of recent years. The school promotes good levels of equality for all pupils through its careful monitoring and exemplary support, so that there is no hint of discrimination.

The governing body fulfils all legal requirements and gives good attention to the welfare of pupils and staff with all safeguarding arrangements found to be effective at the time of the inspection. It holds the school to account well for its work, and systems for evaluating the effectiveness of initiatives are increasingly robust.

In this highly inclusive school, every child matters and individual needs are considered very specifically. The school works in outstanding partnership with external agencies to secure extra support for those pupils who need it. Whilst there are very positive features to the school's existing work on promoting community cohesion within the school community itself for example, senior leaders are aware that some elements are not yet developed sufficiently. There are plans to forge links with other schools in more ethnically and socially diverse areas in England and to enhance other aspects of this work across the curriculum.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

The school and its headteacher clearly enjoy the confidence and support of those parents and carers who returned the Ofsted questionnaire. A number of individual

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comments reflected the high quality care, support and guidance given to pupils, particularly to those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the high academic standards reached by pupils. The inspectors agree with these views. The numbers of criticisms from parents and carers were very few and these were followed up as inspection trails during the visit. For instance, a small minority of parents and carers felt that the school could keep them better informed about their child's progress and to involve them more in decisions that are taken at school. Inspectors agree, along with the school, that the school can do more to communicate more effectively with parents and carers. The views of the parents interviewed informally in the playground confirm the positive response in the questionnaires.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Ridge Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 69 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 231 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	36	40	58	3	4	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	29	42	38	55	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	28	43	62	7	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	28	44	64	3	4	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	30	43	35	51	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	28	39	57	10	14	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	39	37	54	3	4	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	18	26	42	61	1	1	2	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	36	38	55	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	20	45	65	4	6	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	22	45	65	4	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	21	30	44	64	3	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	39	37	54	4	6	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Ridge Junior School, Yate BS37 7AP

Thank you all for the warm welcome you gave to us when we visited your school recently. What an interesting two days we had! We enjoyed meeting and talking to you. The Ridge Junior School is outstanding and you are right to be proud of it. Here are some of the really good things we found out about it.

Your personal development is outstanding. You behave impeccably around the school and in your classes and you look after each other so well. You relish working in groups and helping each other to learn and you readily help your classmates when they find things difficult. You make good progress as you move through the school and your achievement is getting better all the time, especially in mathematics. By the time you leave at the end of Year 6, you reach standards in all your subjects that are very high compared to those in most other schools. This is because your teachers teach you well and you also work very hard. Your teachers and teaching assistants take excellent care of you. You told us they make sure that everyone feels safe and secure. They also give you a lot of advice about how you can improve your work. Your headteacher and all your other teachers know exactly how to make sure that your school continues to stay outstanding.

Even though you go to an outstanding school, your headteacher, governors and staff still want the school to get better. To help them do this, we have asked your school to do the following:

- give you more opportunities to learn more things on your own
- make sure work that is planned for you is not too easy or too hard, but always just at the right level of challenge
- give you more opportunities to learn about the lives, values, customs and beliefs of communities in other parts of the United Kingdom.

We know you will continue to do your very best at The Ridge Junior School and we wish you all every success in the future. Thank you once again for making our visit such an interesting and pleasant experience.

Yours sincerely

Michael Merchant

Lead inspector

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