

Redditch, Ridgeway Middle School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116971
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	338927
Inspection dates	23–24 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Michelle Parker HMI

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	440
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss Julie Grieve
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Richards
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2007
School address	Evesham Road Astwood Bank Redditch
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The team observed 15 lessons and 15 teachers were seen. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, parents and carers, pupils, the chair of governors, school staff and the school improvement partner. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at whole-school planning, teachers' planning, the staff handbook and school policies together with 152 parental questionnaires.

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

- the progress that pupils were making
- the effectiveness of strategies to raise attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 and improve the rate of progress of pupils at the end of Year 8
- the effectiveness of senior and middle leaders in raising attainment and improving achievement.

Information about the school

Ridgeway School is an average-sized middle school which is popular and over-subscribed. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also low while the percentage with statements of need is below average. Most pupils are of White British heritage and the remaining 4% are from a range of backgrounds. The school has renewed its Arts and Sportsmark accreditations, achieved Healthy Schools status and was awarded an Eco green flag in 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. The strong caring ethos reflects the drive and commitment of the headteacher, who is ably supported by her senior team. All staff share a passion for improving the lives of pupils in their care and this is seen in the good relationships and the wide range of experiences the school offers pupils, such as horse riding and specialist coaches for sports and arts. The vast majority of parents and carers have confidence in their child's education. One parent said, 'All the staff go the extra mile, nothing is too much trouble'.

All groups of pupils by the end of Year 8, including those who are looked after, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. In 2009, at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment was in line with national averages with significant numbers of pupils attaining Level 4 and above in English and science.

The school has worked hard to address successfully the points for improvement from the previous report. A programme of well considered professional development for all staff has ensured that teaching is better matched to all pupils' needs. Teachers now compare pupils' progress against challenging targets and identify weaknesses. The curriculum provides opportunities for literacy and numeracy targets to be met through writing stories for pupils in partner schools. Pupils have an increased say in the school and have a budget to spend on improvements they have planned. Self-evaluation is accurate and this positions the school well to sustain improvement.

Pupils' attendance has continued to improve and is high. Persistent absences have been tackled effectively, although some pupils still miss out on some of their education through taking holidays in term time.

The curriculum is good. Pupils and staff enjoy the alternative curriculum weeks which provide a rich mixture of specialists from outside the school, working alongside school staff. This encourages pupils to aspire to greater ambition in their work.

Teaching is good and staff work hard to interest pupils in their work. Many staff have improved their style of questioning to promote pupils' learning. Sometimes opportunities are missed to provide pupils with immediate feedback as they work; most of it is usually given at the end of the unit of work. This would allow such feedback to correct misunderstandings as they go.

Leadership and management are good and middle managers are increasingly confident in carrying out their roles. Currently they are not monitoring learning sufficiently to ensure that the outstanding practice is shared.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise attainment and progress in English and mathematics through:
 - enabling middle managers to monitor teaching to ensure there are consistent approaches to learning
 - ensuring that assessment and feedback are part of all aspects of pupils' work so that they understand what they are learning and can address misunderstandings quickly.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has been improving over the last three years and is now broadly in line with national averages for English, mathematics and science. The school has worked successfully to address former weaknesses in English and mathematics. The school's own data indicate that pupils are on track to perform well this year. The recent emphasis on improving pupils' writing has been successful and the school has appropriately identified the need to improve reading.

The pace of learning is faster in Years 7 and 8 than in Key Stage 2 so that by the end Year 8 pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science. Learning in lessons is good. Pupils are well motivated and understand their targets. All groups of pupils, especially those known to be eligible for free school meals and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. This is promoted by careful monitoring by class teachers and year teams of the progress pupils make, coupled with timely and tailored interventions.

Pupils' good behaviour around the school and in lessons contributes to good learning in lessons. A firm line is taken with the occasional instances of behaviour that fails to reach the high standards expected. Some parents are understandably concerned about this. The school ensures that the potential for disruption is minimised. Teachers work assiduously with a range of partners to support pupils whose behaviour can give cause for concern. As a result behaviour is managed well.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. Some pupils and parents feel that the school does not keep them informed sufficiently about how bullying is resolved. The school is aware of this and is looking at ways to improve its communication about this important area of its work. When bullying occurs it is dealt with quickly. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers spoken to said the school was very responsive to bullying and that they were confident it was dealt with promptly. Pupils play a significant role in supporting victims as buddy mentors and in producing a child-friendly guide to reinforce the anti-bullying message.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good. In the lessons seen, a wide range of exciting activities was used to engage and interest pupils. A strong feature of the learning involved team work and problem solving. Cross-curricular learning made a big contribution to pupils' overall experiences and enterprise skills were included well. In many activities, pupils understood how well they were learning as the work went along. For example, during a product design activity pupils were asked to reflect on whether they had met the learning targets they had set themselves and what they needed to do to accomplish them. Opportunities were missed in some lessons to ensure that all pupils understood their tasks; consequently some reached the end of the activity before they realised they had misunderstood an aspect of the work. Thus, pupils had to retrace steps, which hindered progress. Work is marked regularly and targets are monitored. However, written comments are often insufficiently clear as to how pupils could improve their work.

The curriculum is good and is enriched both by the cross-curricular weeks, three times a year, and by visiting specialists, such as the drummer and sports coaches, who work alongside pupils and staff. These give good professional development to staff and excite pupils' imaginations. One Year 6 pupil summed up their views, 'Design and technology week was one of the best weeks of my life. I made my own miniature merry-go-round.' Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are catered for well in smaller sets while the higher attaining pupils benefit from special events such as the Teen Book Week and Maths Challenge events with the local university. Collaborations with partner schools are good. Jointly planned tasks with both first and high schools support pupils

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well when they transfer schools. Action Sport work is used well to increase participation in sports and has widened the school's provision. The school carefully monitors pupils' participation in extra-curricular activities to ensure that pupils are supported. This has encouraged wider participation, especially of the most vulnerable pupils.

The school links pupils' pastoral care and academic work well and provides a welcoming and secure environment that supports all pupils' learning. Attention is carefully paid to pupils' social interactions and their ability to make friends. Support is sensitively given to resolve conflicts between friends. Information is shared effectively in year teams so that class teachers know their pupils well and use this information to support their learning and make carefully planned interventions. Other agencies, such as Children's Services and the educational psychologist, are brought in when appropriate to ensure the health and well being of pupils. Parents praise the level of communication, especially when they have concerns, and they value the dialogue and partnership between them and school. Some parents want more opportunities to talk with staff and the school is actively looking at ways to increase them.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and staff have worked hard to provide a positive climate for learning. The school not only cares and nurtures pupils, it challenges them appropriately as well. This ethos is shared by all the staff. The senior leadership team are strongly committed to improving the school and work well together. Careful analysis of the school's data has led to a sharp re-focus on improving the school's tracking systems. Senior staff now look in forensic detail at pupils' attainment and progress. This information is then shared with all teachers and is used by them in their planning and target setting with pupils in their lessons. As a result, the progress of all pupils has improved.

The headteacher's drive for continual improvement propels the staff's professional development. The school's development plan and teachers' personal targets inform the choice of professional development activities so they are seen as relevant and worthwhile. The local authority has also recognised the work of staff and invited them to share their best practice with teachers from other schools. Staff are confident in working together to support each other. All teachers now regularly observe each other's teaching and discuss ways that it can improve. Middle leaders now regularly monitor how targets

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are being set and achieved by pupils. However, the monitoring of learning is not yet carried out consistently across the school and as a result opportunities are sometimes missed to share the best practice.

Safeguarding is good. Policies are updated and good procedures are in place to fully integrate these into all aspects of the school's work.

Governance is satisfactory. The chair of governors and the curriculum committee are extremely well informed and have a robust knowledge of the school. Training and systems are in place to ensure that the rest of the governing body becomes confident in holding the school to account. Governors are keen to hear the views of all parents and attend all school events.

The school promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination effectively. It is very proactive and uses specially allocated funding to ensure all pupils have access to extra-curricular activities. The access and inclusion manager works tirelessly to support staff and pupils and provides extensive training within the school to ensure that all staff know how to identify and meet the needs of all pupils in the school.

Community cohesion is good. The school has carefully evaluated both its needs and its work and developments closely reflect this. It has well established local and international dimensions which have developed friendships as well as pupils' understanding of other cultures and religions. More recent partnerships with an inner city school have begun to widen pupils' understanding of cultural diversity in Britain.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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	2

Views of parents and carers

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The large group of parents and carers who were interviewed and those who completed questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive about the school. Inspectors followed up the concerns of a small number of parents with regard to bullying, communication from school and the amount of homework pupils are given and the progress their children were making. The inspection found that the school has appropriate policies in place with regard to these issues and that procedures are followed consistently. Inspectors were able to confirm that the school took any concerns of parents and carers seriously and followed them up assiduously.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Redditch, Ridgeway Middle 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 152 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 440 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	39	83	55	8	5	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	67	44	76	50	7	5	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	21	96	63	18	12	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	27	85	56	20	13	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	46	30	97	64	4	3	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	21	95	63	20	13	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	26	98	64	10	7	0	0
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)	42	28	87	57	7	5	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	32	76	50	21	14	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	48	32	73	48	18	12	7	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	24	84	55	16	11	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	40	26	91	60	10	7	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	57	38	79	52	11	7	4	3

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



25 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Redditch, Ridgeway Middle School, Redditch, B96 6BD

Thank you for the warm and friendly welcome you gave to us during your inspection. We were very interested in your views and they helped us form our opinion of your school. We agree with you that you go to a good school.

The strong leadership of your headteacher has helped yours to be a good school. She is very ably supported by her senior team and staff, who all share her vision.

Your school is increasingly successful in helping you to achieve higher levels at the end of Key Stage 2. You all achieve well in lessons. Teaching is good in your school and you enjoy interesting lessons which are well planned by your teachers. We very much enjoyed the activities the school had planned for you with visits out and specialists from outside the school, coming in to teach you. You worked very well in teams and helped each other with your learning. You know how to stay safe and make healthy choices. The school prepares you well for the next stage in your education. We have asked your school to help you make even better progress through planning work that allows your teacher to identify how much you understand before you finish the work so that misunderstandings can be addressed as you work. We have also asked the school to check how you learn in lessons so that there is greater consistency in improving learning.

We wish you continued success in all you do.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Parker

Her Majesty's Inspector

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