

Ridge Community Primary School

Keswick Road, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA1 3LE

Inspection dates 14–15 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Governors, the headteacher, leaders at all levels and staff have brought about considerable improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement since the last inspection.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the school's work. They work in partnership with senior leaders to improve the school.
- The quality of teaching is good. Staff now have a sharper focus on ensuring all pupils are learning as much as they can while also providing them with high-quality personal support. Clear priorities have been identified to raise standards and speed up progress even further, and the school is well placed to achieve these goals.
- Pupils behave well and feel very safe in school. They are kind and respectful to each other and to staff. Most enjoy learning and are keen to come to school. Attendance is above average.
- Early years provision is good. School routines are firmly established in the Reception class. Children know what is expected of them and make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Pupils continue to make good progress as they move through the school and, in 2014, reached broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils make good progress because they are well taught. Work is carefully planned, varied and challenging. Consequently, activities engage the interest of all groups of pupils and enable them to achieve well.
- The curriculum successfully develops pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for their secondary education and for their future lives as citizens of modern Britain.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' understanding is not always checked regularly enough in lessons.
- Work in a small number of books is not well presented.
- The outdoor area in the Reception class does not give children enough opportunities to fully develop their skills, especially in literacy and numeracy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in a range of subjects being taught to whole classes and smaller groups of pupils of all ages. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and inspectors made several shorter visits to classrooms together. Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, staff, parents, pupils, members of the governing body and with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, progress data, safeguarding information and other documentation.
- There were insufficient responses (five) to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for these to be considered. Inspectors took account of responses to the school's own parental surveys. They also considered responses from 17 staff to the inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

Ann Ashdown, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Alastair Younger

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and so eligible for support through the pupil premium is well above that found nationally. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a similar proportion speak English as an additional language.
- The school has specially resourced provision for up to 10 pupils with a statement of special educational needs for speech, language and communication difficulties. Currently, there are no pupils using this provision.
- The on-site provision for childcare, 'Rising Stars', is not managed by the governing body and receives its own inspection report which is available on the Ofsted website at www.ofsted.gov.uk. Firbank Children's Centre also shares the school's site.
- Children in the early years are of Reception age and attend full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that pupils reach higher standards and make even faster progress by:
 - regularly checking pupils' understanding in lessons and adapt teaching accordingly so that any misunderstandings are picked up and corrected in a timely manner
 - always insisting on high standards of presentation of work in pupils' books.
- Improve the outdoor learning area so that children in the early years have even better opportunities to develop all their skills, especially in literacy and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Since the last inspection, leaders, managers and governors have had a sharper focus on promoting pupils' learning and have created a climate in which good teaching and good behaviour can flourish. Pupils' progress is tracked rigorously and well-targeted extra help is immediately given to any pupil in danger of falling behind in their work.
- The school celebrates its strengths but also knows what needs improving and the right priorities have been identified to ensure it gets even better. Teaching is rigorously monitored and staff performance is managed well. Staff share their own expertise, coach one another and also have good opportunities for specialist training to improve their skills even further.
- The pupil premium funding is spent effectively on one-to-one and small-group tuition in literacy and mathematics for disadvantaged pupils. Although a gap between their attainment and that of pupils nationally remains, the progress of disadvantaged pupils has accelerated and is now similar to that of their classmates.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well and fosters good relationships. Pupils from different backgrounds relate well to one another and play happily together. They have a good understanding of different faiths and cultures through school visits, assemblies and through the school's well-established link with a school in Sri Lanka. Such good practice indicates the school's commitment to tackling any discrimination.
- Middle leaders have made a major contribution to improving the school. They have clear priorities for raising achievement further in English and mathematics. They rigorously scrutinise pupils' work and monitor their progress carefully. They also give less experienced staff good support and help them to improve their teaching skills.
- The curriculum is balanced and ensures pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. It has an appropriate focus on promoting pupils' good literacy and numeracy skills while also successfully developing their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. It is enriched by a wealth of exciting trips and visits. Year 6 pupils spoke enthusiastically about their forthcoming residential trip to London and what they were going to learn by visiting the Houses of Parliament. Year 2 pupils were equally excited about their forthcoming farm visit and the animals they were hoping to feed.
- Safeguarding requirements are met. Staff are well trained and fully aware of the school's policies and procedures. Children and adults feel safe as a result.
- The school receives good support from the local authority. Advisors visit regularly and give advice on improving the quality of teaching and on analysing the school's performance data.
- Primary sports funding has been well spent on specialist coaching for pupils and training for staff. This has allowed the school to provide more opportunities for pupils to take part in sports such as gymnastics, to attend sports clubs and to participate in competitions. Consequently, pupils are encouraged to take exercise and perform at the level of which they are capable.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has continued to improve since the last inspection and is very effective. Governors have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses because they use their considerable expertise to monitor its work closely. They have a detailed knowledge of the school's performance data and ask challenging questions of senior leaders about the achievement of all groups of pupils. Finances are well managed and governors check that the pupil premium funding is spent effectively. Governors are clear about the quality of teaching and how staff performance is managed. They know how good teaching is rewarded and how weaknesses are tackled. They ensure that the school's safeguarding arrangements are effective.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils look after one another and are respectful to staff and visitors. They are proud of their school and most arrive on time and ready to learn. Pupils play happily together in the school yard and behave politely in the dining hall.
- Records show that incidents of challenging behaviour and rare incidents of bullying are recorded carefully and dealt with swiftly and appropriately.
- In lessons, most pupils answer questions readily and are keen to succeed. They cooperate well when

working in pairs or groups and share resources and ideas sensibly. Work in their books is usually of good quality but occasionally untidy because teachers have not insisted on it being well presented.

- Attendance has improved steadily and is now above average.
- Pupils are keen to take responsibility. They enjoy activities as varied as acting as members of the school council, being reporters for the school newspaper, looking after younger pupils and even collecting the eggs from the school's hens and ducks.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say how very safe they feel in school and parents agree that the school keeps their children safe. Checks on the suitability of staff to work with children are fully in place. The school site is kept secure and visitors are carefully checked.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They are knowledgeable about staying safe when using the internet and mobile phones. They are also aware of the dangers posed by, for example, the misuse of drugs and alcohol. They understand the harm that bullying, in all its forms, can cause, and are satisfied with the school's work to prevent it from occurring.
- The parent support advisor, the special educational needs coordinator, learning mentors and all staff work closely together to ensure all children, but particularly those who are vulnerable, bereaved or unhappy, receive high-quality personal support. They also work closely with specialist agencies to ensure pupils receive expert help when this is needed.

The quality of teaching is good

- Work in pupils' books shows that they make good progress because they are taught well. Teachers plan lessons carefully and use a variety of interesting tasks and activities to engage pupils' interest and ensure they achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. Knowledgeable teaching, clear explanations and well-managed classes all contribute to pupils' good achievement.
- Most pupils become confident readers because phonics (the sounds that letters make) is well taught and pupils are successfully encouraged to read a range of books for pleasure. The school has also been successful in developing pupils' literacy skills, particularly through involving large numbers of older pupils in producing a high-quality school newspaper, *The Ridge Reporter*.
- In mathematics, challenging activities, which are often practical and relevant to real-life situations, ensure all groups of pupils learn at a brisk pace. For example, pupils in Year 3 make good progress in learning to tell the time by using paper plates to construct their own clocks.
- Sensitive and timely support from both teachers and teaching assistants enables disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to complete the same or similar tasks to their peers. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are given specialist help when this is needed to fully develop their language skills.
- Work in pupils' books is marked regularly and they are given helpful pointers on how to take the next steps in their learning. 'Fix-it' time in lessons gives pupils good opportunities to respond to teachers' advice and improve their work. In a small number of pupils' books, work in mathematics is not always laid out clearly enough and handwriting is sometimes untidy because teachers have not insisted on consistently high standards of presentation.
- Sometimes pupils' learning slows when their understanding is not checked regularly during lessons and misunderstandings are not picked up and corrected quickly enough.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children enter the early years with skills which are below those typical for their age in most areas of learning. From these starting points, they make good progress as they move through the Reception class and Key Stage 1. By the end of Year 2, they have reached standards which, although still below, are closer to average.
- In Key Stage 2, good progress continues and, in 2014, Year 6 pupils achieved average standards overall with particular strengths in reading and in grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Work in pupils' books and the school's own detailed tracking data all confirm that current pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are achieving well. Pupils' progress is accelerating and current pupils are on track to achieve their targets this year.
- Disadvantaged pupils are given well-targeted extra help if they need it and, consequently, they now make

the same good progress as their peers. However, test results in 2014 showed that in reading, writing and mathematics they were approximately three terms behind their classmates and two terms behind other pupils nationally. As a result of the extra support, the attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates and other pupils nationally are now closing.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, pupils who speak English as an additional language and pupils who join the school partway through their primary education all make good progress and achieve well. Pupils new to the school are helped to settle in quickly and all groups of pupils receive well-targeted, timely support when this is needed.
- The most able pupils make good progress because they are given challenging tasks which extend and deepen their understanding. In mathematics, small-group teaching allows the most able pupils to complete work which gives them the knowledge and skills to reach the higher levels in tests and assessments.

The early years provision

is good

- Good links with parents and the on-site nursery ensure that children settle quickly into school routines and become confident learners. Although the proportion of children reaching a good level of development in 2014 was below that found nationally, the school's accurate tracking shows that predictions for the current cohort of children are much higher. Current children make good progress from their starting points, particularly in reading and writing. By the time they enter Key Stage 1, they are developing skills much closer to average and are better equipped for success in Year 1.
- Children respond well to the good teaching they receive. Staff are well aware of children's individual needs and work is carefully planned to capture their interest. Children enjoyed studying the topic 'Under the sea'; they made good progress in developing their literacy skills as they carefully studied a picture of a turtle and made up sentences describing what they thought it would feel like if they were able to touch it.
- Children behave well because teachers establish clear, consistent routines and children know what is expected of them. Most share resources, take turns and listen to instructions carefully. Well-trained staff ensure that children are kept safe.
- The early years provision is well led. Staff are well deployed and teachers and teaching assistants monitor children's progress carefully to ensure that all groups of children achieve well.
- Children have good opportunities to develop all their skills inside the classroom but these are more limited in the outdoor learning area. Resources in the outdoor learning area do not provide children with sufficient opportunities to fully develop their literacy and numeracy skills.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	119131
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	462329

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 of pupils on the school roll	196
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Phil Hudd
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Fitt
Date of previous school inspection	19 June 2013
Telephone number	01524 67880
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	head@ridge.lancs.sch.uk

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