

Ridgmont Lower School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109476
Local Authority	Bedfordshire
Inspection number	324964
Inspection dates	10 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Sheelagh Barnes

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	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	54
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	12
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Bernie Ryan
Headteacher	Mrs Lynda Clark
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	22 September 2005
School address	High Street Ridgmont Bedfordshire MK43 0TS
Telephone number	01525 280236
Fax number	01525 280236

Age group	3–9
Inspection date	10 September 2008
Inspection number	324964

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the current standards and progress in mathematics across the school and particularly for the oldest pupils; the quality of pupils' personal development, and the effectiveness of the provision for Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Evidence was gathered from a scrutiny of documentation and pupils' work, observation of lessons, assembly, break-times and lunch, information from parents and discussions with staff and pupils.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but this inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Ridgmont Lower is a smaller than average primary school. Pupils come from the village and also from further afield. Children aged three to five in the EYFS are taught in one class. There are two other classes for older pupils who are aged from six to ten years. Following recent changes, mathematics is currently taught in individual year groups. The school runs an early morning club for one hour before school each day and another provider runs a holiday club on site. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. There is a higher than average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but currently no pupil has a statement of special educational need. Standards on entry to school vary class by class because of the small size of year groups: overall it is similar to those attained nationally. The school has gained the Active Mark and Healthy Schools Awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The headteacher and governors are accurate in their assessment that this is a good school. A significant factor in the school's effectiveness is the good leadership of the headteacher, supported effectively by the governors and staff. The headteacher has a good knowledge of the strengths of the school, an awareness of what needs to be done to improve things still further and a determination to continue to raise standards. The school has moved on well since the previous inspection and has a good capacity to continue to improve. As a result, achievement throughout the school is good overall. Boys and girls make a good start to their learning in the EYFS and this is consolidated and built upon from Year 1 to Year 4. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been consistently above average at the end of Year 2 for a number of years, and pupils' achievement is good. They continue to make good progress in reading and writing in Years 3 and 4 and standards are above those expected for pupils' ages by the time they leave the school. However, while standards in mathematics have improved over the last year, and for many pupils are above those expected, pupils' progress in this subject is satisfactory. As a result, the headteacher and governors have identified the need to raise standards further as an area for improvement. New measures have been put in place that include teaching pupils in individual year groups and a whole school focus on improving teaching and learning to remedy this. These are beginning to take measurable effect.

Another significant factor in pupils' good achievement is their good personal development. The school places a great emphasis on this aspect of learning and teaches it effectively. Pupils enjoy coming to school because relationships are good and they think learning is fun. One pupil summed it up by saying 'One of the best things about our school is the other children. They are all your friends!' A parent wrote similarly of the 'caring nature of the children for one another' and the importance of this in enabling each pupil to feel included and involved. Pupils have a good awareness of how to stay healthy and keep safe, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Staff support their learning in this and other aspects by a good and well-planned curriculum. They provide pupils with a good range of extra-curricular opportunities, such as the opportunity to learn French. Learning is also supported effectively by regular trips to places of interest, including the nearby church and a local country house estate. The links with the local and wider community are good and are used well to enrich learning opportunities still further. The school makes a good contribution to village life and relationships through its links with the church and a local nursery. The combination of all these factors results in pupils being prepared effectively for the next stage in their learning. As a result of their enjoyment of all the school has to offer, pupils work hard and their attendance is above the national average.

Teaching is good and meets pupils' needs effectively. Teachers know their pupils well and plan lessons carefully to ensure they capture the interest and enthusiasm of boys and girls alike. All staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and response, and involve them effectively through careful questioning and opportunities for practical activities. Care and welfare are good.

Pupils who find learning difficult get good support from skilled teaching assistants, so that they achieve well. The school has worked recently to refine and improve assessment procedures and these are now good. As a result, leaders have good information about how well pupils are achieving. Marking of work by teachers is regular and accurate, but does not always give pupils as much information as it could about how to make their work even better. The school has identified that while the academic guidance given to pupils is good in some lessons, it is not consistently so. Pupils are not involved enough in evaluating their own work and identifying what they need to do next to improve. This is particularly the case in mathematics. The school has therefore highlighted this as part of the development plan for the forthcoming year.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage **Grade: 2**

Provision for children in the Nursery and Reception class is good. It has been developed and extended effectively to incorporate younger children, from three years old upwards, under the good leadership and management of the EYFS coordinator. The welfare of all of the children is promoted well. As a result, children are happy and confident and make good progress in their personal development, making new friends and extending their social skills. They enjoy school and because of the relaxed and friendly atmosphere, children are enabled to concentrate fully on the opportunities provided for them. They achieve well and make good gains in all areas of the curriculum for their age. Children attain standards which are at least in line with, and often above, the average by the time they start in Year 1. Teaching and learning are good. Staff know the children well and are particularly adept at questioning them about what they are doing in such a way as to extend children's understanding and language skills still further. Children are taught effectively about the relationship between sounds and the letters that represent them. A good range of interesting and exciting activities are planned, both indoors and out, and good use is made of the extensive playing fields. Staff design the activities they lead well, to develop specific skills and knowledge. Children take part in these adult led sessions with enthusiasm and are clear what they are learning. However, on occasion, some other learning opportunities available for children to choose for themselves lack clear focus. Therefore, children are not always sufficiently aware of the purpose of the activity or how well they have achieved the task set.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on the strategies already in place to raise standards in mathematics for older pupils.
- Ensure that teachers involve pupils more actively in the evaluation of their work and give them clear guidance on their next steps in learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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 boarding provision	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 is the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
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 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/or disabilities make progress	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.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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 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

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 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	2
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



11 September 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Ridgmont Lower School, Ridgmont, MK4 3OTS

Thank you for the polite and friendly way you welcomed me when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking to you at lunchtime and in the playground, joining you in assembly and seeing you work in lessons. You are proud of your school and have every right to be. Particularly good things about your school are:

- Your teachers teach you well and you reach good standards in your work, especially in reading and writing.
- You enjoy lessons because teachers plan them well.
- You work hard and make good gains in your learning.
- The school takes good care of you and keeps you safe.
- You get on well with your teachers and with each other and your behaviour is good.
- The school provides lots of interesting and exciting things, such as clubs, that you really enjoy.
- Your headteacher knows your school really well and has the right plans to make it even better.

There are some things that could help to improve your school. They are:

- For the older ones of you to make even more progress in your mathematics. You can help with this by always making sure you work as hard as you can.
- For teachers to give each one of you clearer information about what you need to do to make your work even better.

I hope you carry on working as hard as you can and enjoying playing together.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Barnes
Lead inspector