

Rivermead Primary School

Loddon Bridge Road, Reading, RG5 4BS

Inspection dates 21–22 November 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although pupils are starting to make faster progress in some year groups, they are not yet making consistently good progress throughout the school.
- The quality of teaching has improved but there are still inconsistencies between classes. There is not always enough challenge in lessons. As a result, some pupils are not doing as well as they could.
- Teachers do not always have a clear enough picture of how well pupils are doing in order to plan work that builds on their previous learning.
- Year group and subject leaders are not fully involved in checking rigorously the quality of teaching or pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility.
- Pupils do not always receive enough advice on how work could be improved or about their progress towards meeting learning targets.
- The governing body has undergone many changes and does not yet provide consistent challenge to school leaders about pupils' achievement or the quality of teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher is a strong leader who has taken decisive action to raise standards. He has the support of all staff who work together as a united and ambitious team.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils are polite and courteous. The school uses consistent and effective approaches to managing behaviour.
- The school provides good opportunities to develop pupils' moral and spiritual awareness.
- The curriculum captures pupils' interest and pupils really enjoy the wide range of clubs, themed days and weeks, visits and visitors.
- The headteacher and all staff have created a safe and caring school environment for their pupils.
- Pupils from different backgrounds get on well and take a genuine pride in their school.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with half a day’s notice.
- The inspectors observed all members of staff teaching and learning in 22 lessons, including two joint observations with senior members of staff, and looked at a cross section of pupils’ written work.
- Children from Years 1, 3 and 6 were heard to read individually. Guided reading sessions involving older pupils were observed as well as lessons in phonics (the sounds that letters make) with children from Key Stage 1 and Reception.
- The inspection team held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, subject leaders, the school’s improvement partner, and members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of evidence which included the school’s development plan, the school’s data for tracking the progress and attainment of each pupil and specific pupil groups, curriculum and lesson plans, governing body documentation and the work pupils were completing in their books.
- The school’s self-evaluation information was also scrutinised.
- The inspectors met parents and carers at the beginning and end of the school day. They evaluated 46 responses from parents and carers to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the 30 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The breakfast club and after-school club were also observed during the course of the inspection.
- Pupils’ behaviour, both inside and outside of the classroom, was observed and the inspectors checked the school’s health and safety and safeguarding procedures.

Inspection team

Mark Anderson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Fran Ashworth	Additional Inspector
Avtar Sherri	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an above-average-sized primary school in an urban setting, which has grown steadily in size over the last three years. The majority of pupils come from White British families.
- Classes contain mixed year groups in Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is significantly below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus and those with statements of special educational needs is below average.
- A very small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school operates a breakfast club and after-school club situated on the school site.
- There is no alternative provision in the school.
- The school meets the current floor standards which set the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress expected by the government.
- Since the previous inspection the school has a new headteacher, who took up his post in January 2011, and a new deputy headteacher, as well as changes to the teaching staff. There have also been substantial changes to the board of governors.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - teachers use the information they have about their pupils to set work at the right levels for pupils of different abilities so that they are challenged throughout each lesson
 - all pupils receive regular written and spoken guidance from teachers so that they clearly know how to improve their work and make progress towards meeting their learning targets
 - providing training for support staff to enable them to provide high quality support for pupils' learning, especially in phonics, in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.
- Maximise the impact of year group and subject leaders by ensuring that:
 - all leaders closely monitor the quality of learning and pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility.
- Increase the effectiveness of the governing body by:
 - providing appropriate training for all governors to extend their understanding of the achievement of different groups of pupils in the school so that they can challenge school leaders to provide the best possible education for all pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' rates of progress are inconsistent in Years 1 to 6 due to variations in the quality of teaching in different classes. Pupils make faster progress in Years 5 and 6 where the teaching is consistently good.
- In some lessons pupils do not progress as quickly as they should because teachers do not plan activities that challenge different ability groups well enough and do not check regularly how well pupils are getting on.
- At Key Stage 2, current levels of attainment are broadly average. Standards in mathematics are above average, while they are slightly below average in English. At Key Stage 1, standards in reading are above average, while standards in mathematics and writing are average.
- The school has placed a particular emphasis on reading and pupils get regular opportunities to read in school. They are strongly encouraged to read regularly at home which helps to strengthen links with parents and carers in supporting their children's skills.
- The effective system for monitoring pupils' progress introduced fairly recently is already resulting in improving standards in teaching and faster progress, but this has yet to become consistent across the school.
- The funding the school receives for those pupils eligible for the pupil premium is used well to offer this group extra support with their learning. This has enabled the school to put in place substantially more one-to-one support, both from teachers and teaching assistants. As a result, these pupils make the same progress as others.
- There are no significant gaps in the achievement of different groups. Pupils who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to other pupils.
- Teachers are involving pupils in more active learning and this is resulting in an increase in pupils' confidence and helping them to take on harder work.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skill levels broadly in line with those expected for their age and reach average standards by the end of the Reception year.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- After a period of high staff turnover, the school is now establishing a better standard of teaching, where all teachers are fully held to account for their performance. Nevertheless, there are inconsistencies between classes. The good teaching seen in Years 5 and 6 is not typical throughout the rest of the school.
- Some support staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 do not fully understand how they can best help with phonics teaching and pupils' learning in other lessons.
- In some lessons, the teachers talk for too long and this limits the time that pupils have for learning by themselves.
- On some occasions, particularly in Key Stage 1, when pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their individual skills, they become distracted and this slows their learning.
- The quality and depth of teachers' marking is not consistent in all subjects. The standard of marking and written feedback varies considerably because teachers do not always show pupils what they have done well or explain clearly how their work can be improved.
- Assessment information about pupils' progress is not used rigorously enough in planning lessons to ensure that tasks are pitched at the right level for all pupils.
- Teachers are good at developing pupils' social skills. A high standard of cooperation and collaboration was seen in the lessons observed.
- Teachers are helping pupils to develop a 'can do' attitude towards learning, reinforced by a clear understanding that it is all right to make mistakes and take chances as long as they learn from

them.

- Where teaching is good, teachers use a range of interesting methods to engage pupils in lessons. For example, in a Key Stage 1 phonics lesson, the pupils really enjoyed a competitive treasure hunt for 'real' and 'made up' words. In a Key Stage 2 lesson, punctuation was made fun with each punctuation mark being given a Kung Fu move and sound to identify it. This off-beat approach proved highly effective in extending pupils' understanding.
- In the large majority of lessons observed, teachers demonstrated good questioning skills and ensured that all the children were kept engaged and not allowed to 'switch off'. Staff also used humour to good effect in building a strong rapport with their pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The vast majority of pupils enjoy school and feel safe there and this view is reflected in the responses to Parent View and to the school's own recent pupil and parent questionnaires.
- Attendance is above average and the school has worked hard to achieve this by celebrating good attendance and working closely with parents. The majority of pupils clearly look forward to coming to school each morning and punctuality is good.
- The school takes effective steps to foster good relationships and to prevent bullying, which pupils say is not common and is dealt with promptly and appropriately by staff when it does occur. Behaviour code posters are prominently displayed and pupils are fully aware of the high expectations that apply to all.
- There are clear systems and procedures to record unacceptable behaviour and racist incidents, although such incidents are relatively rare.
- Assemblies often focus on the importance of good behaviour. An assembly observed underlined this by giving the following thought-provoking message, 'Did what you say today hurt or heal?'
- Pupils look after each other and respect others. Older pupils help and support the younger ones, providing good role models.
- The school council provides ideas that are listened to and the older children are given day-to-day responsibilities around school, such as acting as playground peer mediators.
- The staff and school leaders have created a positive atmosphere which permeates the whole school. It is a welcoming environment in which all pupils are at ease.
- Pupils display positive attitudes to learning and respond enthusiastically and appropriately to questions and requests in lessons and around the school.
- Older pupils are aware of the precautions that they should take when using the internet.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because neither teaching nor achievement are yet good.
- The school is led by a dedicated headteacher who knows exactly what needs to be done to improve it and leads by example. Since his arrival he has ensured that the new senior leadership team and the year leaders have started to play a greater role in the leadership and management of the school. However, year group and subject leaders are not fully involved in checking the quality of teaching or pupils' progress.
- The headteacher has worked well with the governing body and staff to accurately evaluate the school's past performance and has already put in place initiatives to improve pupils' achievement. These have not yet had time to fully impact on raising standards.
- The school has taken steps to link performance management more closely to school development planning and to raising achievement. Targets set for staff in the past have not always been appropriately related to improving pupils' progress. This is also now becoming more closely linked to identifying staff training needs, for example, to ensure some teachers improve

their subject knowledge.

- Senior leaders meet with teachers each term in order to identify quickly those pupils who are falling behind or not making expected progress. This leads to appropriate action, such as additional 1-to-1 support and booster groups.
- The curriculum is well planned around topics and themes and provides pupils with a variety of experiences that enhance their learning and understanding of the world in which they live. Pupils say they enjoy meeting visitors to the school and taking part in interesting trips. The school offers numerous clubs and activities ranging from tag rugby and street dance to cheerleading, all of which are well attended.
- All statutory safeguarding and child protection requirements are met.
- There are good opportunities for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In assemblies there is a strong emphasis on reflection, and in art and music pupils' creativity is actively encouraged and channelled.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has not been effective enough in the past in challenging the leadership about why pupils' progress had not improved since the previous inspection. The governing body has recently undergone almost a complete change in personnel. This has resulted in improving the governors' effectiveness, both in offering support to the school and in asking more demanding questions about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Governors are wholeheartedly committed to helping drive the school forward. However, they have not yet received training to help them in analysing data about pupils' progress. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met and that safeguarding arrangements are fully in place. They receive regular reports from the headteacher and make frequent visits to the school. This is giving them a greater awareness of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. They have a clear understanding of the performance management system which recognises and rewards good teaching as well as addressing underperformance. Governors have a clear grasp of the school's budget and how it is allocated, including how the pupil premium funding is spent, and ensure that it is being used effectively to raise the attainment of those pupils who are eligible.

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	109894
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	405261

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	364
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paula Montie
Headteacher	Brian Prebble
Date of previous school inspection	4–5 October 2010
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