

# Ridgefield Primary School

Radegund Road, Cambridge, CB1 3RJ

## Inspection dates

19–20 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The strength of the headteacher's leadership is shown by the way school has continued to move forward this year in spite of many staff changes and fewer experienced staff in leadership roles.
- The headteacher's aim of teaching being good in most lessons is being realised. This accounts for pupils' good and improving progress and rising standards throughout the school.
- The continual focus on driving up the quality of teaching has meant new teachers have settled in quickly and become effective at their work because of the support and guidance provided.
- The school has made reading a high priority, particularly in ensuring that pupils secure basic skills as quickly as possible. As a result, their attainment in reading is rising strongly.
- Pupils' daily experiences are made exciting by the topics they study, special events and educational visits.
- The school is calm because pupils behave well and show respect and consideration for others. They are keen, work hard and try to improve.
- Staff and governors take great care to ensure that pupils are kept safe at all times and safeguarding procedures rigorously put into practice.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teaching is consistently of the highest quality that the headteacher is striving for, because at times teachers do not adapt their lessons quickly enough in response to how well the pupils are doing.
- Pupils are not always clear about the targets they are aiming for in English and mathematics or how they can be achieved.
- There are times when teachers do not make clear to pupils in language they understand just what they will be learning in a lesson and how to judge whether or not they have been successful.
- Teachers do not always check that pupils have responded to comments in their marking and so do not make the same mistakes in the future.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons or parts of lessons, of which five were joint observations with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff, members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 23 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) and held informal discussions with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Martin Beale, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Rosemarie McCarthy

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is average in size.
- Half of the pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is well above average, but only a small number of these are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives funding through the pupil premium is broadly average. This is extra money given to schools for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is broadly average as is the proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- More pupils than in most other primary schools join or leave part of the way through their primary school education.
- The school has experienced considerable staff changes this year due to the maternity leave of several teachers and staff leaving to take up promotion in other schools.
- The school is part of The Parkside Federation of local primary and secondary schools. The school has its own governing body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently outstanding by:
  - making sure teachers assess pupils' progress during lessons and adapt their teaching more quickly to push the learning of all forward
  - making clear to pupils in ways they understand what they are to learn in each lesson and how they can judge if they have been successful or not.
- Help pupils to improve the quality of their work more quickly and take greater ownership of their learning by:
  - ensuring that pupils consistently respond to marking and that teachers check this is leading to improvements in their work
  - providing clear targets in English and mathematics for pupils to aim for in the longer term
  - giving pupils greater responsibility for identifying and undertaking the steps they can take to meet their targets.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment is rising in English and mathematics throughout the school as pupils make better progress and the higher results of Year 2 assessments over the last three years work through to Key Stage 2. Year 6 test results fell in 2012 but more pupils are now working at and above expected levels and the current group is already exceeding levels reached last year.
- Children enter the school with skills well below those expected for their age and an increasing proportion are at an early stage of learning English. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception, although attainment is still below average by the time they enter Year 1. The focus in these classes on talk and discussion successfully supports the language development of those new to speaking English as well as others with speech and language difficulties.
- Pupils' understanding of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) starts securely in Reception and is built on strongly across Key Stage 1. As a result of effective teaching, most pupils are reaching levels expected for their age by the end of Year 2 and many are reading at higher levels. Other skills of research and comprehension develop well as pupils move through the school. They learn to enjoy and appreciate books and read a wide range of authors.
- The attention paid to developing key skills includes writing and mathematics. Pupils have plenty of opportunity to write at length including within their topics. They start to show an interest in writing in the Nursery and Reception, where some boys spend considerable time at the 'writing table'. Pupils not only develop accurate number skills but can also apply them when solving mathematical problems.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making good progress because their needs are carefully identified and effective programmes put in place to support their learning. Similarly, pupils speaking English as an additional language make good progress once they have developed sufficient fluency and confidence in the English language. Later arrivals also make good progress once they have settled into the school. There is also no significant difference in the progress and attainment of different minority ethnic groups.
- Individual tuition and targeted support are the main reasons why the gap is now closing between the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and that of their classmates. These pupils made slow progress and were 18 months behind their classmates by the end of Year 6 in 2012 in English and more than two years behind them in mathematics.

### The quality of teaching is good

- There are many features that are typically found in the most effective teaching. Teachers grab pupils' attention and interesting resources are used to stimulate their imaginations. Questions are used to explore their understanding and pupils are expected to explain their reasoning when answering. Activities are provided at different levels and challenge the more able. Teaching assistants are deployed carefully to support the learning of groups and individuals including those with special educational needs.
- Reading is taught well, particularly the development of basic skills. By regularly assessing pupils, teaching is focused on individual needs in small groups. Teachers and support staff follow programmes consistently so pupils know what to expect in each part of a lesson. Those who struggle are identified quickly and staff provide them with individual support to help them catch

up.

- Through on-going and unobtrusive assessments in the Nursery and Reception classes, adults are able to plan and adapt activities to meet children's needs and interests. Learning flows freely between inside and outdoors and role-play activities encourage children to use their imaginations and work together. Adults move children's learning forward by perceptive and well-phrased questions, although at times the more-able children could be challenged more in Reception.
- Where teaching is less effective, teachers do not always respond quickly to pupils' learning during lessons and adapt what they are doing. This can mean they can tread water in activities they have already mastered. Furthermore, pupils are not always clear about the purpose of what they are doing because it has not been explained to them in ways they understand.
- Marking is very thorough. Teachers' comments usually require a response from pupils, although these are not consistently undertaken or checked. Pupils are generally unclear about their personal targets and are not given enough guidance on how to achieve them.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils are very keen to learn and try hard in lessons. They respond quickly to their teachers because they understand fully what is expected of them. Very occasionally, individual pupils lose concentration when teaching does not fully engage their attention, although this very rarely disturbs others.
- Pupils are polite and well-mannered and move sensibly around the school. Their friendliness towards each other makes playtimes happy occasions. Pupils contribute to school life whether this is as school council representatives or house captains. Year 6 pupils help Key Stage 1 pupils with their reading and pupils go out of their way to help newcomers to settle into school life.
- A balance of rewards for pupils and making expectations clear to parents has led to steady improvements in attendance. The number of pupils persistently absent has fallen considerably by focusing on the families concerned and taking a firm line on term-time holidays.
- Pupils feel safe and are encouraged to identify how to keep themselves safe by assessing likely risks on school trips and how to deal with dangers from the internet. The school subscribes to a platform appropriate for their age for pupils to use as a social media source which includes a whistle-blowing procedure for safety measures.
- Pupils are very clear what constitutes different forms of bullying and say any infrequent incidents that occur are dealt with swiftly. Their parents agree.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher has successfully led the school forward because she has high expectations and provides a clear direction based on doing the best for all pupils. The school can point to many notable improvements in attainment, the quality of teaching and attendance since the last inspection.
  - Formal arrangements for managing the performance of staff are rigorously put into practice, and teachers are set challenging targets for the progress pupils are expected to make in their
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classes. The school knows itself well and by identifying clearly where further action is needed, sharply focused plans are put in place and acted upon. This places the school in a strong position to improve further.

- Ensuring equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination are high priorities for the headteacher and the school's success in this area has been recognised by a national award. Assessment data is analysed to spot potential underachievement, check the progress of different groups and action put in place if any gaps in performance appear. The school also identifies and supports families as their circumstances change.
  - The engagement with the local authority has been crucial in supporting the headteacher at a time of many changes. An adviser has worked closely and effectively with the school to support the development of leadership skills and to work alongside teachers to improve their teaching. The federation also gives the pupils access to facilities that would not otherwise be available to them.
  - The way subjects are organised and taught is continually under review so that pupils' needs and interests are fully met. The school's motto of 'brave explorers, great thinkers' comes to life through the topics pupils study. Each topic is stimulated by a linked visit such as to the Science Museum, and pupils ask questions they want answered and follow their own lines of enquiry. Additional themed events such as 'science week' link to topics being studied and the activities involved are memorable for the pupils.
  - That the school strongly supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident through vibrant classroom and corridor displays including of their art work. The link to a school in Botswana and receiving letters from pen pals there gives pupils an insight into lives other than their own. Pupils work well together during lessons and teaching provides many opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Governors have become increasingly effective by undertaking regular training to extend their expertise, and through regular visits to school including to their linked class. They have also made sure they can understand assessment data and the school's performance compared with others. The governing body wisely took the decision not to give the acting deputy headteacher a class responsibility this year so she could support the headteacher and focus on developing the quality of teaching across the school. Governors are clear about the action taken by the headteacher to improve teaching and reverse the dip in Year 6 test results. They are fully involved in managing the school's finances and are clear that only good teaching is rewarded with salary increases. However, they have not always ensured that pupil premium funding has provided additional resources for pupils entitled to its support.
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## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	133311
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	406509

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	236
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Michael Priestley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Anne Morten
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 June 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01223 712418
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