

Ripley Junior School

Poplar Avenue, Ripley, DE5 3PN

Inspection dates 17–18 October 2013

| 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 | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- There is too much variation in the quality of teaching, and as a result, pupils' progress is uneven and they do not always reach the standards they are capable of.
- The work teachers set in some lessons is not sufficiently well matched to pupils' abilities.
- More-able pupils are not always given tasks that make them think or work hard enough.
- In a few lessons, pupils spend too long listening to lengthy explanations, and when this occurs their attitudes to learning become less positive.
- Teachers do not always make the best use of the support for learning available from teaching assistants.
- The marking of pupils' work in subjects other than English and mathematics does not always provide clear guidance on their next steps in learning.
- The progress some pupils make in reading is slowed by weaknesses in their understanding of letters and sounds, and their comprehension skills.
- Not all teachers show that they are able to adapt their teaching to fully cater for variations in the performance of different groups of pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is improving because of the determined leadership of the headteacher and the rigorous checking of teachers' performance.
- Pupils are given a good range of additional sporting and other activities outside lessons.
- Safeguarding arrangements are secure and parents report that their children are kept safe in school.
- The school is good at helping pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 15 lessons. Three lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. The inspectors also observed the breakfast and after-school clubs and two assemblies, and made a number of short visits to classrooms.
- Pupils were observed at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, staff, pupils and the Chair and of the Governing Body. They also met with a representative of the local authority and some parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- Groups of pupils of different ages were heard reading.
- The inspectors took account of 30 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- They looked at the school’s policies, teachers’ plans, samples of pupils’ work, school improvement planning and records on behaviour and safety. Inspectors also looked at information on individual pupils’ progress and teachers’ performance, and records of meetings held by the governing body.

Inspection team

Kenneth Thomas, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Heather Phillips

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized junior school.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is above average. This is additional government funding for particular groups such as pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school introduced breakfast and after-school clubs in September 2013. These clubs are managed by the governing body.
- The headteacher took up her post in April 2012.

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:
 - the existing good and outstanding practice is shared across all year groups
 - pupils are given work that is challenging, particularly those capable of reaching higher levels
 - teachers' explanations are not too long, so pupils' interest is maintained and the best use is made of the support available from teaching assistants
 - the good marking seen in English and mathematics is extended to all subjects
 - all teachers fully understand what assessment information tells them about the performance of different groups, particularly those supported by the pupil premium.
- Improve pupils' progress in reading by consolidating their knowledge of letters and sounds, and developing a wider interest in reading for purpose and pleasure.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The achievement of all groups of pupils requires improvement. The attainment of most pupils on entry to the school in Year 3 is broadly average. Because of inconsistencies in teaching, pupils do not make constantly good progress as they move through the school. As a result, attainment remains broadly average when they leave Year 6.
- Action to tackle the underachievement that was apparent in the results of the tests taken at the end of Year 6 in 2011 and 2012 has had a positive impact on pupils' progress. As a result most pupils made the progress expected of them in the 2013 tests, although few exceeded expected progress.
- Better use is being made of information about pupils' progress to set learning targets and this is improving the rate of progress. However, the work in pupils' books shows that in some lessons, progress is slowed because pupils are not given the right level of work, particularly those capable of reaching higher attainment levels.
- Although pupils now make expected progress, the school has identified and is tackling gaps in what pupils can do in reading, writing and mathematics. This is particularly the case in reading. Increasing numbers of pupils enter the school with weak skills in phonics (the sounds that letters make) and while older pupils demonstrate competent reading skills, the progress of some is slowed by weaknesses in comprehension.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium make similar progress to other pupils, but they do not attain as highly by the end of Year 6. The funding is used to provide small group and one-to-one support sessions focusing on reading and writing skills. The progress of these pupils is not more rapid because not all teachers fully understand how to respond to variations in the performance of different groups. In 2013, by Year 6 these pupils were on average about two terms behind their classmates in both English and mathematics.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is similar to other pupils. They make good progress in lessons where the support is well matched to their individual needs but slower progress in others.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Previous weaknesses in teaching meant that until last year pupils were not making the progress expected nationally for their age. While teaching has improved, and there are examples of good and better practice, its quality across year groups is still too variable.
- Where teaching requires improvement, the same work tends to be given to all pupils without regard for different ability levels. This is because teachers do not make enough use of their knowledge of pupils' attainment levels in lesson planning. Consequently, some pupils find the work too difficult while others find the tasks too easy. When this occurs pupils lose interest and do not display sufficiently positive attitudes to learning.
- In a few lessons, pupils of all abilities are required to sit and listen to the same lengthy explanations of learning when higher ability pupils, in particular, are capable of moving on more quickly. When this occurs, the support available from teaching assistants is underused because pupils have limited time for independent work.

- The marking of pupils' work is a strength in English and mathematics. The regular marking of work with clear guidance on how to improve is having a positive effect on pupils' learning. However, marking of this quality is rarely seen in other subjects.
- Where teachers plan work that is suitably challenging for all ability levels, good progress is made. This was seen, for example, in an outstandingly well-taught mathematics lesson for Year 5 pupils. Pupils made rapid progress in developing their understanding of word problems, because the tasks captured their enthusiasm and teachers' constant checking ensured that mistakes in learning were picked up and corrected quickly.
- Teaching assistants are used well to support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and others who need additional support. In particular they ensure that the work given to those who have a statement of special educational needs is carefully planned so that they make good progress towards their learning targets.
- Pupil premium funding is used appropriately to supplement teaching support and resources for pupils for whom the funding is intended. This helps to make sure that these pupils progress as well as the others in English and mathematics.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are closely linked to the quality of teaching. In lessons where the work is challenging and matched to their needs they are keen to learn. In lessons where learning is not made appealing enough, many lose interest and motivation to learn. As a result, some pupils require reminders from staff to focus on the learning task.
- Social behaviour is generally good and most pupils are respectful to adults and to one another. Pupils report that they feel safe in school and that behaviour is mostly good. The behaviour observed at play and break times was good and records show there have been few exclusions from school over recent years.
- Most pupils have a good understanding of different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and said that while there had been instances of bullying in the past, they were not aware of any current concerns. All said that adults will deal promptly with any of their anxieties or concerns.
- Pupils willingly take on responsibility and through, for example, the school council they play a constructive role in the life of the school.
- Attendance is average and pupils are punctual at the start of the day. Celebrations of good attendance and close home-school links are having a positive impact on the few pupils who have irregular patterns of attendance. Early indications suggest that the breakfast and after-school clubs are contributing to this improvement.

The leadership and management

are good

- The firm and decisive leadership of the headteacher is having a significant impact on the performance of the school. Since taking up her appointment she has clarified the roles and expectations of staff who have leadership responsibilities and developed a cohesive and effective leadership team.

- Leaders' monitoring and analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the school accurately identify the areas where improvement is needed. This forms the basis of a well-structured school improvement plan.
- While there are still some inconsistencies, the quality of teaching is improving because its impact on pupils' learning is checked regularly. Subject leaders are now more involved in this process and suitable training and support are provided to address any identified weaknesses in teaching. This is having a positive impact on pupils' progress, although the best practice has not yet been shared widely enough.
- There has not been enough time for the full impact of the improvements in teaching to be reflected in rising standards. However, the improvements in pupils' progress already demonstrate that the school has the capacity to continue to improve.
- Leaders use rigorous procedures for managing the performance of teachers and setting targets to improve their work. They use the national 'teachers' standards' effectively to guide the drive for improvement.
- The curriculum is sufficiently matched to pupils' abilities and interests to ensure that all groups of pupils make at least expected progress. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development permeates the curriculum and is reflected in the school motto, 'Inspiring children – learning together – moving forward.'
- The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of after-school clubs and sports activities. The school intends to use the new primary sports funding, for example, to employ additional specialist sports coaches. It has appropriate plans to measure the impact of this spending.
- Relationships with parents and carers are very positive and the school is working hard, and with some success, to involve them more fully in their children's learning. This reflects the determination of staff to ensure all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed and their refusal to accept discrimination of any kind.
- The local authority provides effective support through, for example, the training of subject leaders and governors.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body fulfils its duties well and is rigorous in setting and reviewing the headteacher's targets for improving the school. Governors are well informed by reports from the headteacher and visits to the school, and have a good knowledge of the quality of teaching. They understand the link between teaching and pupils' achievement, and their effectiveness is enhanced through regular training. The governing body manages funding conscientiously and is fully informed about the use of the pupil premium and its impact on pupils' achievement. They ensure that all national requirements are met, including those relating to child protection and safeguarding.

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

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| Unique reference number | 112611 |
| Local authority | Derbyshire |
| Inspection number | 424963 |

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

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|--|-----------------------------------|
| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 247 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Isobel Harry |
| Headteacher | Sue Stack |
| Date of previous school inspection | 11 October 2011 |
| Telephone number | 01773 742281 |
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