

# Ripley Church of England Primary School

Wentworth Close, Ripley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6ED

## Inspection dates

3–4 May 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Inadequate</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Weak governance and ineffective support and challenge from the local authority mean that pupils have been let down by the quality of education they receive for far too long.
- Successive temporary headteacher arrangements have prevented the school from improving as quickly as it could or should. Improvement plans do not provide a clear or convincing picture of how the school will get to good.
- There have been too many 'sticking plaster' solutions and there is still no long-term sustainable plan for the school. Consequently, the capacity for sustained improvement is weak.
- Over time, financial management has been poor. The use of additional funding has been ineffective.
- The school does not have a sustainable governance structure. The interim executive board has made a flying start, but has only been formally in place for approximately three weeks. It is not a long-term solution.
- Against this extremely unsettling backdrop, school leaders have not secured consistently good teaching and outcomes for current pupils. There is too much variability between subjects and classes.
- Disadvantaged pupils, the most able and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make consistently strong progress.
- Teachers know pupils' individual capabilities well, but use this information with mixed success. In some classes, pupils' learning and understanding lack depth, including for most-able pupils.

### The school has the following strengths

- On the ground, there is a very strong sense of community. Loyal school leaders, staff, parents and pupils have worked hard together to maintain the school's existing strengths.
- The promotion of pupils' personal development and well-being is good. Pupils enjoy school, attend regularly, feel safe and behave well.
- Stable and determined leadership in the early years has resulted in continuous improvement in the Reception class. Consequently, children get off to a good start.
- There is some effective teaching and learning, especially in English and mathematics.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

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

- Secure effective and sustainable strategic leadership for the school by:
  - fully resolving interim headteacher arrangements
  - establishing an effective long-term governance structure
  - shoring up the financial management of the school, including the use of additional funding
  - sharpening improvement planning so that it sets out clearly how the school will get to good, and enables leaders to check regularly and accurately whether improvements are on track
  - increasing the rigour and effectiveness of support and monitoring to secure consistently good teaching, learning and assessment.
- Ensure that all groups achieve as well as they can relative to their starting points, including diminishing differences in performance between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally.
- Build on the existing strengths of teaching in English and mathematics, making sure that these are secure and sustained across classes.
- Sharpen teachers' use of their knowledge of pupils' existing capabilities to maximise progress from their differing starting points.
- Ensure that teaching deepens pupils' understanding, including most-able pupils, so that they achieve the standards in their work and learning of which they are capable.
- Improve the quality of education beyond English and mathematics to lift outcomes for different groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, across a wide range of subjects.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- There has been a collective failure at a strategic leadership level over a prolonged period. Responsible authorities and partners invested in the school have not taken or agreed the necessary action to put this school on a firm footing and ensure that it can prosper and thrive.
  - Capacity for securing sustainable improvement is poor. Current arrangements for strategic leadership, including governance and headship, are short-term and unsustainable. Both are heavily dependent on the considerable good will and external support offered by neighbouring schools.
  - There is very limited evidence of any positive impact made by the local authority on securing the necessary improvement at the school.
  - Uncertainty, and shifting interim leadership arrangements, have hampered efforts to improve the school. While strengths exist, as they did at previous inspections, the overall quality of education and outcomes for pupils is still not good enough. There is no consistent trend of improvement in achievement at key stage 2. Comparing 2016 results at the end of key stages 1 and 2, better results at the end of key stage 1 mask inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning for current pupils.
  - Due to the transient and unstable nature of strategic leadership arrangements, school improvement planning has been too short-term. Current plans do not provide a clear roadmap to get the school to good. Too many time frames are 'ongoing' with insufficient prioritisation of intended actions. The plan does not include enough measurable checks to help keep the pace of improvement on track.
  - For the last two years, a significant proportion of additional sport funding remained unspent. Although this has now been rectified, the money did not benefit all of the pupils for whom it was intended. The funding that was spent on providing specialist coaching and increasing access to inter-school tournaments was successful in raising pupils' participation levels.
  - Leaders have prioritised improvements in English and mathematics. While there are some strengths in these areas, they are not secure in all classes. The quality of education in many other subjects lags behind considerably. For example, opportunities for pupils to develop their investigative skills in science are inconsistent and sometimes sporadic.
  - Monitoring by leaders at different levels is not rigorous enough to achieve and sustain sufficient improvement. Although generally clear-sighted about the school's strengths and weaknesses, leaders' view of the overall quality of teaching before the inspection was too optimistic. Teachers' access to high-quality training opportunities has been restricted due to budgetary constraints at school level.
- At the time of the inspection, the current shared interim headship arrangements had

been in place for less than three weeks. One interim headteacher, completely new to the school, was already identifying areas requiring improvement swiftly and accurately. However, although forming ideas about potentially sensible steps to tackle these issues, it is very early days. Both interim headteachers are realistic about the precarious position and challenges the school still faces. They receive valuable support from the national and local leaders of education that lead the schools from which they are seconded.

- The interim headteachers, other leaders and staff have worked hard to maintain the school operationally and to prevent existing strengths from slipping. Good care is taken to ensure pupils' well-being. This year, there has been a renewed emphasis on the school's values, such as respect, collaboration and forgiveness. These are prominently displayed throughout the school and well understood by pupils. The school's teachings are consistent with fundamental British values. Pupils experience democracy through their school council, for example, and learn about topical local and national elections. Year 4 pupils visit a Hindu temple as part of their learning about faiths they may not otherwise encounter.
- Leaders gather information regularly about pupils' attainment and progress. They have taken sensible steps to check its accuracy. They consider the achievement of both individuals and groups to identify and target where outcomes should be better. However, while 'inroads' have been made to accelerating pupils' progress, the interim headteachers recognise that these have not been quick enough and variability remains.
- The leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is developing. However, the inclusion manager is still relatively new to post. Although clear-sighted about where further improvements can be made, the quality of provision and outcomes for these pupils remains inconsistent. Leaders track the cost of additional help, but the analysis of whether particular strategies provide maximum value for money is undeveloped.
- Leaders of different subjects convey a strong sense of teamwork. Leaders and teachers work together, supporting, coaching and modelling ideas. This has resulted in the development of some effective practices, particularly in English and mathematics, but this is not consistent enough across classes.
- Pupils' experiences across the curriculum are adequately enriched by trips and a small selection of clubs including art, choir and sports.

## **Governance**

- Over time, governance has been ineffective.
- The former governing body failed to find a sustainable solution that allowed the school to operate successfully. Successive governing bodies have overseen a sub-standard quality of education for pupils over a number of years.
- Governors did not ensure the financial viability of the school as the number on roll decreased. The use of additional funding to diminish differences in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils compared with others nationally has not been tracked tightly enough and is not effective.
- Last term, the full governing body resigned simultaneously. A new interim executive

board consisting of experienced governors had been formally in place for three weeks at the time of the inspection.

- In anticipation of their role being formalised, board members wasted no time gaining a strong understanding of the school's predicament and its effectiveness. They have a firm handle on their statutory duties and have already used their experience to prioritise their actions appropriately. For example, board members have overseen a thorough safeguarding audit. They have taken steps to balance the budget for the current year.
- The interim executive board members convey a strong determination that they will not preside indefinitely over continuing uncertainty. They know that this board is not the long-term answer required. They have set out ambitious timescales to formulate proposals for a sustainable resolution to the current situation. However, given the exceptionally short life of the interim executive board, this work is at an early stage.
- The board is aware that the school's website is not fully compliant and is taking steps to address this.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders push the point with staff that 'it could happen here', emphasising that they should not take false reassurance from the close-knit community. Whistle-blowing policies and procedures are prominent and readily accessible for staff. Staff at different levels are clear about their responsibilities and the actions to take if they have concerns.
- The single central record meets statutory requirements and records the correct checks carried out systematically on the suitability of staff. Staff receive the relevant training according to their roles. Wisely, given the transient nature of headship arrangements, a number of staff have sufficient training to lead on safeguarding if required. However, current lines of responsibility and communication are clear and well understood.
- Leaders' records of any concerns are of a good quality. Documentation shows that the school is proactive in working in partnership with other professionals and agencies for the protection of pupils.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- There is still too much variability in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment between classes and subjects. Consequently, pupils do not make good progress over time. Although teaching is not inadequate, the standard of education received by pupils has been less than good for a number of years. This is unacceptable.
- Some teachers do not use their knowledge of pupils consistently well to promote good learning and progress. Differing levels of challenge and support for most-able pupils or

those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not tight enough. In some classes, teaching and tasks are sometimes pitched too low when pupils are capable of tackling more demanding work.

- Not enough teachers are adept at promoting the deep level of understanding for pupils, including the most able, that would allow them to really master the concepts they are learning.
- The success of the strategies teachers employ for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is mixed. Where they are most effective, materials and resources are well chosen or adapted so they develop or enhance pupils' understanding. Teaching assistants allow pupils enough freedom to get on with their work, periodically checking their progress and understanding. At other times the task may be adapted less appropriately, so it hinders rather than helps because it slows pupils' progress down. Sometimes the enthusiasm of teaching assistants results in their leading pupils too much, rather than making them think for themselves.
- Teaching is typically stronger in English and mathematics, although even in these areas some variability remains between classes. This is partly because specific improvements that have been made are not sustained equally well across classes. At best, effective teaching across other subjects is patchy.
- Teachers give pupils plentiful opportunities to write at length for a range of purposes. They make their expectations for what should be included for particular tasks very clear. Pupils follow these instructions carefully and can mostly explain what the particular features are. In some classes, they are less certain of how their more generic writing skills are developing, or which skills they can apply to different tasks. Sometimes the most able pupils do not understand the subtleties in style of different types of writing that would deepen their understanding.
- Where teaching in mathematics is more effective, teachers pay close attention to pupils' existing capabilities to decide the next steps. They extend learning, including for the most able, by frequently giving pupils tasks that demand problem-solving or reasoning. This is particularly evident towards the top of the school, and especially in Year 6. In some classes, these opportunities are too infrequent.
- There are important strengths in the questioning of both teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils are often asked open questions that make them develop an extended answer. Sometimes adults ask follow-up questions to probe pupils' understanding and encourage them to explain their thinking. However, too rarely do questions go beyond the particular task to get pupils thinking deeply about the underlying concept.
- Regular homework supports pupils' learning and gets them into good habits, contributing to their successful preparation for secondary school.

**Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Good**

## Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Parents, staff and leaders consistently reported that the uncertainty about the school's strategic leadership has not affected pupils' well-being. Many parents are understandably concerned about the high degree of uncertainty that surrounds the school. However, numerous parents specifically praised the commitment of staff and leaders on the ground for their work in maintaining a positive experience of school for their children.
- Leaders and staff know pupils and their families well, and use this understanding of pupils' needs effectively to promote their safety and welfare. There is a very strong community feel to the school. For example, loyal and supportive parents are pulling together and taking action to make the environment more attractive for pupils.
- Pupils feel safe. They develop a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe in different situations. Pupils' knowledge of the potential benefits and risks posed by modern technologies develops appropriately according to their ages. Staff are alert to any pupils who may access applications or programmes that are not age-appropriate outside school, taking swift action to tackle any issues identified.
- Taking account of all available evidence, bullying is rare and dealt with effectively. Pupils understand that relationships can be tricky and speak sensibly about their view of the differences between bullying and falling out with friends. They say they are encouraged to work together to resolve their own issues, but that there is always an adult to help if they need it.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are typically industrious in lessons, including disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders and staff take deliberate and effective action to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school community celebrates a wide range of pupils' qualities and achievements, recognising their varied accomplishments both in and out of school. Year 5 pupils 'buddy' younger children, developing their bond over two years, including pairing up when walking to the local church. Visits to Year 6 by professionals such as doctors and engineers aim to raise pupils' aspirations as they move on.
- In the previous term, leaders took action to ensure that opportunities to promote pupils' personal development are properly mapped out across the curriculum. However, it is too soon to see fully the difference this may make.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Classrooms usually have a busy but calm and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils respond readily to adults' requests.
- Relationships in lessons are a real strength between and among pupils and adults. Pupils work together cooperatively and engage in meaningful conversations about what they are learning. This includes pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, particularly when the task is interesting and pitched accurately. They

remain purposeful and do not distract each other from the matter in hand.

- Occasionally pupils' attention wanders when the level of challenge is not right. This includes those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, who can lose focus readily if not supported by an adult. However, although individuals sometimes switch off, which slows their progress, this seldom causes disruption for others.
- Breaktimes are mostly harmonious occasions. During the inspection, much laughter could be heard as pupils of different ages played happily together. Pupils enjoy school and attendance levels have risen well in recent years. Use of additional funds to provide pastoral support has kept the overall attendance of disadvantaged pupils within a broadly average range over time.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Pupils do not make consistently strong progress, including in English and mathematics. Although these areas are stronger overall compared with other subjects, the picture between classes varies too much.
- Different groups of pupils make inconsistent progress, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Differences between the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils compared with other pupils nationally are not closing consistently. Not enough most-able pupils reach the higher standards or achieve the depth of learning that their starting points indicate they could.
- Children join school with a range of previous experiences and at varying stages of development. Overall, these are broadly in line with what may be seen typically for their ages. With some yearly fluctuations, standards reached at the end of key stages 1 and 2 have broadly matched national averages over time. Consequently, pupils are adequately prepared for their secondary education. However, they do not make the better progress that would enable them to gain ground. Standards in science are lower than those seen nationally at the end of both Years 2 and 6.
- There are pockets in the school where academic outcomes are better. For example, children in the early years make good progress and achieve well. By Year 6, some most-able pupils, including those who may also be disadvantaged, write with developing flair using complex sentences and well-selected vocabulary. However, older pupils' spelling is variable and results in the spelling test last year were below national figures.
- The results of phonics screening checks in Years 1 and 2 have typically been above national figures in recent years, including for disadvantaged pupils. Younger pupils learn effectively to apply these skills to their reading and spelling. Across the school, pupils have mostly positive attitudes to reading, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

### Early years provision

### Good

- Effective and stable leadership in the early years has resulted in sustained improvements since the previous inspection. As a result of strong teaching and good progress, children are well prepared for Year 1. The proportion reaching a good level of



development has risen in recent years and is above national figures.

- Routines are well established in the busy and bustling atmosphere of the Reception classroom and outdoor area. During the inspection, children engaged enthusiastically in the wide range of mathematical tasks available for them to choose. Through her observations and assessments, the teacher had identified this as an area where children could be doing even better. Carefully chosen activities gave opportunities for children at different stages to do everything from recognising and writing single digits correctly to working with numbers up to 100.
- Adults observe and interact well with children as they play and learn. Their questions frequently help children make links in their learning with things they have done before. For the most part, children sustain their attention well. They sometimes become deeply engrossed, for example finding minibeasts in the garden areas and examining them using magnifying glasses. Occasionally, children are less purposeful and struggle to find meaningful activities that sustain their interest.
- The early years leader and teacher has a strong understanding of how young children learn well. She employs a range of skilful strategies to ensure that children use different senses to help them internalise and remember their learning.
- Children's conduct and engagement show that they feel safe and secure. During the inspection, children were developing a firm understanding of how to keep safe on the road through a wide range of activities.
- The early years leader is acutely aware of children who may have barriers to fulfilling their potential. She is determined that such children will not underachieve 'on her watch'. The time and effort invested in building strong relationships with parents, including through home visits, help in the identification of children who may be eligible for additional funding. However, senior leaders have not ensured that this funding has been targeted sharply enough for the early years. Disadvantaged children get off to a good start, but this is predominantly as a result of routinely effective teaching.
- The most able children are given tasks and encouraged to engage in activities that stretch and challenge them. The early years leader is alert to children who have the potential to exceed age-related expectations, and they do so across a range of different areas.
- Strong links with pre-schools help make children's transition into school a smooth one. Where necessary, the early years leader works closely with the special educational needs coordinator to access other professionals for assessment, advice and support.

## School details

Unique reference number	125147
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10032872

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	140
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Martin Digby
Headteacher	Sarah Carrington/Jacquie Chambers (interim headteachers)
Telephone number	01483 225 307
Website	<a href="http://www.ripleyschool.co.uk">www.ripleyschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@ripley.surrey.sch.uk">head@ripley.surrey.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	16–17 April 2015

## Information about this school

- At the time of the previous inspection, there was a part-time temporary executive headteacher and two part-time heads of school. The turbulent period of leadership changes that began towards the end of 2014 is still ongoing. This includes at governance level, and within successive temporary and interim headship arrangements.
- At the time of this inspection, there were two temporary, part-time interim headteachers in place, seconded from neighbouring schools. One has supported the school in various capacities since January 2015. The other was less than three weeks into her part-time post. Both interim headteachers are well supported by the headteachers of their own schools, one being a national leader of education and the other a local leader of education.
- In February 2017, the full governing body resigned. An interim executive board, consisting of three experienced governors, was formally approved by the Department for Education on 12 April 2017.

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The number on roll has fallen steadily in recent years.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- A higher proportion of pupils than seen nationally has been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information because some of the necessary information about governance, end of key stage 2 results, equalities and accessibility is missing from its website.
- The school meets the floor standards which set out the government's minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The on-site pre-school breakfast and after-school provision is managed separately and was not part of this inspection.

## Information about this inspection

- Her Majesty's Inspector visited all classes to gather evidence, including about the typical quality of teaching, learning and assessment. One or both of the current interim headteachers joined all of these visits.
- Her Majesty's Inspector reviewed a wide range of pupils' work across different subjects, talked to them about their learning and heard some pupils read.
- He held discussions with pupils, parents, staff, leaders, interim executive board members, the two supporting headteachers from neighbouring schools, and representatives of the diocese and local authority.
- He analysed 30 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as 33 anonymous questionnaire responses from pupils and 20 from staff. All the written comments that were added to these were considered alongside other inspection evidence. Her Majesty's Inspector also took into account an email sent to Ofsted from a parent.
- A broad range of school documentation was reviewed and safeguarding arrangements were scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Clive Dunn, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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