

Ridgeway Primary Academy

Address: The Ridgeway, Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 7HQ

Unique reference number (URN): 138347

Inspection report: 10 February 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have promoted school attendance effectively. Pupils attend regularly. Leaders keep a close eye on pupils' attendance. When they notice pupils struggling to attend, leaders work in partnership with parents and carers and put effective support in place. This has contributed towards the improved attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils now attend generally in line with their peers.

Staff typically have high expectations of behaviour. Pupils and children in the early years understand and follow the routines at school. They concentrate in lessons and work hard. Pupils work well together and celebrate each other's success. During class discussions, pupils and children in the early years listen to others and make positive contributions.

Pupils play well together on the playground. Children in the early years learn how to share and take turns. Pupils are well equipped to build positive friendships. When disagreements or concerns about bullying arise, staff support pupils well to find solutions and rebuild positive relationships.

Leaders provide effective support for pupils who struggle to manage their emotions and maintain positive behaviour. These pupils overcome their challenges and generally behave well. As a result, the number of sanctions and suspensions has reduced, including for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.

Early years

Expected standard 

With the support of the trust, leaders have improved the quality of the school's early years provision. As a result, children make a positive start to their education. Children make a smooth transition and settle well into Reception Year. Leaders and staff forge effective partnerships with parents and carers. They quickly learn children's needs. Staff use what they know about children to plan learning activities that suit children's needs.

Children learn the knowledge and skills they need to be ready for Year 1. They enjoy exploring the well-considered learning opportunities in Reception Year. Staff model sophisticated language and support children to extend their choice of words. Staff also ensure that children learn what they need to start reading and writing fluently. When children appear to struggle with an aspect of learning, staff provide timely support so that children do not fall behind. However, occasionally, staff do not notice when children over-focus on particular learning activities. This means that, occasionally, children do not learn what leaders intend as thoroughly as they could.

Staff support children well to understand how to make healthy choices. They start learning how to discuss and manage their emotions. Children also know the importance of eating healthy foods.

The school has a well-considered programme for pupils' personal development. Starting in the early years, children learn about right and wrong and how to treat those around them with respect. The programme includes opportunities for pupils to learn about the importance of teamwork. As a result, pupils know how to cooperate and work with others towards common goals. Pupils also learn how the democratic process works in wider society. They understand the importance of elections and the role of elected officials in society.

Pupils are well equipped with the values needed to live harmoniously with people of different beliefs and backgrounds. They learn the importance of respecting others' differences. Leaders make sure that pupils learn how different beliefs about the world affect the way people live. Pupils have opportunities to visit places of worship and talk with members of different faith communities.

Leaders ensure that pupils learn about how to stay healthy in mind and body. Pupils understand the features of both positive and unhealthy relationships. Pupils also know how to stay safe at home, in the community and when online. They know what to do when concerns arise.

Leaders have planned enriching opportunities for pupils to learn outside of the classroom. For example, pupils value and benefit from the school's curriculum for learning outdoors, during which pupils reflect about themselves and the natural world. Pupils also take trips to places of local and national interest to deepen their understanding of aspects of the curriculum. Leaders put in place opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests, such as sports clubs. Because of the school's additional support, disadvantaged pupils access the full enrichment and extra-curricular provision at the school. Leaders track these pupils' participation and encourage them to take full advantage of what the school offers.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Pupils' achievement in national tests, across the curriculum and over time, is inconsistent. This includes outcomes in the phonics screening check in Year 1, which have been below national averages over time. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils has generally been below national averages.

Pupils' responses in lessons and their work in books shows that pupils have not mastered key areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils' handwriting and spelling are not consistently secure. This means that some pupils are not as well prepared for their next steps in education as they need to be. However, there are signs of improvement. This is particularly noticeable in the way children in Reception Year and pupils in key stage 1 typically learn what they need to read fluently. They also enjoy reading, whether together as a class or independently. Improvements are also noticeable in subjects other than reading,

writing and mathematics. Pupils are remembering more of the key knowledge for these subjects because of the recent improvements made to the curriculum and teaching.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Leaders have recently identified weaknesses in the curriculum and have made substantial changes. These improvements are in the early stages. Leaders' new curriculum is ambitious and well organised but is not yet fully embedded, so it is too soon to see the impact of it. The new curriculum supports pupils to learn in logical steps.

Leaders know that staff need further training to improve the quality of teaching, which is variable. Staff have the subject knowledge they need to teach the curriculum. However, the adaptations they make to meet pupils' needs are not consistently effective. This includes the support for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Similarly, staff do not routinely check what pupils know and can do. This means that staff do not consistently provide timely support when pupils misunderstand or forget something. As a result, pupils develop gaps in their knowledge in key areas of the curriculum, including reading, writing and mathematics.

In the early years, however, staff ensure that children learn the foundations of early reading, writing and mathematics. Staff also extend children's use of language and vocabulary. As a result of their routine checks, staff know when children are struggling with an aspect of the curriculum. They typically provide timely support so that children do not fall behind.

Inclusion

Needs attention 

The support that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive is inconsistent. Leaders have recently revised the school's approach to identifying pupils' needs. Working with parents, carers and external specialists, leaders ensure that staff understand the needs of pupils with SEND. While leaders have recently provided staff with appropriate training, further staff development is needed to ensure that they have the expertise they need to meet pupils' needs.

Leaders have only recently started improving the support for pupils with SEND. They have ambitious goals for these pupils, but improvements are in the early stages.

Leaders check whether the support for pupils with SEND is working. When something is not working well, they make alterations to improve the provision. For example, recently, leaders have made substantial changes to the Hive, the school's internal unit for pupils with communication and interaction needs. While helping these pupils to communicate and develop social skills, the Hive does not yet enable pupils to study the full curriculum well enough.

In the early years, however, staff understand and typically cater effectively for the needs of children with SEND.

For disadvantaged pupils, leaders have an evidence-informed pupil premium strategic plan. The use of additional funding has led to improved attendance for these pupils. However, there is still a gap in attainment between these pupils and their peers.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Leaders and those responsible for governance do not have sufficiently precise information about the quality of the school's provision. As a result, trustees and governors have not held leaders to account for the decline in standards at the school. They are currently developing new approaches to improve their understanding of the school and the quality of governance.

The quality of school leadership is variable. This is because some leaders are not sufficiently skilled to carry out their roles. However, the new school senior leadership team has identified the right priorities for improvement. It has introduced substantial positive changes in recent times. Its actions are improving the school.

Leaders share the trustees' and governors' aim to ensure that vulnerable pupils receive the best possible education. They have invested in new approaches to ensure that the school caters well for all pupils, regardless of need or background.

Leaders have in place a well-considered approach for professional learning. As a result, staff are improving the quality of their work and are optimistic about the school's potential for further development.

Staff morale is very high. They are encouraged by the school's improvements since the start of the school year. Staff appreciate the way leaders manage priorities. As a result, staff are not overloaded with too much at the same time.

Parents and carers have mixed views about the school. Most notice the improvements made at the school. Many parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities expressed concerns about the provision for their children. Leaders are working with parents to secure more effective partnerships so that pupils get the support they need.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Ridgeway Primary Academy is an improving school. Pupils enjoy coming to school, so they attend regularly. They value the well-established positive ethos at the school. Pupils know that learning is important. In lessons, during play time and while moving around the school, they behave well and feel safe. When interacting with each other and with adults at school, they are polite and show manners. Bullying is rare. When it happens, leaders deal with it swiftly and effectively.

Pupils do not achieve as well as they should. The quality of teaching they receive is variable, and, as a result, pupils do not learn the curriculum as well as they could. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils. Pupils with SEND benefit from teachers who know them well and understand their needs. However, the support they receive to help reduce the barriers they face is

inconsistent. Pupils are beginning to benefit from an improved curriculum and greater staff expertise, but these improvements are in the early stages.

The work to improve provision in the early years is further along than the rest of the school. As a result, children in Reception Year learn a well-designed and well-taught curriculum. They start Year 1 ready for the challenges of the key stage 1 curriculum.

Pupils benefit from the school's effective approach to personal development. Pupils learn the importance of serving others in the community, and they are proud of the responsibilities they hold, such as being house captains. They develop their interests and talents in the various clubs, such as in art, music and sport. Competing in sports festivals and competitions supports pupils' sense of belonging as well as their teamwork skills. Pupils appreciate the diverse beliefs and lifestyles found in modern society. Visits, such as to different places of worship, help to bring learning to life.

Next steps

- Trustees, governors and leaders should further improve the way they understand the quality of the school's provision. Trustees and governors should use this information to hold leaders strictly to account.
 - Leaders at all levels should develop the knowledge and skills they need to carry out their roles effectively.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff consistently adapt their teaching to meet the needs of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff routinely check what pupils know and can do, including looking for any gaps in foundational knowledge. When staff identify gaps, they should provide timely support so that pupils learn and achieve what leaders intend.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Learn Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Jane Jones, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Amanda Callear.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with a trustee, a governor, the CEO, trust leaders, the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, subject leaders, teachers, support staff, parents and pupils during the inspection.

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school uses no alternative provision.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. The headteacher and other senior leaders joined the school in August 2025.

Headteacher: Sally Applebee

Lead inspector:

Al Mistrano, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Caroline Evans, Ofsted Inspector

Chrissie Barrington, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 10 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

253

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

315

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

12.25%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

4.74%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

13.44%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	57%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	59%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	62%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	50%	60%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	77%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	74%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	83%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	73%	73%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	70%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	69%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	69%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	70%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	66%	73%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	69%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	69%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	61%	73%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	29%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	13%	44%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	53%	62%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	38%	60%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	53%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	38%	58%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	35%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	25%	59%	Below

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	29%	68%	-38 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	13%	66%	-54 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	53%	80%	-27 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S
2022/23 (final)	38%	78%	-41 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	53%	78%	-25 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	38%	77%	-40 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	35%	80%	-44 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	25%	79%	-54 pp

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	5.6%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.9%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.8%	5.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	10.9%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	13.4%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	13.8%	16.2%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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