

Riverside Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	128077
Local Authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	360114
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Anna Coyle

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	371
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Desmond Brooke
Headteacher	Jim Preston
Date of previous school inspection	20 February 2008
School address	Belmont Avenue Hereford HR2 7JF
Telephone number	01432 274653
Fax number	01432 274653
Email address	admin@riverside.hereford.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2011
Inspection number	360114

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 21 lessons involving 14 teachers. Discussions were held with staff, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, the governors responsible for overseeing literacy and safeguarding, and groups of pupils. The inspectors looked at pupils' books and viewed a wide range of documentation including, school policies, curricular planning, the self-evaluation information, improvement planning, safeguarding and welfare arrangements, and tracking and assessment data about pupils' progress. They also analysed 59 questionnaires from parents and carers, 154 from pupils and 10 from members of staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Do pupils in Years 1 to 6 make enough progress in writing and mathematics, especially the gifted, talented and higher attainers?
- Are teachers' expectations high enough and do they make effective use of assessment to provide sufficient challenge for all groups of pupils, including boys and girls with special educational needs and/or disabilities?
- How effective are governance and the leadership and management of English and mathematics?

Information about the school

This is a newly-built, larger than average sized primary school set in an urban area. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and a few are from minority ethnic families. A small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The main languages spoken at home, other than English, are Polish, Lithuanian and Slovakian. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to the national average. The school provides a breakfast club that is managed by the governing body. It has Healthy Schools status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Riverside Primary School provides a good education for its pupils in its newly-built accommodation and playground areas. The attractive, welcoming and supportive learning environment benefits pupils' learning so that they enjoy coming to school and show good interest in lessons. Staff make sure that pupils are cared for, guided and supported exceptionally well so that they feel safe and valued within an inclusive ethos. Safeguarding procedures are outstanding. This is recognised by parents and carers, many of whom speak highly of the school. Almost all of those who replied to the inspection questionnaire expressed a good level of satisfaction with the school and their children's experiences. One, capturing the views of many, said, 'Riverside Primary School is a happy school with enthusiastic teachers and assistants.'

Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. This means that children make effective progress from very low attainment on entry to Nursery, and they increase their basic skills well. Children do not reach the expected outcomes by the end of the Reception and Year 2 because they have so much ground to make up. Nevertheless, pupils' good progress continues as they move up the school and attainment is close to the national average at the end of Year 6. This represents good achievement by pupils in all groups, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Higher attaining pupils and those who are gifted and talented also achieve well because they are given challenging work that stretches them. Progress in mathematics is good because pupils have plenty of opportunities to apply their numerical skills in problem solving. The school's good focus on raising attainment in English has benefited pupils' learning, although teachers sometimes talk for too long at the start of lessons. Even so, staff have been particularly successful in focusing on the development of reading skills to good effect. Progress in writing is slightly slower because pupils have many gaps in their knowledge of grammar and punctuation. In addition, handwriting is too variable, and pupils are not encouraged to use pens in the upper junior classes, only pencils.

Much has been done to improve the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection and so most is now good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and their academic achievement. Marking is good in pupils' assessment books but it is inconsistent in other books and does not clearly identify the next steps in learning. This means that pupils do not always know what to do to improve their work. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together. They provide a good curriculum and a wide range of after-school activities that promote pupils' independent learning effectively. As a result, pupils take on responsibilities willingly, showing respect and behaving well. Levels of attendance are rising steadily and are currently broadly average. The school's links with the local community are supported by a good understanding of the context in which the school operates. However, the school has not conducted an audit for promoting

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

community cohesion and so its planning does not in detail identify how it will build on its links with local, national and international communities.

The headteacher leads the school well with good support from the deputy headteacher and the senior managers. Careful data management and reliable tracking information help leaders and managers to keep a watchful eye on the school's performance. The Chair of the Governing Body is a regular visitor and is very passionate about the school and supportive of staff. A small group of governors are closely involved with the school in aspects such as literacy, safeguarding and finance. However, some governors do not attend meetings regularly and are not sufficiently involved with the school. Nevertheless, the school has made some notable improvements over the last three years and the strategies to tackle weaknesses are proving successful. The school's overall effectiveness has risen from satisfactory to good and its view of itself is accurate. Its successful track record shows that the school is well placed to build on its strengths and it has a good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress and raise attainment in writing by:
 - making sure that lessons get off to a swift start
 - increasing pupils' knowledge of grammar and punctuation
 - encouraging pupils to write neatly in pen as soon as they become skilled in using pencils.
 - Make teachers' marking more consistent so that pupils all know what to do next to improve their work.
- Extend the role of the governing body by:
 - encouraging all governors to attend meetings more regularly and be more actively involved with the school
 - conducting an audit of how well the school promotes community cohesion and improving its action plan to show how it will build on local, national and international links.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils make good progress from low starting points on entry, particularly in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. They work hard and attain standards that are close to the national average by the end of Year 6, especially in reading and mathematics. The improvement in the Year 6 test results over the last two years shows that the school is taking successful action to tackle the weaknesses identified in writing. Pupils enjoy their lessons and respond well to challenging activities. Lesson observations and the work seen in pupils' books show that many in Year 6 are working at levels that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Higher attainers and gifted and talented pupils do particularly well and attain above average standards. Pupils work effectively, independently and collaboratively. This was seen in a Year 2 literacy lesson where pupils wrote sentences that included connectives with interesting adjectives, known as 'wow' words, to describe 'Horrid Henry'. They generated plenty of ideas and made good progress

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

because they were actively engaged in the lesson. Pupils who are vulnerable because of their circumstances and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. This is because they receive effective support from teachers and from skilled teaching assistants to help them learn. Pupils who learn English as an additional language and those from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve well because staff make sure that support is focused well on their needs.

Pupils are proud of their new school and are enthusiastic about many aspects of its work. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils reflect on aspects of learning in assemblies on themes such as 'Patience'. They are polite and well mannered and demonstrate a good awareness of how to stay safe. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and taking regular exercise. They behave well and say that there is always someone who will listen to them if they are worried about anything. The school council provides a good forum for pupils to express their views and make useful contributions to the school and local community, for example, by raising money for worthwhile causes. Attendance is broadly average. It has risen since the time of the last inspection, although it is adversely affected by the persistent absence of a few pupils and families taking holidays during term-time.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

How effective is the provision?

Learning is characterised by good relationships between teachers and pupils. Teachers have high expectations and want the best for the pupils. They make good use of skilful questioning to extend pupils' thinking and encourage them to work independently. In the very best lessons, pupils make rapid progress because teaching is lively and tasks are challenging. This was seen in a mathematics lesson in Year 3 when the pupils made excellent progress in using Venn diagrams. Staff use assessment information well to guide their planning and set clear learning objectives, although teachers sometimes talk for too long when introducing learning. Effective use is made of assessment information to track pupils' progress towards their targets, identify pupils who may be falling behind and provide additional support where necessary. Pupils are given useful pointers to help them in the literacy assessment books. However, there are some inconsistencies in marking, which does not always identify the next steps for pupils to know how to improve their work.

The curriculum provides pupils with a good range of learning experiences. Pupils' good progress in literacy and numeracy is aided by plenty of opportunities for them to apply their skills across the curriculum in subjects such as science and history. The curriculum is enhanced through the good use of computers and a wide range of extra-curricular activities such as football and street-dancing. French is taught across all year groups which gives pupils an extra dimension to learning. These activities contribute effectively to pupils' enjoyment, as do trips and residential visits.

The care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding. The school's strong focus on providing excellent pastoral care and forging close links with parents and carers help staff to cater for all pupils. All adults know the pupils and their families very well. Pupils who have special educational needs are very well supported, as are those with disabilities. Close attention is given to supporting children whose circumstances make them vulnerable to promote their well-being. The Parent Support Adviser provides families with a great deal of help and support and is much appreciated by them. The vast majority say that the school is very caring. Pupils are well cared for in the breakfast club and after-school activities, which are well attended and which promote pupils' personal development. Transition arrangements to the secondary schools are handled well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

How effective are leadership and management?

With the help of the new deputy headteacher and the senior management team, the headteacher is successfully driving forward improvement. As a result, the school is firmly set on an upward path with a clear sense of direction and ambition. Leadership and management of English and mathematics are effective. Through the good monitoring of teaching and learning and very careful tracking of pupils' progress, the school has identified its strengths and weaknesses accurately. This has led to the gap closing between the attainment of pupils in this school and those of other schools. The provision is enhanced effectively by the school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination. For instance, its inclusive nature and good partnerships with a number of agencies support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the needs of those from a range of backgrounds.

Parents and carers are pleased with the education provided by the school and they receive a good range of information. The school has worked well with a designated member of staff, known as the Parent Support Adviser, and a governor to link with families and ensure that safeguarding procedures are of high quality. All staff are very well trained and checked exceedingly carefully to make sure that they are suitable to work with children. As a result, the school has the confidence of parents and carers. One parent summed up the views of many by saying, 'Safety at the school is outstanding.'

The governing body takes its statutory responsibilities seriously and is well informed about the school through regular reports from the headteacher. The Chair is highly dedicated to the school. He and a small core of governors work hard to provide support and challenge to staff and they have a keen interest in the school's performance. However, some of the other governors are not sufficiently proactive and do not attend meetings regularly. This means that the work of many falls on the shoulders of a few. The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is satisfactory. Links with other schools and agencies are effective and there are good links with a school in Uganda to provide a global perspective. These encourage pupils to explore the range and diversity of culture in the United Kingdom and beyond. However, the school does not have an audit or a clear action plan to help it promote community cohesion. The school provides good value for money.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly in the Nursery and Reception classes because they are supported well to help them adjust to school life. Routines are well-established so that children feel safe and enjoy learning. A strong emphasis on personal, social and emotional development means that children soon begin to share toys and play happily together. They are well behaved and polite to each other and to adults, and keen to attend every day whether part-time in the Nursery or full-time in the Reception classes. As a result of the good teaching, children make good progress. They do not reach the expected levels by the start of Year 1 because they have so much ground to make up. Even so, the teaching of letters and sounds receives good attention and children make good progress in acquiring early reading and writing skills. They learn to use numbers up to five when counting on and back, and the most-able children can count beyond.

Caring, kindly adults watch over the children vigilantly and make sure that they are exceptionally safe. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together as an enthusiastic team to provide a stimulating environment for the children. Highly colourful, exciting displays capture children's interest and provide good talking points for them. For example, children's attractive paintings and models of daffodils have been the result of thinking about 'Signs of Spring'. The recent visit to a garden centre was followed up successfully by a good focus on creative and scientific development. This enabled children to discover and name parts of a flowering plant such as the stem, petal, leaf and root. All staff have a secure understanding of how children learn and they provide a wide range of adult-led and free-choice activities, indoors and outside. This means that children have plenty of opportunities to develop their imaginative play, learn about the world around them and increase their physical skills. The good leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage means that welfare requirements are met in full and the provision is managed well within a positive learning environment. There is no covered outdoor area but the staff have

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

rightly identified this as an aspect for development. The school's brand new accommodation and its safely enclosed outdoor space and plentiful supply of resources benefit children's learning well.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires are happy with the school. They agree that their children make good progress. There were no significant concerns, although very small number would like more help to support their children's learning at home. The inspection evidence shows that the school provides parents and carers with a good range of information about the work their children are doing and how they can be helped at home.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Riverside Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 59 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 371 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	59	24	41	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	40	68	18	31	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	31	53	24	41	3	5	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	56	18	31	5	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	32	54	23	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	49	23	39	4	7	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	54	25	42	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	21	36	27	46	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	42	30	51	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	47	22	37	2	3	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	47	25	42	3	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	26	44	28	47	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	32	54	24	41	3	5	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



18 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Riverside Primary School, Hereford, HR2 7JF

Thank you for the help you gave us with the recent inspection of your school. We spoke to many of you and you were really helpful and friendly. These are some of the things we found.

You go to a good school where the children in the Nursery and Reception classes have a good start to their education.

Most of you enjoy school, listen carefully to what your teachers have to say and you are willing to work hard in your lessons.

You learn to play well together and to help each other.

Your good behaviour is a considerable help to your teachers because it helps them to concentrate on making your work interesting and helping you to learn.

You understand the importance of being healthy: you eat sensibly and take part in physical activities regularly.

Adults at school look after you exceptionally well so that you feel safe and happy.

Your headteacher, all the other staff and the governing body are determined to make things even better.

We have asked the school to do three things.

Speed up your progress in writing so that you reach higher standards of attainment.

Make teachers' marking more consistent so that you all know what to do next to improve your work.

Improve the role of the governing body so that they are more involved in the work of the school.

All of you can help yourselves by always working hard, especially in writing.

Yours sincerely

Dr Anna Coyle
Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.