

# Riverside Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100808
<b>Local Authority</b>	London Borough of Southwark
<b>Inspection number</b>	376465
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 October 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mehar Brar

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	301
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter John
<b>Headteacher</b>	Wendy Mortimer-Lee and Jose Lewis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	Janeway Street London SE16 4PS
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. In total, 21 lessons or part lessons were observed. Ten teachers were seen teaching, along with teaching assistants. Meetings were held with the staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors evaluated the responses of parents and carers in the 138 questionnaires returned, and the responses of staff in 22 questionnaires. Discussions were held with groups of pupils in addition to the analysis of their 101 questionnaires. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the improvement plans, policies, samples of pupils' work and assessment information.

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

- What the school does so well to achieve high results by the end of Year 6.
- The quality of learning and progress of pupils currently in the school, especially in reading and writing in Key Stage 1 and in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- How the curriculum, and teaching, enable all pupils to achieve highly in national tests.
- How effectively leaders are supporting learning throughout the school and the impact of this on the school's capacity to improve.

## Information about the school

Riverside is a larger than average school. Almost half the pupils are of White British heritage, and the other half of the school is made up of an extremely diverse range of cultural groups. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is more than double the national average, within which the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is high. A large majority of these pupils have social and emotional difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than average. The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of a Nursery and two Reception classes. The school has received the Activemark, Eco-Schools Silver Certificate and Healthy Schools Award. Since the last inspection, there have been considerable changes to staffing.

**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?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Riverside is an outstanding school. It meets the needs of its pupils very effectively, so that they are exceptionally well prepared for their future lives. One parent reflected the views of many by saying, 'The teachers really care about the children being happy as well as doing well academically'. Inspectors endorse this view.

The consultative and focused approach of the two co-headteachers promotes determination and unwavering commitment, throughout the school, to ensure the success of every pupil. Outstanding care, guidance and support, when combined with good teaching and learning and a very well organised flexible curriculum, enables pupils to reach high levels of attainment by the end of Year 6.

Sensitive and focused support helps pupils to feel outstandingly safe and secure while quickly developing a very strong sense of self-belief. The school is rigorous about ensuring that all pupils receive an equal opportunity to achieve well; both of these features are thus outstanding. There are no differences in achievement between any groups of pupils. All pupils feel very safe in school as a result of outstanding care, guidance and support. This promotes outstanding behaviour from all pupils, and a happy and highly inclusive school.

The outstanding curriculum provides opportunities to learn about issues and perspectives important to pupils, sometimes at the request of pupils. The school helps pupils understand, for example, local community tensions and global disparities. An inclusive and reflective ethos within a harmonious community, where pupils are curious about the world and want to understand its beauty and difficulties, demonstrates their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Outstanding partnerships with others enhance the curriculum, pupils' cultural development and the care provided for their individual needs.

Senior leaders, including the governing body, have embedded high ambitions for all pupils in the school, and involved middle leaders in developing and implementing well-planned improvements. Leaders have managed to sustain, for the fourth year in a row, high attainment by the end of Year 6. Attainment by the end of Year 2 is improving steadily and is now broadly in line with the national average, although levels of attainment in writing continue to be stubbornly low by the end of Year 2. As such, this remains a key area for development, which is linked to ensuring that children make more rapid progress in using letters and sounds (phonics) in the Early Years Foundation Stage and have wider opportunities for writing. Writing is also a

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whole-school focus in the drive to help even more pupils reach the very highest levels of attainment. Leaders' commitment to pupils' wider personal development is evident in their outstanding awareness of how to adopt healthy lifestyles.

Since the last inspection, outcomes and the overall effectiveness of the school have improved from good to become outstanding and the school as a whole has moved up a grade boundary. Senior leaders combine clarity of vision with carefully considered actions. They analyse information about pupils' progress and their wider development to identify what could be improved. Their evaluation of school effectiveness is good. Leaders check the quality of teaching but are not yet as tightly focused on checking pupils' learning. While some lessons are outstanding, leaders are ambitious to ensure that more are at this level in the school as a whole. The Early Years Foundation Stage has recently gone through a considerable amount of change and staff are correctly working to make learning as exciting and challenging as possible; this remains a focus of development. Taking all of these different features into account, the school's capacity to improve is good.

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

- Build on the work already started to enhance the quality of teaching and learning to become outstanding by:
  - increasing independent learning in the school as a whole and especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage
  - maintaining the whole school focus on writing, especially ensuring that younger children are able to use phonics to aid the development of both reading and writing
  - check the quality of learning more rigorously when monitoring lessons.

### Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**1**

Pupils' outstanding achievement is underpinned by good learning and very effective one-to-one and group support. This is further aided by pupils having interesting and/or challenging activities to do. In the words of one pupil, 'It's fun – you don't even know you are learning, you are just having fun.' Pupils work very hard in lessons and they keenly work together. Their outstanding behaviour helps them to respect others and listen attentively. They enjoy activities, as seen when Year 6 were building the tallest tower possible out of spaghetti and marshmallows to support an egg. The task gave them opportunities to direct their own learning, manage time, resources and each other. They could devise their own solutions and learn how to interpret design briefs. In the school as a whole, there is not yet enough of this kind of outstanding learning because sometimes structured teaching limits opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills to very best effect.

Pupils often feel school is a sanctuary from their home lives. As a result of how the school helps pupils learn and develop, it is not unusual for all Year 6 pupils to reach the expected Level 4 in English and mathematics. This level of attainment was

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already evident when pupils evaluated texts, data and film footage to gather and interpret evidence about a crime. Almost half of all pupils attain the higher Level 5 in mathematics, and over two thirds gain this level in English. There is a concerted effort to help an even greater proportion of the most-able pupils to do as well as possible in writing, as pupils tend to do better in reading than writing.

The quality of learning for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is good because teaching ensures systematic learning. Progress for this group, like others, is not yet outstanding, as there is a little unevenness about how well pupils make progress in some year groups. Pupils know their targets and are very keen to improve. Those learning English as an additional language make at least good progress. Typically, they benefit from plenty of support where effective visual and practical activities help to extend their language skills.

Pupils needing help with reading benefit from targeted small group work. These sessions ensure that pupils practise skills and develop confidence. However, while pupils do well in the long run, there is room for more rigour and pace in the teaching of letters and sounds earlier on in pupils’ school life in order to avoid the extensive amount of catch-up and consolidation that is currently needed later in the school. Work has securely begun on this, for example in Years 1 and 2.

Learning in the arts is strong. For example, the designs for hats, bags and shoes were of high quality and inspired by the work of several famous designers. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed working with The Royal Ballet School, The Design Museum and The Globe Theatre to make learning fun, challenging and meaningful. Through guidance about healthy eating and opportunities for sport, exercise, dance and outdoor learning, pupils are taking their learning about healthy living home to their families, which is very impressive. The school has consequently been successful in achieving its Healthy Schools Award and Activemark.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	1
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>

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

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<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Booster classes and many extra support activities are excellent features of the curriculum that underpin pupils' outstanding achievement. Displays around the school show the very interesting range of activities. Visits are numerous and pupils use the outside grounds very effectively to enrich their learning. This was evident during the exciting cross-curricular projects, such as murder mysteries. The anti-bullying workshops were very impressive, contributing much to why pupils feel so safe. Pupils gain a great deal from the wide range of clubs. A cross-curricular study of construction principles shows the richness of the curriculum and enables pupils to achieve very well in different subjects beyond the basics. Pupils are encouraged to contribute ideas. For example, they requested that the study of the Second World War included more detail about the perspective of the Jewish community. Pupils have also taken part in an extensive study about the recent London riots. The school has the Eco-award for such things as the upkeep of a piece of land belonging to the community; they use this land to learn about sustainability issues.

Teachers and leaders identify pupils' difficulties and social and emotional needs early, and provide highly effective targeted support to help pupils continue to learn and develop. Progress in lessons is well supported by imaginative teaching that is structured and paced to engage pupils' interest and effort. For example, Year 3 pupils used role play to express emotions of characters they had just learnt about in a story read together. Teachers ask thought-provoking questions, to aid their assessments about pupils' learning, but they do not always develop these well enough to promote deeper independent thinking. This is a factor in why teaching is not outstanding overall. Some lessons have a tremendous buzz of excitement but some lessons miss the 'wow' factor that makes independent learning outstanding.

The school knows its pupils as individuals. It uses this knowledge to ensure that pupils feel safe, confident and happy in school, including the most vulnerable pupils. The school works closely with their families, and other partners such as the school counsellor, to ensure that both academic and social and emotional support is readily available. The foundations laid by this care build attitudes and relationships that enable pupils to achieve very well. Strong relationships with parents and carers, and a school ethos that welcomes pupils into a safe and caring environment, enables good attendance by almost all pupils.

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*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

Both of the co-headteachers, together with an active governing body, have helped develop a clear vision for the school. This is fully supported by all staff who work with commitment and enthusiasm to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed at the highest level. Discrimination at any level is not tolerated and this helps to make this an exceptionally racially harmonious school, where pupils show immense respect for each other and the staff.

Self-evaluation is effective. School leaders at all levels are beginning to evaluate learning as well as teaching but there is more to do to make this outstanding. They have successfully developed the skills of teachers to teach reading, with good impact on reading attainment in 2011 by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This has necessitated a lot of catch-up in pupils' phonic skills, as they were low when pupils joined Year 1.

The governing body provides good support to the school and ensures that ambitious targets for improvement are set and achieved, and that challenging questions are asked about the work of the school. Safeguarding procedures are well developed. They meet all government guidelines. Regular child-protection training, and updating of policies and procedures such as risk assessments, help protect pupils.

Community cohesion is good. The school has analysed its context and understands the local community well. Pupils understand what it means to be part of a diverse community reflecting different faiths and cultures. Links with other schools in the United Kingdom, and links with schools internationally, are growing. Links with the local community are well established. The school has evaluated the impact of its work. This has yet to establish itself within a cycle of improvement to lift community cohesion to become outstanding in the future.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the</b>	<b>2</b>



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<b>school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	
<b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Caring staff help children settle into the Nursery happily. The close partnership with parents and carers ensures that children are soon known as unique individuals. Throughout the Nursery and Reception classes, children are very quickly helped to learn how to behave well, follow routines and gain the social, emotional and personal skills that are needed to continue learning well. Welfare procedures are effective in ensuring that children are safe and well cared for.

During the inspection, children’s learning, progress and overall achievement, as seen, were satisfactory. Staff actively promoted the development of speaking and listening skills in a suitable way. For example, the children thoroughly enjoyed the story, ‘We’re Going on a Bear Hunt’, and soon understood the pattern in the story and joined in, which is good practice. However, opportunities for shared reading with the teacher were missed. Teachers’ often good questioning helps the children to use longer sentences. For example, when children explained how sticky mud might feel. Unfortunately, children were not subsequently able to explore real sticky mud, to support further learning.

Leaders have begun to drive a greater emphasis on teaching letters and sound (phonics). The teaching of this is satisfactory, but does not always allow the children enough opportunities to link their learning in a wide range of activities throughout the day. Children are interested in writing, although the range of resources and activities to promote this to very best effect are underdeveloped. Teachers are helping the children to listen well but on occasions this means that they are sitting on the carpet for too long. This limits the time available for independent, freely chosen activities. Staff are developing the outside learning opportunities and are aware that there is more to do.

The setting is led by two senior staff, who are experienced Early Years practitioners. Currently neither of them are based permanently in either the Nursery or Reception class. This is largely due to one of the leaders also being the Assistant Headteacher, and the other also being responsible for Years 1 and 2. At the beginning of this term, there were many changes in both teachers and assistants. Some staff are new to

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teaching the youngest children. Added to this, the accommodation has been subject to major alterations in order to create a single Early Years Foundation Stage block. Senior leaders have not yet monitored the quality of teaching and learning this term beyond informal visits and through evaluation of planning. They do, however, have a clear vision about what needs to be done to restore past good provision and are busily working to extend teaching skills and enrich learning opportunities.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

There was a higher than average response rate to the questionnaires. The vast majority spoke very highly about the school. A typical comment expressed considerable satisfaction when saying, 'My children seem to love going to school.' Parents and carers are very happy that their children enjoy school, feel safe and that the school is led and managed effectively. They value the partnership the school develops with parents and carers. A few parents and carers indicated that the school could manage behaviour more effectively, consider the views of parents and carers more than at present and help parents and carers better to support their child's learning. Inspectors found the school manages behaviour very effectively. The school is rightly proud of its partnership with parents and carers, and is committed to making this partnership even stronger.

### 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 138 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 301 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	103	75	35	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	99	72	38	28	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	93	67	39	28	3	2	3	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	95	69	36	26	5	4	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	99	72	39	28	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	85	62	42	30	6	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	90	65	46	33	1	1	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)	84	61	39	28	4	3	1	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	83	60	46	30	5	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	78	57	48	35	6	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	70	51	51	37	7	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	96	70	41	30	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	100	72	35	25	1	1	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



6 October 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Riverside Primary School, London SE16 4PS**

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed meeting you and speaking with you. We think that you go to a very caring school that helps you learn well. We know from the surveys you returned to us that we are agreeing with your views about the school. We have described your school as outstanding. By the time children leave your school, their results are often fantastic! This is because your teachers do their best to make learning enjoyable and you learn new skills well. Adults listen to you. If anything is making it difficult for you to learn, your teachers make sure that they give you all the help you need. All these things together help you want to work hard to learn as much as you can, and sometimes more than you think you can. We were very impressed by your art and music work and in the way that you have the chance to learn about many interesting things about the world in which you live. The partnerships with many people outside school help you to have many interesting and challenging activities to do.

You have a lovely school. Everybody cares for each other, and wants each other to do well. You try to keep yourselves healthy, help your families learn healthy habits and help keep the health of our environment. Keep up the good work!

Both your headteachers, and all the staff in the school, want this school to be improving all the time. We have agreed with them to make your school even better in the following ways.

- Look even more carefully at how well you learn in lessons so that even more lessons are outstanding.
- Keep improving writing, especially helping younger children with this by making faster progress in the way that they understand and use letters and sounds.
- Making sure that you do even more independent activities, especially in the Nursery and Reception classes.

It was a pleasure to meet you and I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mehar Brar  
Lead inspector

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