

Riverside Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104996
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	377156
Inspection dates	4–5 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Kevin Johnson

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	M Allen
Headteacher	G Lahive
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The team observed 19 lessons involving 11 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of parents and carers, pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at national assessment data and the school's own assessments, samples of pupils' work, school policies, including the school's self-evaluation and minutes of the governing body meetings. Also taken into account were 19 questionnaires returned from parents and carers as well as those completed by pupils and staff.

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

- Has pupils' attainment continued to rise since the last inspection.
- Are teachers' expectations high enough and do they challenge more-able pupils sufficiently?
- Does the school have realistic targets and strategies in place to improve pupils' attendance.
- Is monitoring and evaluation by leaders sufficiently embedded to promote continuing improvement.

Information about the school

Most pupils in this average-sized primary school are of White British heritage. A large majority are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above the national average. There is a specially funded unit within the school for up to eight pupils who have specific learning needs. A significant number of pupils join or leave the school at times other than the normal times.

The school has achieved the Activemark and Healthy Schools status and has gained a Family Works Award.

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

The school has moved forward since its previous inspection and has brought about improvements in key areas of its work. Strong leadership from within the school and equally committed support from the governing body have moved Riverside from a satisfactory to a good school.

Pupils enjoy school and achieve well. Their personal qualities, overall, are good and they have outstanding awareness of how to keep themselves and others safe. Good care, guidance and support ensure that they behave well, contribute willingly to the everyday life of the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 shows steady improvement. Although attainment is average, when results are taken over the past three years, the signs are that it has improved in the most recent national tests. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 make good progress, including those who attend the specially funded unit. This is because the school has developed effective and sustainable strategies to track pupils' progress and intervene quickly when support is needed or targets need to be amended. These measures, in turn, mean that teaching and learning in both key stages is good and, at times, outstanding.

Children enter nursery at generally well below expected stages of development for their age. They are given a satisfactory start and make steady progress in some areas of learning. Although a small number are more advanced, many are still below expected levels in communication, language and literacy skills, mathematical and some aspects of their personal social and emotional development when they enter Year 1. School leaders are aware of the need to boost progress for children in Nursery and Reception classes. Although some action has been taken, it is relatively recent and has not shown a clear impact at this stage.

Leaders have monitored the school's progress in improving the quality of teaching rigorously over recent years and have a clear and accurate view of its successes and areas for improvement. Improved systems for assessing pupils progress have helped to secure stronger teaching and raise expectations of staff and pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. Attainment has risen and pupils thrive on the challenges and richness of their learning, which the improved curriculum offers. The school has amply demonstrated good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve provision and progress for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - planning more opportunities for children in reception to learn independently through exploration and play both indoors and in the outdoor area
 - making sure that next steps in children's learning are based securely on observations and evaluation of their individual progress
 - providing more opportunities for children in the Nursery and Reception classes to share activities, learn and develop skills together.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils learn well in lessons because they are attentive and well behaved. They enjoy their lessons, particularly when, for instance, the teacher becomes a 'witch' to set the scene for writing. They rise to the interesting challenges provided. Pupils work well with one another in groups to share their knowledge and skills effectively. This benefits pupils with varying abilities and increases confidence and independence. A clear colour-coded marking scheme informs pupils about their progress and shows precisely what they need to do to improve their next piece of work. Pupils take pride in their work and most of it is presented neatly. Their achievement is good.

Current attainment in Year 6 is average in English and mathematics and improving. There has been steady improvement over time, particularly in the numbers of pupils who attain above the expected level for their age. Challenge for more-able pupils has also increased recently at Key stage 1. There too, pupils' attainment has risen in reading, writing and mathematics and more pupils reach the higher levels in these subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of good use of assessment and individual learning plans, which pin-point exactly what pupils need to achieve in order to progress. Support within lessons and in small groups is good and well matched to abilities. The school can show clear examples of good, and sometimes, rapid progress made by pupils who join the school, for example, mid-way through a key stage. Their needs are quickly assessed and effective support helps them to settle in and progress well. Pupils who attend the specially funded unit thrive under the exceptional care and teaching they receive. Expectations are high. At the time of the inspection, two pupils were being re-integrated into mainstream classes because of the excellent progress they had made.

Pupils say that they feel very safe in school. They are confident that there is always an adult on hand when needed. Playground relationships are harmonious and pupils strongly oppose bullying and racist behaviour. Pupils fully understand potential danger spots outside school. Maintaining a sensible diet and plenty of exercise are high on the pupils' agenda. Some use the 'walking bus', or cycle to school and the good attendance at sports clubs after school helps to justify their Activemark. The school council ensures that all have a say in school matters. Other duties undertaken, such as being part of the recycling time, or being a play leader or a lunchtime helper all help the school to run more smoothly. Given their good personal

qualities, improved skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, and broadly average and improving attendance, pupils are well prepared with the skills they will need to secure their economic well-being.

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	1
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching overall, accounts for pupils' good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. Teachers plan their lessons very well and ensure that pupils, whatever their ability, have suitably challenging work. Effective use of resources, including the use of laptops and electronic white-boards successfully brings lessons to life. There is good pace to learning. Pupils are engaged well because in most lessons teachers successfully motivate pupils to support one another in small groups. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally strong. This helps them to ask probing questions when assessing pupils' understanding. It was especially noticeable in two mathematics lessons, where excellent questioning quickly increased pupils' understanding of the properties of shapes. Teaching assistants are a valued part of the teaching team and contribute well to pupils' learning and progress through their skilled and sensitive support. Occasionally, the effectiveness of the partnership between the teacher and teaching assistant is outstanding, for example, in one lesson where pupils made excellent progress when learning the sounds that different groups of letters make. Teachers use assessment well to set the right targets and maintain high expectations. Marking is consistently good across all subjects. Occasionally the time for pupils' independent learning in lessons is shortened because the teacher's input is too long.

The engaging curriculum provides a good variety of learning opportunities and enables pupils to achieve well. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop writing skills across different subjects, and mathematics is made relevant because teachers often put learning into a 'real life' context. A very strong feature is the enrichment that pupils gain through themed topic work. A good example of this is the history study of the *Titanic*, in which pupils dressed as passengers and attempted

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

to capture the feeling of life on board. Pupils foster their personal skills and interests through a good selection of after-school activities and enjoy, particularly, residential visits, which benefit their personal and social development. Links with local schools and colleges contribute productively to learning opportunities for gifted and talented pupils, as well as some who need specific learning support.

Parents and carers unanimously endorse pupils' views that they are well cared for in school. They are happy with the information they receive about their children's progress and well-being and with the supportive arrangement for those joining the school or transferring to the next. The quality of care and support provided for pupils considered to be the potentially most vulnerable due to their circumstances is exceptional. Every effort is made to include those pupils and their families to ensure they make best possible progress. The continuous efforts of the home-school link workers are showing positive results in helping to improve attendance overall. There are good links with outside support agencies to ensure that pupils with additional needs have the help and support they need. Pupils' attitudes and good behaviour are a clear measure of the guidance they receive in school.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Led by the dedicated headteacher, the senior leadership team is strongly motivated to improving the school. They have harnessed the full commitment of staff members and the support of the governing body and parents and carers. Much time has been given to analysing outcomes and putting successful strategies in place to promote good improvement. Teaching and learning are managed well. Astute appointments to the teaching staff have strengthened the team and rigorous monitoring has secured overall good teaching. Leaders have a good overview of their work and recognise the need for continued focus on provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage in order to improve the school further.

The governing body provides good support and challenge for the school and is fully committed to its future success. Its members share good quality information and question outcomes. There are systems in place for monitoring visits and link governors liaise well with staff members to help their evaluation of the school's progress. Measures in place to ensure the safeguarding and well-being of pupils are good. Policies and procedures are updated regularly. Relevant training ensures that all concerned are fully aware of their responsibilities. All risk assessments and checks are properly undertaken.

School leaders challenge all forms of discrimination strongly. With all staff, they are ambitious for every child. To that, end individual progress is monitored closely to ensure equality of opportunity. The school's good work with parents and carers and

links with other schools enhance those opportunities for pupils. Community cohesion is promoted well. The school has a high profile within the local community because of links established, with religious and arts groups. The good understanding of different cultures, and their value to society, which pupils gain through the school curriculum are boosted by what they learn through email links with children and workers in a Cambodian school.

These are the grades for the 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	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

There is satisfactory provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teachers and other adults interact with children well to further their learning. For example, when children were occupying a 'cave', which had been constructed in the outdoor area, the teacher joined in the game to stimulate their play. Teachers plan for activities led by adults and those which children choose for themselves across all of the areas for learning, but too often activities set up outdoors do not reflect what has gone on in the classroom. This results in children not working as purposefully as they might to practise skills and learn independently. There are too few occasions when children from both classes mix for activities whereby they are able develop good language and social skills and learn from one another. Provision for children's welfare is satisfactory. Essential requirements are met and adults are watchful over children's well-being and know them well. Children clearly enjoy their time in school and chat confidently to adults. Assessments are generally accurate, but adults miss some opportunities to capture and record those precise moments when new learning takes place. This limits the possibilities for teachers to plan next the steps that individual children need to take in their learning, and to match work accordingly. Teachers welcome parents and carers and generally foster trusting relationship with them, encouraging them when possible to contribute to process of their children's learning and development.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	3
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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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Views of parents and carers

A very small minority of parents and carers returned completed questionnaires. The vast majority of those were entirely positive. Some praised the school for its teaching and leadership and for the way children made progress. The very few concerns raised were discussed with school leaders while ensuring that parents and carers anonymity was fully protected.

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 **19** completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 229 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	79	2	11	1	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	84	2	11	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	16	84	2	11	0	0	1	5
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	79	3	16	1	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	15	79	4	21	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	74	4	21	1	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	12	63	7	37	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)	11	58	5	26	2	11	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	84	3	16	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	53	9	47	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	63	6	32	1	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	14	74	4	21	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	95	0	0	1	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	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 is 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).

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"> ■ 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.



6 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Riverside Primary School, Wallasey, CH44 6QW

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your school recently. Talking to you was very pleasant not just because of your politeness and good manners, but also because you told us a great deal about your school. We agree with you there are some exciting things going on and can see why you enjoy school so much. Not everyone can boast that their teacher is a 'witch' and get away with it!

We also found out a few good things for ourselves. The standards you reach in English and mathematics have improved well. You make good progress because your teachers make lessons fun. There is some exciting topic work and your art work is impressive. The grown-ups in school take good care of you and you behave well and take good care of one another. All-in-all, Riverside is a good school which has improved well since it was last inspected.

Nevertheless, it could still be better. To make that happen we have asked your school leaders to improve some things in the Nursery and Reception classes to help children get off to a better start. We have asked that nursery and reception children join in activities together so they can learn more from each other. Also, that children from the Reception class have much more time for outdoor play where they can continue their indoor work independently and learn new skills. Finally, we have asked that the activities which are planned always match exactly the skills which children need to learn next.

Yours sincerely,

Kevin Johnson
Lead Inspector

