

River View Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	135281
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	393496
Inspection dates	29–30 May 2012
Lead inspector	Brian Cartwright HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	290
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kevin Downing
Headteacher	Christine Bell
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2011
School address	Suffolk Road Burton-on-Trent Staffordshire DE15 9HR
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Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	29–30 May 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Brian Cartwright

Her Majesty's Inspector

Alan Jones

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out at no notice. Inspectors observed 14 lessons taught by 13 teachers, met with groups of pupils, teachers, and parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' work, records of pupil assessments, school self-evaluation documents, governing body minutes, and notes of local authority monitoring visits.

Information about the school

The school is of average size for a primary school. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. The proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language is below average and is increasing. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is above average and the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average. Last year, the school did not meet government floor standards, which are the minimum standards expectations for attainment and progress. When the school was inspected in February 2011, it was judged to require special measures.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. River View is now a satisfactory school that is improving rapidly. It is not yet good because good teaching has not been consistently in place for long enough for pupils to make better than average progress overall. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Attainment in Year 6 has risen from well below average in 2011, to be broadly in line now. Pupils are making the expected progress over the course of Key Stage 2. Achievement is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.
- Good leadership has successfully tackled previous weaknesses in teaching through robust performance management processes and has established a common sense of purpose amongst staff.
- Behaviour and safety of pupils has improved since the previous inspection because teaching is now engaging pupils with their learning much more effectively. Behaviour is now satisfactory, but there remain occasional shortcomings. The frequency of those incidents has reduced sharply since last year and such behaviour rarely occurs in lessons. Pupils say they feel safe and their attendance has improved to average.
- The best teaching is particularly noteworthy for its emphasis on allowing pupils to discover for themselves natural phenomena, or solve problems, or become engrossed in their reading and writing. The pupils have time to develop their imagination, and good opportunities to share their work to the class. Some lesson activities are not always pitched well to individual pupils’ prior learning. Marking and feedback to pupils is generally good for

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English and mathematics, but not consistent across all subjects.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Consolidate the recent improvements in teaching and learning throughout the school so that all pupils achieve well consistently over time, by ensuring that all lessons have tasks that match the learning needs of each pupil.
- Ensure all pupils' written work is consistently marked with corrections, praise and personalised steps that each pupil should take to improve it and provide time in lessons for pupils to respond.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The academic attainment of pupils has improved substantially since the previous inspection. The current Year 6 is securely on track to exceed national floor targets in standards and in progress. Children join the Nursery at a stage of development below that expected for their age. They get off to a good start that is sustained through the Early Years Foundation Stage. In Key Stage 1, most pupils are now making good progress, so that pupils are attaining broadly average standards by Year 2. In previous years, progress in Key Stage 2 has been slower, but recent improvements are now helping pupils to achieve at least satisfactorily by the time they leave the school. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make satisfactory or better progress and their standards are also rising quickly, closing the gap on their peers. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do well in Key Stage 1, but there are some who are not making enough progress at Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics.

Pupils are learning to read well in their early years at school and have reached nationally expected levels by the end of Key Stage 1. However, in previous years, reading and writing was poorly developed for many pupils in Key Stage 2 and the legacy of this is still evident in the relatively weak punctuation and spelling skills of older pupils. The school is introducing a systematic spelling programme to tackle this in Key Stage 2, which builds on the good start made through the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) to younger pupils. Improvements in the imaginative, creative and non-fiction writing skills of pupils in Year 6 are clear, thanks to the many opportunities for extended writing. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 in writing has more than doubled from 31% last year to 72% now. Parents and carers are much happier with the progress their children are now making and also recognise that better teaching is the primary reason why pupils are happier to come to school.

In most lessons, pupils spend their time engaged in interesting activities that are matched well to their abilities. The best learning occurs when pupils can fully explore

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their curiosity at the limit of their talents and are encouraged to try new activities in a safe and supportive learning environment. That is normally the experience for younger pupils and is now improving for the majority of pupils in Key Stage 2.

Quality of teaching

Since the previous inspection, teaching quality has improved substantially overall. Parents and carers were unanimous in recognising that, as were pupils; all are now happy with the experience they are receiving in lessons. At this visit, the fourth since the school was placed into special measures, all the lessons seen were at least satisfactory, most were good and five were outstanding. However, this welcome improvement has not been in place long enough in Key Stage 2 to deliver better than satisfactory learning over time.

The best teaching is noteworthy for the carefully planned activities that match the abilities of pupils and capture their interests. In those lessons, teachers minimise their whole-class discussion, swiftly ensuring pupils begin the main lesson task promptly. Also evident is the effective deployment of classroom assistants. Teachers expect pupils to contribute, through discussions, making presentations, responding to questions, and sharing their own creative writing. Pupils enjoy very much showing teachers and their classmates what they can do. The classroom learning ethos that arises in the good or better lessons plays a critical part in developing pupils' social, moral, and spiritual awareness and is led by good modelling of high standards by teachers. Written work is consistently corrected in these classes and particularly well in English, with teachers offering advice on how to improve the writing. The advice is sometimes too general to require a pupils' immediate response. There is some inconsistency in giving each pupil a specific step they should take by way of improvement, for all of their work.

Where teaching is satisfactory, the task has not been matched well enough to the range of different pupil abilities, resulting in every pupil tackling the same activity. Although less common than at previous visits, it is still occurring in subjects other than English and mathematics. Where the pace of learning is made the same for everyone, some pupils are not challenged suitably and others cannot keep up.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The behaviour and safety of pupils is satisfactory and improving quickly. Pupils behave well most of the time, in and out of lessons, although pupils and their parents and carers refer to rare low-level disruption to lessons and to occasional misbehaviour during breaks and lunchtimes. The frequency of those incidents has declined sharply this year, as has the number of serious incidents resulting in fixed-term exclusions. Nevertheless, those are still higher than the national average. Some pupils are involved in peer mentoring, which is helping to minimise the anxieties of some younger children and helps develop the mentors' sense of responsibility. Pupils and their parents and carers say they feel safe and well looked after. The inspection evidence supports that view and inspectors note the high profile taken by the school

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in teaching pupils about bullying in its various guises, including how to stay safe when using the internet. Despite that good advice, many pupils claim to have social media accounts. As the pupils are below the minimum age for registration for those websites, the school is re-issuing its advice for parents and carers to take action by protecting their children from using such accounts.

Pupils, parents and carers explain confidently how much more enjoyable school is now compared with previous years, because they recognise, correctly, that teaching is so much better. Attendance is improving, particularly for older pupils, and is average.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good. Senior leaders have, with the advice and guidance of local authority officers, systematically tackled the inadequate teaching which was the root cause of underperformance of the school identified in the 2011 inspection. Robust action, drawing on consultant advice from the local authority and effective professional development partnerships with a nearby outstanding primary school, has driven strong improvements in teaching quality and ensured the elimination of inadequate practice. Monitoring of teaching is systematic and involves middle as well as senior managers, with leaders having benefited from helpful training. As attainment continues to rise, particularly in literacy, gaps in outcomes between different groups of pupils are reducing, ensuring no discrimination and the effective promotion of opportunity for pupils in their next stage of education.

The governing body is now fully aware of and accurately informed about school performance data. Its current focus has been, understandably, on removing the school from a category of concern. A recent school survey revealed many parents and carers did not know what the governing body did, or who the members were, and the governing body is considering better ways to engage with parents and carers. School improvement plans remain short-term and there is a lack of a clear medium-term strategy to help parents, carers, and staff to see the direction that the governing body wish to take, by way of setting out the academic achievement and personal characteristics they hope to engender in pupils. Procedures to safeguard pupils in school meet regulatory requirements fully, including the regular training of staff in recognising child protection concerns. The buildings and grounds are safe, secure and well maintained.

The school has developed a good curriculum programme to ensure pupils become more aware of their own and other cultures. Pupils are involved in reviewing the rewards system of the school. The curriculum contains regular opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural, and social awareness well, including links with other schools abroad. Pupils are contributing to the curriculum planning as teachers become more confident in asking pupils what they would like to learn. That helps to make lessons interesting and stimulates pupils' curiosity. There is a range of trips, visits and visitors that help to expand the horizon of pupils' experience beyond their locality.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



31 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of River View Primary and Nursery School, DE15 9HR

Thank you for your friendly welcome and enthusiastic conversation during our recent visit. We are delighted to find that your school has improved a great deal over the past 18 months and no longer requires 'special measures'. It is now a satisfactory school that is improving rapidly. We note that your academic progress is improving quickly, building upon the good start you make in the Nursery, Reception Year, and Key Stage 1. We saw good teaching throughout the school and can see how well your headteacher and staff have worked to improve the overall quality of teaching. We are also pleased to find that your behaviour, including attendance, has improved a lot since the previous inspection, mainly as a result of improvements in teaching, and is now satisfactory. In the lessons we saw, you all behaved well.

To make sure the school continues to improve, we have suggested that teachers try to make every lesson as good as their best ones, by ensuring you have tasks that build on what you already know and can do. You can help by telling your teachers whenever you find your work is too easy or too hard. Teachers, usually, mark your written work well, especially in English and mathematics, but sometimes do not make it clear what you could do to make the work even better. Again, you can help by always reading carefully the comments teachers write when they mark your work and by doing your very best to follow their good advice.

Best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Brian Cartwright
Her Majesty's Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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