

# Riverside Special School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118148
<b>Local authority</b>	East Riding of Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	379550
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 June 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	James Kilner HMI

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>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	89
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Judy Armitage
<b>Headteacher</b>	Richard Barcynski
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 November 2008
<b>School address</b>	Ainsty Street Goole DN14 5JS
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

James Kilner  
Bobbi Mothersdale

Her Majesty's Inspector  
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. One inspector spent two days in the school and the other one day. Eleven lessons were observed lessons with all ten of the teaching staff seen. Four lessons were joint observations undertaken with senior staff. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation, including the school improvement plan and policies, assessment information, pupils' records and work, statements of special educational needs and annual reviews. Inspectors scrutinised 68 parental questionnaires as well as those from 64 pupils and 24 from staff.

## Information about the school

Riverside school caters for pupils who have a statement of special educational needs, generally related to moderate learning difficulties. Many have speech and language difficulties with approximately one third of the pupils on the autistic spectrum. The range and complexity of pupils' needs has increased since the previous inspection, particularly related to significant learning delay and challenging behaviours. The school admits children from all areas of East Yorkshire and the surrounding local authorities and all pupils are of either White British or Irish heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly above that found nationally. Since the last inspection the school has ceased its provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Consultation on the proposed future development and location of the school is currently underway with the community and the local authority. The school holds many awards, including Basic Skills Quality Mark and the Arts Council, Artsmark.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- Riverside is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because not enough of the teaching is outstanding and some monitoring and evaluation procedures are not formalised and data are not yet used consistently to test the success of provision in subjects. One parent wrote, 'The culture, ethos and aims of the school have enabled my child to flourish'.
- Pupils achieve well. Due to the complexity of pupils' learning difficulties, attainment remains low, although pupils make significant gains particularly in their reading and speaking and listening skills because of the effective teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) through a good combination of speaking, signing and writing.
- Consistently good and increasingly outstanding teaching ensures that all pupils achieve well. Lessons are interesting and the high-quality support from knowledgeable and dedicated classroom assistants is extremely effective in enhancing pupils' learning. Although teachers cater for the wide range of needs of the pupils in their classes, insufficient use is currently made of assessment data to challenge pupils to reach the highest levels in their learning, particularly the more able pupils.
- Behaviour and safety are good and pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. Attendance is above average and pupils feel safe in school, a view echoed by parents and carers. The increasing number of pupils presenting with more challenging behaviour benefit from the school's consistently applied behaviour management strategy.
- School leaders and the governing body are resolute in their efforts to secure the best interests of the pupils and their families in the current negotiations surrounding the future of the school. Self-evaluation is accurate and school leaders have used performance management effectively to improve the quality of teaching and maintain its current quality. An outstanding curriculum is highly

effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are fulsome in their praise for the work the school does for their children.

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

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching in order that more pupils reach the highest levels in their learning by ensuring that teachers:
  - make more effective use of information about pupils' achievement when they plan their lessons to provide greater challenge, particularly for the more-able pupils.
  
- Strengthen monitoring and evaluation procedures conducted by school leaders by ensuring that:
  - lesson observations are recorded more formally, are more closely linked to outcomes for pupils and that areas for development are followed up consistently
  - subject leaders make more consistent use of data to evaluate the effectiveness of the provision in their subjects.

## **Main Report**

### **Achievement of pupils**

All pupils make good progress, a view which is shared by the overwhelming majority of parents and carers. As a consequence of their special educational needs, pupils' attainment remains low, including in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 and, for some, by the time they leave school. The introduction of new assessments and tracking systems throughout school ensures that there is an accurate view of pupils' achievements and progress. This information is used effectively to ensure that different groups of pupils, including those with the most complex needs, make similarly good progress. However, progress is not yet outstanding, particularly for the more able pupils, because they are not consistently challenged to achieve the higher levels in their learning.

In the mixed Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 classes, pupils learn about phonics so that, where appropriate, they are increasingly able to access their learning through written texts. Across the school, pupils make particularly good progress in developing their skills in speaking and listening. For example, in a successful English lesson the youngest pupils in school were able to speak as well as sign the sound they were learning. This ensured that pupils having difficulties were able to make good progress as they articulated the sound, signed it and identified the image of the object for the adult supporting them.

Pupils' mathematical skills are developed well and older pupils are increasingly confident in using these skills in other curriculum areas, such as when making objects in design and technology and carrying out calculations in science. By the time pupils move in to the upper Key Stage 3 classes many have the confidence to

attempt to read and write for a wide range of purposes, using different support systems and prompts. They enjoy working with information and communication technology (ICT) and use it successfully in a range of different contexts. For example, pupils enjoyed evaluating and editing their photographs with great confidence because of their well-developed ICT skills. Throughout Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 pupils develop a good understanding of different subjects, all of which keep a clear focus on the development of literacy, numeracy and ICT.

The school has been proactive in ensuring that appropriate courses meet the changing academic and vocational needs of pupils. Consequently, an increasing number of pupils gain passes in a wide range of national accreditation, including ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) and Entry Level courses. Over the last three years all pupils leaving in Year 11 have gained places at a college of further education.

### **Quality of teaching**

Parents and carers overwhelmingly agree that their children are taught well at the school. Inspection findings confirm this view. Teachers are enthusiastic and, because of regular training, are knowledgeable about how to best meet the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. A dedicated and professionally trained team of classroom assistants provide high-quality support for the pupils in their care; all are highly adept at signing for the pupils. Most notably a significant number of classroom assistants have good subject knowledge so that when supporting older pupils in GCSE classes they are able to challenge any potential misconceptions.

Significant strengths in teaching include teachers' effective use of open-ended, probing questioning underpinned by excellent relationships between adults and pupils. Classroom assistants and teachers, as well as peers demonstrate tremendous patience, allowing those with communication difficulties to give fulsome answers. One pupil summed this up by saying, 'I like it when you have time to think and get your ideas sorted'.

Lessons are planned well with tasks matched appropriately to the needs of the wide range of abilities in the class. However, not enough use is made of the wealth of good quality data about pupils' achievements when planning lessons to stretch and challenge pupils in their learning. Consequently, progress, particularly for the more able, is good rather than outstanding. All pupils are guided well by both teachers and classroom assistants and, where appropriate, are given written and oral guidance as to how to improve, although this practice is not yet consistent throughout the school. This potential weakness has already been identified and senior leaders are monitoring the consistency and quality of their marking systems.

Literacy skills are developed well through the systematic teaching of phonics and enjoyment of reading is further enhanced through role play when pupils use 'Story Sacks'. Through consistently good teaching of mathematics pupils develop their numeracy skills well, with a high number of pupils reporting that their favourite lesson is mathematics.

An outstanding curriculum enables teachers to plan creative opportunities for pupils to explore their learning. For example, in an outstanding science lesson pupils with communication difficulties successfully demonstrated how alpha, gamma and x-rays were able to penetrate solid objects by referring to a model they had made which depicted the concept. Classrooms and public areas abound with photographic evidence, good quality art and three-dimensional work which celebrate the pupils' artistic, dramatic and musical talents.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils' behaviour is good. Records and discussions with pupils indicate that this is typical over time. The vast majority of parents and carers agree that there is a good standard of behaviour at the school. A number of parents and carers wrote to inspectors with comments such as, 'school manages bad behaviour very well – incidents are resolved to parents' satisfaction' and 'his behaviour has rapidly improved since attending Riverside'.

All pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning and show great resilience and dedication, taking pride in their work. For example, older pupils tend the well-maintained flower beds around school and their efforts in growing plants are put to good use in displays around the town. These skills equip well those pupils who go on to study horticulture at college. Attendance is above average and the school has reduced the number of exclusion to nil since September 2011.

Pupils show a good understanding of internet and mobile phone safety and know what to do should they feel unsafe. As a result of an outstanding curriculum, which has a focus on personal, social and health education, pupils show a keen awareness for all types of bullying including that of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and homophobic bullying. They report that bullying is rare and are certain that adults would be on hand were it to occur. Consequently, the school is a harmonious, inclusive community where adults and pupils show a great deal of respect for one another.

### **Leadership and management**

Under the astute guidance of the headteacher the school does much to champion the care, welfare and safety of individuals. Uncertainties about the future of the school have not thwarted the school's efforts to improve. Indeed, leaders and the governing body have recently re-affirmed their vision statement and commitment to inclusion. One parent whose child had recently joined the school wrote, 'the school has been a life saver for my child'. Despite pupils travelling some distance to the school, communication is effective and parents and carers report that they are well informed about how well their children are doing.

The introduction of a new assessment and progress tracking system ensures accurate monitoring of pupils' progress and appropriate additional support where identified. The school is committed to the promotion of equal opportunities and tackling discrimination. For example, a recent scrutiny of progress revealed an emerging gap in the performance between boys and girls. Immediate and effective action was taken to tackle this and the school is now able to demonstrate that all

pupils are making at least good progress. The governing body demonstrates a good understanding of assessment information and holds leaders to good account. Performance management and professional development are strong. Safeguarding has a high priority with all staff appropriately trained, for example, in signing, physical handling and de-escalation techniques, ensuring consistency in approach. All required checks are carried out on staff before they are employed. All this combines to ensure that the school demonstrates a strong capacity to improve further.

Self-evaluation is effective with regular classroom monitoring undertaken by senior leaders. Although written feedback in some cases is detailed and informative, some of this practice is too informal and lacks a rigorous link to rates of progress being made by the pupils. Also, following lesson observations, targets for teachers to improve are not consistently followed up in subsequent lessons so that, for some, minor weaknesses have the potential to continue. Curriculum leaders monitor their subjects effectively and have a good understanding of the major strengths and weaknesses on their subjects. The quality of departmental action planning varies with some effective examples seen in English, mathematics and physical education. However, the use of the good quality data on pupils' progress and their challenging targets do not feature as a measure for the success of initiatives.

The curriculum is outstanding. It provides rich opportunities for pupils to express themselves and develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. The results of this are tangible around the school in the sights and sounds produced by the pupils in celebration of art, culture, music and world faiths. For example, in an outstanding religious education lesson, Year 11 pupils entered into a deep and meaningful discussion on the moral dilemmas presented by euthanasia. Highly effective support from the teacher and classroom assistants ensured that all pupils were confident to express their own opinion, even though it might have been at odds with others in the group. All parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire would recommend the school to another.



## 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](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.

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.**



15 June 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Riverside Special School, Goole, DN14 5JS**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. It was interesting to talk to you about life at Riverside.

Here is what we found out about your school, these are some of the good things.

- Teaching is at least good and sometimes outstanding so that you make good progress in your learning, particularly in communication, reading, writing and mathematics.
- Your classroom assistants help you to make good progress in lessons because they know about the subjects you are learning and are really good at signing.
- Your headteacher, school leaders and governors do a good job in checking everything is as it should be for you to be safe and to achieve well.
- The school gives you lots of exciting and interesting lessons which help you to learn a lot about right and wrong as well as the arts and other cultures.
- Your parents and carers think it is a good school too and appreciate the efforts made by everyone to help you to improve all of the time.

Your school leaders agree that these things need to be done to make your school even better.

- When planning lessons teachers are going to make it much clearer for you what you need to do to get to the highest levels in your learning.
- When checking on how things are going in school those in charge will look a lot closer at how their actions and plans are helping you to make really good progress.

All of you can help by continuing to try your very hardest and keep up that good attendance.

Yours sincerely

James Kilner  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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