

# Riverside School

Wood Green Inclusive Learning Campus, White Hart Lane, London N22 5QJ

**Inspection dates** 6–7 December 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Since its creation in September 2011, Riverside School has established itself as a good school with a strong capacity to improve further.
- The school is committed to excellence and students already achieve well.
- Teachers always want students to achieve their best and actively help them to do so. They strongly support students' emotional and social development as well as their learning.
- Inspectors agree with parents and carers that behaviour and safety are outstanding. Students who join the school with extremely challenging behaviour are given excellent support to improve through behaviour programmes that are rigorously applied.
- Leadership, including governance, is effective and ensures teaching and achievement are good. The extended leadership team continues to develop its expertise. It is providing strong support to teachers to make more of their practice outstanding.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The information available on students' progress needs to be more thoroughly shared with teachers so they are fully informed of students' potential to get the very best from those they teach.
- While the school is developing positive links with its adjoining academy, the local sixth form centre and local work-related providers, these could be further strengthened to extend the learning opportunities available to students.

## Information about this inspection

- A total of 17 lessons were observed, taught by 17 different teachers and accounting for eight and a half hours of inspection time.
- The inspectors looked at some of the work produced by students and the way in which reading and literacy skills are developed.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and members of the leadership team, teachers, students, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- The views of the 10 responses to the online Parent View survey, together with an analysis of the school's own questionnaire for parents and carers, were taken into account. The views of teachers were gathered from their questionnaire returns and discussions, while students' views were sought through meeting a representative group and from conversations with individuals.
- A range of documents were looked at in detail including information on students' progress, teachers' planning of learning, marking of work, work plans, the school development plan and a range of policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Martyn Groucutt, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Mary Geddes

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Riverside is a special school that gained its students from the closure of two previous special schools. It is now in its second year of opening.
- It caters for a wide range of learning and communication difficulties, including general learning delay, profound and multiple learning difficulties, and autistic spectrum disorders.
- All its pupils are supported by statements of special educational needs.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding made available by the government for pupils who are eligible for free school meals, are in the care of the local authority or have parents in the armed services) is well above average.
- The proportion of students who are from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language are both well above average.
- The school has been accredited by the National Autistic Society for its work with students on the autistic spectrum.
- The school is based adjacent to a secondary academy in the Inclusive Learning Campus. It has already established links with this school, as well as with work-related learning providers, and a sixth form centre for learning opportunities off the main site.
- The school receives a grant from Transport for London to assist students to travel into school independently using public transport after training.

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

- Make sure that the information on the achievement and progress of students is shared better with teachers so they can always match work closely to students' levels of learning to ensure that students can reach their full potential.
- Extend the growing links with the adjoining academy, the sixth form centre and work-related providers to give students as wide a range of learning opportunities as possible.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students with learning disabilities and autistic difficulties all make good progress and achieve well. At the end of the school's first year in 2012, 100% of the school's Year 11 leavers gained national qualifications because they were challenged to produce the best work of which they were capable, whatever their individual learning difficulty.
- Some students whose needs are primarily of communication achieve success up to GCSE level. Only a small number of students reach this level and those entering for GCSE do so only in Year 11.
- Attainment is low, overall, because of the students' learning disabilities. However, the school is able to show that, whatever their individual starting points, students make good and often outstanding progress - particularly those with autistic spectrum disorders. However, the ways in which information on students' progress is gathered and used to guide teaching is not fully effective in giving teachers the information needed to match work to the right level for each individual student. Consequently, occasionally, students are not given work that is demanding enough.
- That said, good use is made of the information on students' progress currently available. No groups are held back or achieve less well than others. Most students, irrespective of their ethnic heritages and including those who use English as an additional language, are able to reach and often exceed the targets that are set for them each term.
- Many Year 11 students develop confidence and self-awareness through good links with work-related education providers. These links support very effective arrangements to help these students move on at age 16. For example, at the end of the school's first year in 2012, every student went on to the local sixth form centre.
- Students eligible for the pupil premium make good progress and achieve well. Great care is taken to ensure that the additional funding is targeted at those for whom it is intended. This supports them on trips and other out-of-school activities, and helps purchase specialist equipment when it is needed by an individual. Consequently, these students benefit from better opportunities to learn.
- Reading is effectively promoted for those students who can develop these skills. The students who can read do so with good understanding. An outstanding lesson was seen where the teacher was skilfully teaching letters and the sounds they make, and students responded enthusiastically. There is an emphasis on supporting students to develop their communication skills both verbally and through other methods, including signing and the use of pictures and symbols as a way of communicating with others.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is at least good, and much is outstanding, because the learning needs of every student are known. The professional relationships between teachers, their assistants and other adults in classes are effective in meeting them.
- There is a clear link between the effectiveness of teaching and the good progress made by students. However, at the moment, the amount of information teachers receive on the achievement and progress of each student is not helpful enough to ensure that work is always closely matched to students' abilities and, therefore, teaching is not yet outstanding.
- Teachers work with students who have wide-ranging learning and behavioural needs and there is a clear commitment to promoting equal opportunity for all. Care is taken to record individual progress, even though, for some, this is measured in very small steps.
- Teachers plan learning carefully using what information they have available on each student's progress and standards. Lesson preparation reflects the high expectations of all staff for what students can achieve. Where it is appropriate, teachers use effective questioning of students and

involve them in assessing their own work. In an outstanding art lesson, for example, students gathered in a circle and discussed the work that each had undertaken in an extremely supportive way.

- Students with profound disabilities are encouraged to develop their skills and talents. This encouraging approach was reflected in a lesson where students who are normally in wheelchairs were supported in standing by standing-frames so they could better partake in a practical lesson in which they made bread.
- Students' work is assessed regularly and supportive comments are made. Teachers also make valuable comments for their own later reference, for example when a new skill has been displayed for the first time.
- Those students supported by the pupil premium gain greater access to a range of activities, including the opportunities for every student to benefit from residential experiences. This extra help supports them in narrowing any gap between their achievement and that of other students.
- The quality of teaching of students involved in work-related learning off-site is very helpful to the students involved. Their personal development and practical skills are much enhanced by these opportunities.
- The skill of the school in educating students with a wide variety of autistic spectrum disorders has been acknowledged by the National Autistic Society. This is reflected in the ability of the school to help such students make exceptional progress through effective teaching and other provision, including those previously permanently excluded from specialist independent schools for autism.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- There is general agreement among parents, carers, staff and students that behaviour at Riverside is outstanding. Similarly, there is an equally strong view that the school is an extremely safe place.
- The school carefully works out the level of risk to which each student should be exposed. There is strong support for students' development of independent skills wherever possible. This is reflected in the grant received from Transport for London to encourage those who are capable to travel to school independently.
- Some students start at the school displaying extremely challenging behaviour. Carefully developed individual behaviour programmes are applied consistently by staff and, over time, these are successful in promoting far more positive attitudes in how students act.
- All staff are trained in how to manage potentially dangerous situations in which students might get involved. This means that, although all are trained in the use of safe restraint, such a last resort has only been used once since the school opened.
- There is a focus on making students aware that bullying is not acceptable, and they say that bullying is rare. When incidents have arisen, they have been dealt with effectively. Students are aware of different types of bullying. One focus of information and communication technology lessons is the danger posed by cyber-bullying and of the misuse of social networking sites. Work has also been done to emphasise these dangers to parents and carers.
- Attendance is high when compared to other special schools. This is because students very much enjoy coming to school, where they feel part of a strong community.
- Staff ensure that the wider social and emotional needs of students are strongly supported. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very effectively. A particular strength is the development of very strong social relationships and students can often be seen looking after each other. Another strength is the strong link with a special school in Ghana that has included visits both ways, and through the art and music of Ghana that is seen throughout the school.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher and his two deputies are very experienced special school leaders, all working in one of the schools that closed prior to the creation of Riverside. They bring their individual skills to a team that is driving for excellence in students' achievement and the quality of education they receive.
- Leadership is supplemented by middle managers, each with clearly defined areas of responsibility. They are, currently, very well supported in refining their skills, for example through training. Their improved skills are adding to the overall strengths of leadership.
- Effective systems are used to check the quality of teaching. Staff are made fully aware of their responsibility for students' progress and staff performance is closely linked to promotion and salary progression.
- School self-evaluation is rigorous and leads to the effective identification of areas for improvement that are prioritised in the school's development plan.
- The local authority has provided effective support since the school's opening. It is aware of the effectiveness of the education provided by the school, so local authority support is, currently, 'light touch' in nature.
- The range of subjects and topics taught is flexible and wide ranging, reflecting the very wide spread of students' abilities and personal needs.
- Partnerships with parents and carers are strong, as reflected in the very positive feedback received to questionnaires that the school has used. Similarly, partnerships with other professional agencies that provide services for the students are strong and extremely beneficial to them.
- Riverside is working hard to develop the opportunities for extending provision. Already, some students are joining classes and using the facilities of the academy with which they share the campus, while some of that school's students have joined classes that suit their needs in the special school. Similarly, opportunities are being sought to extend the links with the sixth form centre and with work-related education providers, which are already providing opportunities, such as the development of horticultural skills.
- Although these alternative educational experiences are extending the range of learning opportunities open to students, there has not yet been time for links with partner institutions to be fully developed. Care is taken to ensure the health and safety of students working off-site, where the quality of education is confirmed as good by the school's leaders.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body contains a range of expertise that allows it to carry out all its functions and legal responsibilities, including that for safeguarding, effectively. It has a good understanding of the quality of teaching and how staff promotion is managed. Governors ensure that pay is related to teachers' performance. The headteacher's performance is similarly scrutinised, and governors make good use of an external adviser to ensure that his annual objectives are demanding and enable the school to move forward. Checking on how funding is used is effective. Governors ensure that the resources gained through the pupil premium are used effectively for those for whom they are intended, promoting those students' engagement in learning and good progress. Training enables the governing body to understand how well the school enables students to achieve, and advance their personal development and behaviour.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	102178
<b>Local authority</b>	Haringey
<b>Inspection number</b>	400536

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	108
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mandy Hellowell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Martin Doyle
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8889 7814
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