

River View Primary School

Suffolk Road, Burton-on-Trent, DE15 9HR

Inspection dates

13–14 July 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Significant instability in leadership and staffing has hampered improvement since the last inspection. The newly established senior leadership team, and new middle leaders, have not had time to fully impact on improvements to outcomes and teaching.
- The quality of teaching, although improving, is variable across classes and is not yet consistently good. Some teachers do not adapt activities well enough to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. Not all teachers have accurate subject knowledge.
- Teachers' feedback does not always make clear to pupils how they can improve their work.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to reasoning and problem-solving tasks.
- The school does not communicate well enough with parents.
- Over time, teaching has not built carefully on pupils' existing knowledge and skills. Consequently, some pupils, particularly in key stage 2, have gaps in their understanding which slow their progress and prevent them from reaching the standards that they should.
- Pupils do not always have the skills needed to understand the text they are reading.
- Although leaders evaluate learning accurately, the feedback to teachers does not always make it clear exactly how teachers can improve their practice.
- The governing body has many new members. While very supportive, they do not robustly hold leaders to account for the quality of teaching and outcomes.
- The school's curriculum does not help pupils develop a love of learning.

The school has the following strengths

- Actions taken by senior leaders are starting to have an impact, especially on improving the quality of teaching.
- Effective teaching in the early years enables children to make good progress.
- Pupils make good progress in their understanding of phonics (letters and the sounds they make).
- Pupils' behaviour and personal development are good and have improved since the last inspection.
- Leaders have created a safe, caring school community where each child is valued as a unique individual.
- Pupils make good progress in writing in most classes.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning and thereby outcomes for all pupils by making sure that:
 - teaching is planned at the right level for pupils' current level of understanding, particularly for lower-ability pupils
 - all teachers have correct subject knowledge, particularly for the teaching of grammar, reading and mathematical problem-solving
 - pupils apply their mathematical skills more frequently to activities which enable them to give explanations, justify their answers and help them solve problems
 - teachers' feedback makes clear to pupils how they can improve their work
 - assessment information is used to quickly plug pupils' current gaps in knowledge, skills and understanding
 - pupils have opportunities to extend their skills of reading for understanding, and to practise these skills across subjects.

- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - embedding the roles of new senior and middle leaders so that they play a full part in raising the quality of teaching and pupils' progress
 - improving systems and procedures for communicating with parents
 - providing clearer feedback to teachers so that they know exactly what they need to do to improve their practice
 - implementing the proposed plans to ensure that the curriculum is more stimulating
 - displaying all required information on the school's website
 - ensuring that governors are well informed about all aspects of the school's performance and that they are equipped with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to stringently hold leaders to account.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Since the last inspection the school has experienced much instability. The current headteacher is the fourth to hold the role within this time and there have been many staff changes. This instability has affected leaders' and governors' progress in bringing about improvements in teaching and learning. Although improvements have been made, over time leaders have not ensured that the quality of teaching and outcomes are good.
- Some senior leadership roles are in the early stage of becoming established and many middle leaders are new to their roles. As a result, leadership is not yet fully effective in improving teaching and outcomes. Leaders check more closely on the quality of teaching and understand what needs to improve. However, the legacy of some weak teaching has not been fully overcome, especially concerning pupils' reading skills.
- Leaders are beginning to hold teachers to account for the progress of their pupils. However, targets given following lesson observations or in performance management are not always clear or precise enough for teachers to be held to account with sufficient rigour for any underachievement of pupils in their class. Individual shortcomings have not been fully addressed and this is why there is still some inconsistency in the quality of teaching.
- The new headteacher is working determinedly to promote her vision for excellence and an ethos of commitment to improvement. Staff know what the school is aiming to achieve and feel their contribution is valued and worthwhile. There is a good sense of team spirit and this is echoed in the positive responses to the staff questionnaire. Staff appreciate the enhanced opportunities for professional development activities, which they feel are helping them improve their practice.
- Leaders and governors have already made some difficult decisions in order to bring about change for the better. Leaders are capable, ambitious and committed to doing their best for the children in their care. The school is now entering a more stable period, with a recently established senior leadership team. There have been some significant improvements already. In particular, attendance is rising and standards in phonics, writing and mathematics are higher.
- Leaders and staff ensure that pupils are guided by shared values that help them to understand and get along with others both now and in the future. The new school values have helped improve personal development and behaviour since the last inspection. These are now good.
- Leaders are aware of the strengths and development areas of the school. Leaders know that reading is the weakest subject and that the curriculum needs further development so that pupils can practise and develop the skills learned in one subject to another. Clear improvement plans are in place.
- The school's curriculum has failed to interest and engage pupils in learning. Leaders have drawn up plans to implement a new, more stimulating curriculum in the new academic year. Some aspects of this new curriculum have already been introduced. Activities to 'hook' pupils into a new theme have been used successfully; for example, the school hall was turned into an ice rink and a magic show was held to fully engage pupils in their learning. The school is aware that currently this approach is not fully in place and, at times, the curriculum does not fully excite or engage pupils. When this occurs it limits the progress that pupils make.
- Parents have mixed views about the school. Their views on the quality of teaching and their children's progress reflect the variability identified by inspectors. Parents feel that the school does not communicate effectively with them. Inspectors agree with this view. Nevertheless, most parents who spoke to inspectors were keen to stress how they feel the school is improving since the arrival of the new headteacher. One comment summed up the views of others when saying, 'The headteacher has made a positive impact on the school despite all the issues she has faced. Our children have had some great experiences they never had before.'
- Leaders and governors make appropriate use of the pupil premium funding to provide extra support for disadvantaged pupils. The new inclusion team is having a positive impact on outcomes for these pupils. They carefully analyse the success of any additional interventions, both for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special needs and/or disabilities, to ensure that they are fully effective. As a result, gaps between these pupils and others are narrowing.
- The primary sport premium has been spent effectively to extend the opportunities that pupils experience and develop their understanding of the benefit of sport for their health and personal development. Specialist sports coaches have provided support to develop pupils' physical skills.

- Pupils benefit from a range of clubs, such as those for dance, cricket and multi-skills, to develop their skills and enjoyment of exercise. Girls' and boys' football teams have been established and the school is taking part in more competitions. Pupils spoke proudly of how they represented the school in the regional miniature golf competition. Staff say that their skills in teaching physical education and sports have developed this year.
- Pupils show a good understanding of British values. Pupils are aware of the importance of respect, democracy and equality of opportunity because these have been well taught. Older pupils spoke knowledgeably about the recent EU referendum and the possible consequences of Brexit. Year 6 pupils spoke about their recent visit to the House of Commons and meeting their local MP. They show a good understanding of how the democratic process works and of right and wrong.
- The local authority acknowledges that the school has been through a turbulent time. It was so concerned by the high turnover of staff and the impact that was having on pupils' progress that it issued a 'notice to improve' to the school shortly after the current headteacher's arrival. The local authority is now satisfied that the school is more stable and that all aspects of the school are improving. It has removed the concern notice. The local authority has provided effective support to the school during this time.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The majority of governors are new and do not have the required knowledge and skills to fully challenge leaders and hold the school to account for the school's performance. They do not fully understand their statutory responsibilities, for example in ensuring the school website displays all required information.
 - Governors are committed to improving the school. They have provided strong support to school leaders during the many changes that have taken place since the last inspection. Governors have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and development areas and are starting to ask some challenging questions in meetings, but they remain over-reliant on the information provided to them by the school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Arrangements for keeping pupils safe are robust and well managed. Leaders and staff know pupils and families well. Pupils who are encountering situations which make them vulnerable are supported well, as are their families. This support is a strength of the school. Checks on the suitability of staff meet statutory requirements. Procedures to identify and respond promptly to concerns are well understood by staff. There are positive links with other agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe. The overwhelming majority of parents spoken to, or who responded to the Parent View online questionnaire, indicated that their child felt safe in school and that their child is well looked after.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The overall quality of teaching is variable across subjects and classes. The many staff changes have disrupted the flow of teaching and learning. Staffing arrangements have become more stable since September 2015 and teaching is becoming more consistent. Most staff now have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. Consequently, progress has started to improve and standards are rising.
- Teachers do not always use assessment effectively to plan work which accurately meets the needs of pupils of all abilities. Where this is the case and activities lack suitable challenge, learning slows and pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Over time, historic weaker teaching has not built carefully on pupils' existing knowledge and skills. This means that some pupils, particularly in key stage 2, have historic gaps in their understanding. These gaps slow down pupils' progress and prevent them from reaching the standards that they could. Staff are not yet doing enough to close these gaps in learning.
- Teachers' feedback to pupils varies in quality. Although teachers apply the school's 'pink to think and green for good' marking policy consistently, feedback often does not help pupils improve their work.
- The teaching of reading is variable and does not ensure that all pupils make good progress, particularly in key stage 2. The new, structured phonics scheme is accelerating progress in the acquisition of phonics for younger pupils. Pupils in key stage 1 are applying their phonics knowledge well in their reading. Some older pupils who have not had this structured approach have gaps in their knowledge. Pupils do not read regularly enough and there is insufficient attention given to developing pupils' comprehension skills.
- Not all teachers have secure subject knowledge for the teaching of grammar. The new literacy leader has introduced 'non-negotiables' for the teaching of grammar, for example short daily sessions at the

beginning of English lessons. There has been an improvement in standards at the end of key stage 2 in pupils' use of grammar, spelling and punctuation, but there remains some variability across the school. Leaders are also aware that the teaching of grammar in some classes is not fully engaging pupils.

- The teaching of the most able has improved since the previous inspection in many classes, particularly when writing and calculation are being taught. Books show that many teachers are providing the most able with activities that challenge their abilities. However, this practice is still inconsistent across the whole school.
- Teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to activities which make them think deeply and give explanations as they solve problems. As a result, pupils make slower progress than they should. However, teaching of arithmetic calculations is more effective. For example, inspectors observed Year 5 pupils using whiteboards to provide good examples of equivalence.
- In most classes, the teaching of writing enables pupils to make good progress. This is an improvement since the last inspection when writing was identified as an aspect to improve. Pupils have more opportunities to write in an extended way and across a wider range of genres.
- Some classrooms are vibrant and help extend learning. In the best, for example, 'working walls' display key vocabulary and prompts to help pupils become more independent in their learning. Questioning is used effectively by most teachers and has a positive impact on learning. For example, in a Year 6 class, the teacher closely questioned pupils and expected them to explain their thinking about solving an algebraic equation.
- Teachers foster a positive atmosphere for learning in their classrooms. Pupils are encouraged to concentrate, work hard and support one another as they learn.
- Teaching assistants are deployed successfully to support and promote learning. They work well with individuals and groups to promote positive attitudes and behaviour. They work effectively with pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good and has improved since the last inspection. Staff are quick to identify pupils' emotional and health needs and to take steps to support them. Staff meet regularly to identify and discuss any barriers to learning for vulnerable pupils, such as those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Pupils are proud of their school and say that adults take good care of them. The good relationships between pupils and staff have a positive impact on pupils' personal development. Pupils say that the school is a safe place to be. They especially like the improved security around the school. Pupils say adults listen to them and take what they say seriously. They know that any notes left in the 'worry-box' will be dealt with promptly.
- Pupils talk enthusiastically about the school motto, 'Together we make our community RICHER'. They understand the values that this represents, such as respect, and are able to discuss how pupils from different backgrounds and cultures are always made to feel welcome and part of the school community.
- Pupils show a good understanding of different types of bullying. They say that bullying happens occasionally, but that when it does, staff quickly sort out the issues. School records confirm this.
- Pupils are confident, articulate and ambitious. They enjoy learning and school life. They readily take on additional responsibilities in school. School council members help during interviews for staff appointments, and are currently helping to improve school lunches.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Year 5 pupils spoke about a recent session where they had discussed how to keep themselves safe during the school holidays. Pupils know how to keep safe when using technology such as mobile phones and the internet, and understand what they should and should not do when online.
- Pupils say that the lessons they have had with the 'Commando' team have helped them develop their self-esteem, team work and confidence. This is an outside team brought in by the school this year to help raise pupils' personal development through participation in team-building exercises.
Pupils say they are appreciative of the school for offering this level of support to them this year.
- Pupils' presentation of their work has improved since the last inspection in most classes. Pupils see the

awarding of their 'pen licence' for producing neat handwriting as a significant achievement.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good and improved since the last inspection. In discussions, older pupils commented on how much behaviour has improved recently.
- Pupils say they value the 'good to be green' behaviour system. They value the rewards of the new system and believe any sanctions are applied fairly. The vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons and have good attitudes to learning. Occasionally, when the quality of teaching is weaker, pupils are off task and do not complete as much work as they could. Where teachers have high expectations, pupils respond accordingly, producing work of a high standard and making good progress.
- Pupils cooperate well with each other in lessons. They happily share ideas together and collaborate on tasks.
- Playtime and lunchtimes are calm and orderly. Pupils recognise the importance of being kind to each other. This results in a harmonious community where everyone gets along well.
- Pupils' attendance has been below national levels for the last two years. New reward systems and strategies have improved attendance this year. It is now close to the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils' outcomes require improvement. Pupils' progress over time has been variable. This relates directly to the quality of teaching and teachers' expectations. More consistency in the quality of teaching is now accelerating progress and more pupils are on track to achieve the expectations for their age, with an increasing number exceeding them. Some pupils in key stage 2, who have experienced weaker teaching in the past, are not yet reaching age-related expectations. This is because their gaps in knowledge are not being closed quickly enough.
- There has been an improved trend over time in national assessments in Year 2. In 2015, results at Year 2 significantly improved, with pupils attaining broadly average results for the first time since the previous inspection. Provisional results from the 2016 assessments, which have been moderated by the local authority, suggest that attainment will again be broadly average. This represents good progress for this cohort across key stage 1.
- Attainment at the end of key stage 2 in 2015 was broadly average in writing and mathematics but below average in reading and spelling, punctuation and grammar. The school's information suggests that results for 2016 will be broadly average in writing, mathematics and grammar and just below in reading. Leaders have already identified that boys' attainment is lower than that of girls, particularly in reading. Plans are in place to address this.
- The school's own assessment records show that progress for current pupils is accelerating. Inspection evidence confirms this. Progress for all groups of learners is improving. However in some classes, lower-ability pupils do not make as much progress as they could. This is often because the work given is not adapted sufficiently for them.
- The progress of the most able pupils was an area to improve at the last inspection. Their progress is now accelerating in many classes due to teachers' higher expectations of what these pupils can achieve. Some most-able pupils in key stage 2 are hindered by a legacy of weaker teaching that has not built up their key skills in different areas of learning. Leaders are working hard to make up the lost ground but there is still more to do.
- Pupils' progress in reading, especially in key stage 2, is too slow. Pupils do not read widely and many do not understand the books they are reading. Reading is stronger in key stage 1, where pupils make good progress. Achievement in phonics is a strength of the school. The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected level in the Year 1 phonics screening check was above average in 2015. School information suggests that this has been sustained in 2016. This represents good progress from pupils' starting points on entry.
- Progress in writing has improved since the last inspection and progress is now good. Pupils show more confidence and skill in their writing. Inspectors observed Year 2 pupils writing a recount of their visit on 'transition day' to their new class. Most were confidently using correct punctuation and spelling.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is improving. It is good in key stage 1. In 2015 disadvantaged pupils performed better than their peers nationally in the Year 1 phonics check and in the Year 2

assessments. In Year 2 the gap is virtually closed, as disadvantaged pupils are currently performing similarly to other pupils in their year group. There was a large gap in the Year 6 assessments in 2015 between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils. School information indicates that this is narrowing due to the well-targeted support that disadvantaged pupils receive.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive high-quality support from adults to ensure that they make at least the expected progress. In some classes they make better progress due to the precise identification of their needs and effective strategies put in place to address these.
- Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress in their acquisition of English. They also make good progress in writing and mathematics. In 2015, the proportion of these pupils who made the progress expected of them was above national levels for similar pupils. However, some pupils for whom English is an additional language do not make as much progress as they could in reading. This is because they do not fully understand what it is they are reading.

Early years provision

is good

- From starting points that are below those typical for their age, children in the early years make good progress overall. Progress is more rapid in the Reception classes than in the part-time Nursery class. Leaders are fully aware of this and have plans to address it.
- Outcomes at the end of the Reception Year have improved since the last inspection. In 2015, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development was above the national level. Provisional results for 2016 suggest that results will be similar this year. Children are well prepared to start Year 1.
- Additional funding is well targeted for disadvantaged pupils. In 2015 they performed better than other pupils nationally but not as well as other children in their class. However, the gap is narrowing.
- The new early years leader is effective and has a good understanding of the strengths of the provision and areas for development. She is aware of the need for further development of the outdoor area to promote learning more effectively, and has plans to do this.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Staff build effectively on children's previous knowledge and understanding, which helps them to learn quickly. Staff are skilled at questioning to deepen children's learning.
- Staff provide an interesting and stimulating indoor environment for children. It is of a higher standard in the Reception classes than in the Nursery. Children enjoy learning and engage well independently with the broad range of resources available.
- Children are very engaged in their learning and show a keen interest in the activities provided. Good opportunities to promote early reading, writing and mathematics skills are threaded through the themed activities. For example, as part of the pirate theme, children were observed making treasure maps, using mirrors to double the number of pieces of treasure, counting coins to make number sentences and writing about the pirate ship they had designed.
- Children concentrate well and listen carefully during phonics sessions. They show a keen interest in words and letter sounds and demonstrate a growing ability to apply their phonics knowledge to work out unfamiliar words.
- Children are confident to make choices and many persevere with the activities they have chosen.
- Children behave well and have positive relationships with staff and each other. They share resources, take turns and cooperate well.
- Children's welfare and personal development are given particular attention. Children are helped to keep safe and secure. They follow routines happily and have a positive start to school life.
- Parents are generally happy with the provision in the early years. As in the rest of the school, they feel that communication between home and school needs to be improved. Good transition arrangements ensure that children are well supported for their entry to school.

School details

Unique reference number	135281
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10009284

This inspection 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	362
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Stokes
Headteacher	Mandy Whitehouse
Telephone number	01283 239510
Website	www.riverviewprisch-staff.co.uk
Email address	office@riverview.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 March 2014

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average primary school. There are two classes in each age group in Years 1 to 5. There is one Year 6 class.
- Children in the nursery attend part time either for a morning or afternoon session. There are two reception classes, which are taught full time as an early years unit.
- The majority of pupils are White British. Since the last inspection the school has seen an increase in the number of pupils speaking English as an additional language. The proportion is now above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average. Pupil premium is additional government funding used to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- In 2015, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of specified information on its website with respect to pupil premium and sport premium funding.
- Since the last inspection, there have been significant leadership and staff changes. The majority of staff are new to the school since the last inspection. The current headteacher was appointed in January 2015. Other senior and middle leader positions have been filled this academic year.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning throughout the school. They saw 18 lessons, or parts of lessons. Eight of these were jointly observed with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, three members of the governing body, the headteacher and other staff with leadership responsibilities. A telephone call took place with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 25 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the comments made. Inspectors also spoke to parents as they brought their children to school. Pupils' views were sought by talking to them both formally and informally during the school day. The inspection team received responses from 12 staff to the inspection questionnaire and their views were taken into account.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, observed break and lunchtime, carried out a learning walk and attended an assembly.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents, including: the school's own check on its performance; the school's information about pupils' learning and progress; planning and monitoring documents; and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Mary Hughes, Lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Maybank	Ofsted Inspector
Christopher Ogden	Ofsted Inspector

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