

# Riverside Education

2 Riverside Drive, Stechford, Birmingham, West Midlands B33 9BF

## Inspection dates

6–8 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Sixth form provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Although pupils' achievement is improving, they should be making better progress.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school. Teachers' expectations are not consistently high enough.
- Assessments are not being used well enough to plan work for pupils that meets their needs and abilities. Teachers' use of assessment has not yet resulted in consistently good teaching across all classes.
- Work provided for the most able pupils is not challenging enough, resulting in some pupils not achieving the higher standards they are capable of.
- Governors do not challenge senior leaders enough or hold them sufficiently to account for pupils' academic progress.
- Although the school is registered to accommodate post-16 learners, it does not currently have any students studying vocational or non-vocational courses.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school has been very effective at developing pupils' personal and social development. This has ensured that all pupils up to Year 11 can successfully access the variety of subjects and qualifications that the school provides.
- Behaviour is well managed and the behaviour of many pupils has improved significantly over time. The high ratio of teaching staff to pupils ensures that lessons mostly run smoothly and pupils are well supported to access the learning.
- Leaders and staff are ambitious and share a clear vision for the school. They are aspirational and have high expectations for their pupils.
- The broad curriculum has been developed to meet the needs of pupils up to Year 11. It enables pupils to study a wide range of vocational and non-vocational courses.
- The school works well with a wide range of agencies and professionals to ensure that pupils are well cared for and supported. Good attendance is promoted and rewarded and the majority of pupils attend regularly.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Full report

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

- Improve teaching and learning by ensuring that:
  - all teachers use questioning effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and deepen their understanding
  - activities are matched to the individual needs of pupils, particularly the most able
  - both teachers and support staff check pupils' knowledge and understanding so that tasks can be adapted to meet pupils' needs and abilities.
- Improve the way that leaders and staff assess and monitor pupils' progress to sustain improvements to their achievement by:
  - ensuring that the school's assessment information clearly identifies pupils' attainment and rate of progress so that leaders and governors can better gauge how much progress pupils make
  - strengthening governors' skills to enable them to provide effective challenge and hold leaders to account for the academic progress made by pupils.
- Improve and broaden post-16 provision so that it fully meets the needs of the students and includes options for both vocational and non-vocational courses.
- 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

**Good**

- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders have high expectations of pupils and staff and have established a clear vision for the school. This aims to provide a therapeutic, stimulating learning environment, providing young people with skills they can use now and in later life. This vision is beginning to be realised.
- Leaders have worked hard to establish an appropriate environment, ensuring that the wide-ranging social, emotional and behavioural needs of individual pupils are met.
- Leaders have rightly focused on re-engaging pupils with learning and developing their social and personal skills. This has been very effective, and nearly all pupils have improved significantly on their attendance in their previous school and now attend school regularly.
- Leaders have high aspirations for pupils' outcomes, for example when they identified the high level of success that their pupils had in completing functional skills courses, they implemented GCSE courses in English and mathematics to ensure that pupils can achieve standards of which they are capable. All Year 11 pupils are encouraged and supported to continue in education, employment or training after leaving the school.
- The broad and engaging curriculum up to Year 11 ensures that pupils are offered a wide range of experiences and can acquire knowledge and develop skills in a wide range of subjects. For example, as well as functional skills and GCSE courses, pupils can complete a qualification in animal care and business enterprise. Leaders are continually looking at ways they can extend their provision further and from September 2017 pupils will be able to take a qualification in horticulture, using the school's allotment.
- Leaders at the school have developed a system of school evaluation and improvement which enables them to identify appropriate improvement priorities and plan to achieve these. This has enabled leaders to identify aspects of teaching that still need to be improved and to gauge the impact of measures taken to sustain these improvements.
- The continuing professional development of teachers is a priority. All teachers are either completing teaching qualifications to develop their teaching skills or leadership courses to strengthen their leadership skills. The school has developed a system of performance management which is linked to school priorities and to outcomes for pupils. However, the school recognises that there is more to do to secure consistently good teaching and learning.
- The school is committed to ensuring that the pupils develop a secure understanding of British values. Pupils have a good understanding of democracy, equality and the rule of law. They demonstrate respect for individuals, including those from different backgrounds, cultures, races and religions to their own. They understand the importance of being tolerant. They know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations and could talk confidently about the importance of following a healthy lifestyle.
- The school engages well with parents. Parents are very complimentary of the school and of the positive impact it has had on the lives and education of their children. They greatly

value the support provided by the school.

- Although leaders' actions have resulted in improvements to teaching and learning and outcomes for pupils, these are not yet consistently good enough in some classes.
- A framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly. However, when leaders analyse this information the focus is on the standards that pupils reach rather than the rate of progress they make from their start points. Consequently, leaders do not have robust information that enables them to demonstrate how much academic progress pupils make from when they start at the school and whether this progress is sufficient or rapid enough.
- Observations of learning carried out by leaders do not focus sufficiently on the progress made by pupils in lessons and over time. Although leaders carry out an analysis of pupils' work as part of their monitoring of teaching and learning, the work in pupils' books seen during this inspection did not provide evidence of sustained progress over time.

## **Governance**

- Governance requires further improvement.
- The school has a governing body which monitors some aspects of the school's work well, for example ensuring that the environment meets the needs of the pupils; that teachers have a good understanding of the learning needs of pupils; and that the school is financially viable.
- Governors have undertaken appropriate training including safeguarding and safer recruitment training. However, the governing body does not hold leaders sufficiently to account for the academic progress made by pupils. There is little evidence recorded in the governing body minutes of information about pupils' progress being shared by school leaders, or of challenging questions being asked by governors.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's safeguarding policy meets current government requirements regarding safeguarding. It is available to parents on the school website.
- Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding. Adults in school have a very good understanding of the potential risks pupils face. For example, staff are aware of the recent changes in guidance for keeping children safe, and have received training in the 'Prevent' duty so that they know how to spot the signs of radicalisation.
- Leaders make sure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe from a wide range of potential dangers. Pupils are safe and say that they feel safe. They can talk confidently about how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and have a good understanding of a range of different types of bullying.
- The school implements its policies effectively to ensure that pupils are safeguarded, for example policies relating to anti-bullying, behaviour management, risk assessment and safer recruitment.
- The designated safeguarding lead works well with other professionals and agencies to

ensure that appropriate support is provided to potentially vulnerable pupils.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good across the school. Consequently, pupils do not make enough progress in all subjects.
- While some teachers use questioning effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and deepen understanding, this is not consistent practice across all subjects. Consequently, teaching does not always support pupils to think creatively and reason for themselves.
- In a minority of the lessons observed pupils' behaviour was not always well managed, resulting in some incidents of low-level disruptive behaviour or pupils not engaging as well with the learning as they might.
- In some lessons, teachers do not carry out sufficient checks on how well pupils have learned during a lesson, and this slows learning. Teachers do not always make effective use of lesson time to provide opportunities for pupils to check their understanding or to adapt tasks in order to strengthen and deepen pupils' learning.
- In some lessons teachers were not clear about what pupils were expected to learn, or were too heavily focused on the completion of activities rather than deepening learning. In these lessons pupils did not develop their knowledge, skills or understanding as well as they did in other lessons observed.
- Teaching assistants provide some very effective learning and behavioural support for pupils. However, occasionally the level of support provided prevents pupils from developing their ability to work independently.
- Work in pupils' books shows that some pupils are making sufficient progress over time and a few pupils are making more rapid progress. However, the evidence indicates that this is not yet consistent across the school and, over time, pupils' progress requires improvement.
- Teacher's planning shows that teachers are aware of what pupils can do. As a result, most lessons are well matched to the majority of pupils' needs. However, some tasks do not challenge individual pupils, particularly the most able, so some pupils do not make the rapid progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders have developed an assessment system which allows teachers to check pupils' skills on entry to the school and set challenging targets for them. Half-termly assessment activities are then carried out to monitor whether pupils are on track to achieve these targets. This information is used to identify pupils who may need further support or interventions.
- Teachers have relevant subject knowledge. This results in pupils strengthening their understanding of the subject being taught. For example, in a lesson on animal care, pupils enjoyed learning about different ways in which animals can be adapted to their environment. When given the opportunity to reflect on their learning they could clearly explain what they had found out.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have a good understanding of individual pupil learning styles and needs, resulting in most pupils being able to access the learning for the

majority of the time.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils develop positive attitudes to school and their learning as a result of the respect and support they receive from staff. Pupils' personal and social development and self-confidence are very well nurtured by adults in school. Staff know the pupils well and have a very good understanding of their individual needs.
- The vast majority of pupils who attend Riverside Education had not previously attended school regularly. Promoting regular attendance and good punctuality is regarded as a priority by the school.
- Currently the school's overall attendance rate is 73%, which is significantly below the national average. However, as a result of actions taken by leaders, the majority of pupils' attendance has improved substantially and now exceeds 90%. For the minority of pupils whose attendance is still low, there are good reasons for this. Leaders make every effort to improve attendance.
- Pupils in all year groups have access to a wide range of impartial careers advice. Pupils value this and say that they feel well prepared for life beyond school. All the pupils spoken to had high aspirations for their future careers. They feel that the careers advice they are given is relevant and useful. The school's destination information shows that all Year 11 pupils have secured further education or training placements next year.
- The school's curriculum ensures that pupils know how to keep themselves healthy and safe from a wide range of potential dangers. For example, pupils demonstrated a secure understanding of a range of types of bullying, including cyber bullying, and know how to keep themselves safe online. They are aware of the potential risks they face and know whom to talk to if they have any worries or concerns. They are confident that school keeps them safe.
- Pupils learn in a variety of ways about being responsible citizens. During their time at Riverside Education all pupils undertake a period of work experience. As part of their qualification in business enterprise, pupils are entirely responsible for running the school 'tuck shop', including the financial management and control of stock. Pupils have organised a wide range of fundraising activities for local and national charities, including Heartlands Hospital and the British Legion Poppy Appeal.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils say the behaviour in lessons and around school is good. The inspector agrees with this. Comments made by pupils show that they value the smaller teaching groups and the support they are given in lessons.
- Behaviour logs show that inappropriate behaviour is quickly and appropriately responded to. There are few examples of repeated inappropriate behaviour by individual pupils.

- Although the inspector noted some examples of low-level disruptive behaviour, or pupils not being fully focused on their learning during lessons, this was due to the teaching failing to engage pupils fully. In lessons where teaching and behaviour management are strong, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning and listen respectfully to teachers and each other. They behave responsibly around school, when moving between lessons and at break and lunchtime. They are very polite and courteous to visitors.
- Most of the pupils at the school were either at risk of exclusion from their previous schools or had been excluded. Many of them have not attended school for a considerable time. The conduct and attendance of pupils therefore demonstrates a significant improvement which is a direct result of the actions of leaders.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

### **Requires improvement**

- Leaders cannot demonstrate that outcomes for pupils are good enough across all subjects of the curriculum.
- The progress of the most able pupils is not as strong as it might be because the work they are given is not always challenging enough. Pupils who complete tasks quickly often have to wait for other pupils to finish before they can continue with the learning.
- The school's own assessment information shows that the majority of pupils are making steady progress towards achieving the targets set for them by the school. However, work in pupils' books does not always reflect the school's view of progress. For example, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to write independently for sustained periods of time, or to apply their problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics.
- When pupils arrive at the school they have significant gaps in their learning and their attitudes to learning are largely negative. Initially, the school rightly concentrates on improving pupils' attitudes to learning, self-confidence and behaviour. The school does this effectively and consequently pupils make good progress in their personal development and in their ability to manage their own behaviour.
- Pupil's reading skills are well developed, particularly for pupils who enter the school with low reading levels. The recent introduction of a new reading scheme has resulted in several pupils making accelerated progress in reading. The inspector also saw higher-order reading skills being well developed in a GCSE English class.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who are currently being taught 'out of school' make rates of progress broadly similar to other pupils.
- By the time pupils leave Riverside Education they have developed the interpersonal skills and positive attitudes to learning that they need in order to undertake the next stage of their education or employment.

### **Sixth form provision**

### **Requires improvement**

- The school is registered by the Department for Education to accommodate pupils up to the age of 19. Pupils who choose to remain at the school beyond Year 11 do so in order to complete Year 11 programmes of study, for example additional vocational or non-vocational qualifications or GCSEs. The school does not currently offer a separate

curriculum for post-16 education as this would not be appropriate to the needs of these pupils.

- Post-16 pupils study in teaching groups alongside Year 10 and 11 pupils. They do not have separate provision.
- Effective careers advice and guidance is provided for pupils in the sixth form. All sixth form pupils undertake work experience.
- Pupils who wish to complete post-16 qualifications leave the school and attend other providers.



## School details

Unique reference number	142338
DfE registration number	330/6019
Inspection number	10012983

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	14 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	40
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	6
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietors	Anthony Copeland/Abide Zenenga
Chair	Fahmida Dor
Headteacher	Abide Zenenga
Annual fees (day pupils)	Minimum £1,000 per term. Varies depending on provision required for each pupil
Telephone number	0121 678 2942
Website	<a href="http://Riversideeducation.co.uk">http://Riversideeducation.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@riversideeducation.co.uk">info@riversideeducation.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Riverside Education is on a single site in Stechford, Birmingham. It is registered with the Department for Education (DfE) to provide full-time education for up to 40 pupils aged 14 to 19.
- Seven pupils are currently being taught outside of the school by teachers employed by

the school. These pupils are either taught at home or in a library local to their home.

- This was the school's first standard inspection since it became registered with the DfE in September 2015. The school was previously known as Golden Academy.
- The inspection was carried out by one inspector over three days.
- The school accommodates pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, providing alternative provision for pupils who have previously been enrolled at secondary schools in the local area. All the pupils who attend Riverside Education are registered to the school and on the school's roll. Riverside Education provides full-time education for pupils.
- The school admits pupils in Years 9 to 13, for whom mainstream school is no longer an appropriate setting.
- The aim of the school is to 'provide a therapeutic, stimulating practical learning environment that is interesting and fun, giving young people opportunities to gain skills they can use now and in later life'.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning across all subjects and looked at a range of pupils' work in English and mathematics. The observations were carried out jointly with the school's director of education.
- The inspector looked at the school's own assessment information for individual pupils and groups of pupils.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and a representative from the governing body. The inspector also spoke with a group of pupils from Years 10, 11 and 12.
- Questionnaires submitted by 17 members of staff were scrutinised.
- A wide range of documents and policies were looked at, including health and safety checks, records of observations of teaching, safeguarding documentation and records of attendance.
- The views of parents were gathered from a range of sources, including three responses to Ofsted's Parent View website, responses to school's own parental surveys and speaking to parents at the end of the school day.
- A check of the premises including the facilities provided for pupils, was also carried out.

## Inspection team

Janet Satchwell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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