

# Inspection of a good school: Riversides School

Thorneloe Road, Barbourne, Worcester, Worcestershire WR1 3HZ

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Inspection dates:

5 and 6 October 2021

## Outcome

Riversides School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Riversides have often had significant disruption and negative experiences in their education prior to joining the school. Staff are determined that every pupil really does matter here. Staff have a precise understanding of pupils' interests and social and emotional needs. They provide pupils with positive educational experiences. Pupils appreciate the rich opportunities staff give them outside school, such as fishing, walking the Malvern hills and visiting theatres. This approach successfully re-engages pupils in education.

Staff have the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve academically. They plan learning that is closely matched to pupils' needs. This helps pupils to catch up with much of their missed learning and make strong progress across the curriculum.

Staff understand pupils' behavioural difficulties extremely well. They ensure that situations that could potentially upset pupils are identified and take swift action to avoid any possible issues. When pupils do demonstrate challenging behaviours, staff skilfully support and reassure pupils. Consequently, there is a calm and orderly atmosphere across the school.

Pupils are very tolerant of one another's behaviours and difficulties. They know that there is always someone they can turn to if they have any concerns, and they know that staff will deal with any bullying quickly.

## What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

In March 2020, the newly appointed executive headteacher joined the school. He successfully implemented essential actions to address significant weaknesses in the school. He empowered leaders and staff, including giving them training to enable them to carry out their roles well. Consequently, all staff have contributed to the rapid improvements across the school. The new trust arrangements have further supported these rapid improvements. However, the local governing body has recently undergone

several changes. Therefore, it does not have a sufficiently detailed understanding of the school's performance to enable it to fully challenge and hold leaders to account.

Staff make sure that they have a precise understanding of pupils' needs. They use a range of ways to check how pupils learn, what they need to learn and the most effective ways to engage them in learning. Staff adapt the curriculum skilfully, which enables pupils to access the learning successfully.

The school's drive to improve pupils' reading has been very successful. Staff find creative ways to develop pupils' love of reading. For example, texts are shared in different ways, including audio books, film animations and visiting theatre productions. Staff match stories to pupils' interests, which engages pupils in story time well. Pupils have significant gaps in their phonics knowledge. Leaders introduced a new phonics programme to help close these gaps. However, staff are still developing their expertise in delivering the phonics programme, and the school still lacks some resources to enable them to fully implement the programme. While pupils have made great strides in improving their reading, their progress could be even better.

Recently, there have been significant changes to the school's curriculum. Curriculum planning sets out clearly what pupils should be learning and when. Staff have high academic expectations of all pupils. In some subjects, staff deliver the curriculum planning extremely well and pupils make very strong progress. Pupils' progress in other subjects is not as consistently strong. This is because staff are continuing to develop their skills and expertise in delivering the new curriculum. Nevertheless, overall, pupils are achieving well across the curriculum.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of rich and stimulating learning experiences outside school. For example, pupils take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, orienteering exercises and science fairs. Trips to local cafes and parks using public transport help to develop pupils' social skills when in the community. Links with universities and high-quality careers guidance help to raise pupils' aspirations for their futures. The school's work to prepare pupils for the next steps in their education is exceptionally strong.

Staff appreciate leaders' support for their mental health and well-being. While leaders set high expectations, they also provide staff with the support and care they need to carry out their roles. 'Well-being Fridays', with activities such as yoga, help staff to reflect on, and come to terms with, challenging situations at school. This support helps staff to be very effective in their roles and enjoy working at the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

A strong culture of safeguarding is deeply embedded across the school. Staff know the specific vulnerabilities of every pupil in detail. They are exceptionally vigilant and constantly look out for any indication that pupils may be suffering harm or putting themselves in dangerous situations. Staff take swift action to report concerns, however

small. Leaders are tenacious when following up concerns and will not stop until pupils receive the support they need to keep them as safe as possible. Staff take every opportunity to help pupils recognise unsafe situations and behaviours and teach them how to protect themselves from them.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- While the teaching of reading and phonics is effective, the new phonics scheme has only recently been introduced. The school lacks the full range of resources needed to fully implement the scheme, including appropriate phonics reading material. Some staff have only recently been introduced to the scheme. This means that some pupils do not make as much progress as they could. Leaders should review the phonics scheme and make sure that appropriate resources and training are securely in place. This will improve the teaching of phonics and reading further and help pupils make even more progress.
- There is clearly sequenced planning in all subjects that staff understand and use well. However, staff are still developing their expertise in effectively planning the curriculum in all subjects. As a result, while pupils do make progress across the curriculum, it could be even better. Teachers should continue to refine curriculum planning so that it exactly matches all pupils' needs and enables them to make the best possible progress in all subjects.
- Over the last 12 months there have been significant changes to the governance of the school, both in the trust and the local governing board. Currently, there are new governors being appointed to the board. Consequently, the governance structure is still developing a secure understanding of the effectiveness of the school. The school should continue to develop the governance of the school so that it holds leaders fully to account for the school's performance.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in December 2016.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140397
<b>Local authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10205179
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Academy special sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	65
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Robert Turton
<b>Executive Headteacher</b>	Ian Enwright
<b>Head of School</b>	Madeleine Hill
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.riversideschool.co.uk">www.riversideschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 December 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- Since the last inspection, the school has joined the Central Learning Partnership Trust.
- The school operates a second site at Springfield Road, Worcester WR1 2AE. Pupils attend physical education, food technology, design technology and information and communication technology lessons on this site.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan for social, mental and emotional health conditions. A number of pupils have autism spectrum disorder.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, the English, mathematics, personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and history

leaders. Inspectors also met with class teachers and teaching assistants. Inspectors met with the leaders of behaviour, personal development and the special educational needs coordinator.

- The lead inspector met with a member of the local governing body through an online meeting. She met with the chief executive officer of the trust.
- The lead inspector held an online meeting with the board of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into reading, mathematics, history and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors looked at curriculum planning and spoke to leaders about their subjects. They conducted joint lesson visits with the executive headteacher, head of school and subject leaders, spoke to pupils about their work and wider school experiences and looked at a range of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector met with the safeguarding leader. Inspectors scrutinised a range of safeguarding information, including the school's safeguarding policy, spoke to staff, including transport staff, and pupils about safeguarding and looked at how pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. The lead inspector spoke to the safeguarding leader about the reporting and recording of any safeguarding incidents.
- Inspectors toured the school site with a group of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the three free-text comments, the two responses to the pupils' survey and the 20 responses to the staff's survey. There were three responses on Ofsted Parent View, and therefore this information was not available to view.

### **Inspection team**

Ann Pritchard, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Barry Yeadsley

Ofsted Inspector

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