

# Inspection of Riverside School

White Hart Lane, Wood Green, London N22 5QJ

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Inspection dates: 29 and 30 March 2022

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are happy at this school because they know that staff are kind and caring, and want the best for them. Leaders and staff strive to help every pupil overcome their barriers to learning. They pay excellent attention to promoting pupils' personal development. Leaders endeavour to give pupils the skills and confidence to live a fulfilling adult life. Leaders have well-established links with colleges and specialist providers. They support sixth-form students effectively in moving from the school to their chosen post-19 options.

Pupils and staff enjoy first-rate, trusting relationships. Staff are experts at managing pupils' behaviours. They do so with consistency. They are very effective in helping pupils calm down should they get anxious or emotional. As a result, there is a positive and productive atmosphere across the school. On the odd occasion when bullying occurs, leaders respond in a thoughtful and appropriate way. They take account of the individual understanding and needs of those involved.

All pupils have equal opportunities to access a broad range of enrichment activities. For example, leaders make sure that everyone can enjoy residential trips no matter what their needs or disabilities. Staff do a great deal to nurture pupils' talents and interests, such as in art, music, sport and food technology.

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

The school caters for pupils with a wide range of learning and communication difficulties. These include profound and multiple learning difficulties, as well as general learning delay. Most pupils have autism spectrum disorder.

School staff work closely together with a range of external therapists and medical practitioners. They assess each pupil's educational, healthcare and behavioural needs. Staff use this information well. They plan a bespoke curriculum to support each pupil's needs. Behavioural plans ensure that staff give the right support to pupils to help them stay calm. Pupils try their best in lessons and this helps them gain new knowledge and skills.

Leaders prioritise teaching pupils to communicate effectively. Staff are well trained in a range of strategies to support pupils who are not able to speak. They use many different well-chosen resources to support this work across the subjects. This means that pupils are helped effectively to express their wants and interests.

Staff have always taught reading to pupils who have reached the stage of learning to read. Leaders have recently introduced a phonics programme to improve the teaching of early reading. Staff have gained expertise in teaching phonics, and leaders have purchased books that are matched to the sounds that pupils learn. However, these books are not yet fully in use to help pupils to practise their reading and gain fluency.

Staff promote a love of reading by using a range of class texts in lessons and by reading to all pupils. This includes pupils with profound needs. Staff help pupils recognise sounds that are meaningful to their lives, such as those related to smell or the seasons. Staff make learning fun and engaging.

Across the subjects, leaders break down the work into manageable chunks of knowledge. These chunks are taught by staff in a logical order. This enables pupils to build their knowledge. Teachers in the different teams and classes are skilful. They make adaptations to the curriculum, resources and their teaching to meet pupils' individual needs. Teachers and support staff keep a close eye on how well pupils are grasping new knowledge. They are adept at knowing when to intervene and support pupils if they find the work difficult.

Students in the sixth form study functional English and mathematical skills. Staff help students engage with, and take part in, the wider community. Students with higher cognitive abilities can study a couple of accredited courses, at different levels. One course prepares students for independent living and the other for employability. This limited offer of accredited qualifications narrows some students' future options.

The school has an effective careers information, education, advice and guidance programme. Pupils take part in work experience. For example, Year 11 pupils are engaged in a school business enterprise of washing cars. Sixth-form students do cooking or gardening at a local respite provision. Pupils who leave at the end of Year 11 and post-19 students all progress to education, employment or another specialist provision.

The school has an extensive programme for pupils' enrichment outside the classroom. It makes a wonderful contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils take part in joint projects with overseas schools. They also visit museums, participate in a Shakespeare arts festival and enter art competitions. Pupils learn to cycle and to use public transport safely. They regularly put on musical showcases. Many groups and individuals perform in front of the entire school community.

Older pupils and students in the sixth form learn about forming healthy relationships. They then build on this to learn about the age of consent and sexual relationships.

Staff enjoy working at the school and staff retention is high. Governors and school leaders routinely seek staff's views and act to reduce their workload when possible. They also take care of staff well-being. For example, leaders offer staff external impartial counselling supervision.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff know all the pupils and families extremely well. They are very aware of pupils' potential vulnerabilities. There is a strong culture of vigilance, and

staff report and record any concerns they have. Leaders check these records frequently. The school's safeguarding team meets often with various agencies. It discusses and analyses incoming information. The team plans the next steps and secures help quickly to support pupils' safety and welfare.

Through the curriculum, staff help pupils to understand risks and how to seek help.

Leaders have put in place appropriate recruitment procedures when appointing new staff.

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

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

- Leaders have only recently introduced an effective phonics programme to teach those pupils who have the necessary cognitive abilities to read. However, pupils have not yet had enough opportunities to practise reading the sounds they learn with well-matched books. This means that pupils are not reading as fluently as they could. Leaders should implement their plans without delay, to give pupils lots of opportunities to practise reading the sounds they learn with well-matched books. They should check how well pupils are gaining fluency in reading and use the information to identify the exact extra support needed for pupils who fall behind.
- Sixth-form students who have the potential to continue to further education or employment study just a few accredited courses. This means that for those who are capable, they do not get a wide enough choice of accredited courses, which limits their future options. Leaders should widen the range of accredited courses that are suitable for the needs and abilities of students.

## **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>	102178
<b>Local authority</b>	Haringey
<b>Inspection number</b>	10211607
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	139
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	31
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Kirstie Watkins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Martin Doyle
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.riverside.haringey.sch.uk">www.riverside.haringey.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12 October 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has extended its age range from 11 to 16 to 11 to 19. It opened its post-16 provision in January 2018.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. The school caters for pupils with a wide range of learning and communication difficulties. These include general learning delay, and profound and multiple learning difficulties. Most pupils have autism spectrum disorder.
- School leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, art, and personal, social, health and economic education. Inspectors held discussions with leaders and teachers, visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and held discussions with pupils. Inspectors also considered other subjects as part of the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders and the chair of governors and two other governors. They also spoke with the local authority school improvement partner and three therapists.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including information related to safeguarding and the checks carried out before the appointment of staff. Inspectors looked at records of pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors had formal meetings with staff and with pupils. They spoke with parents and carers in the playground and took account of the responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey. They also considered the responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

### **Inspection team**

David Radomsky, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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