

# Inspection of Riverside Special School

Ainsty Street, Goole, East Yorkshire DN14 5JS

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Inspection dates: 19 and 20 January 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Sixth-form provision

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Good

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

A calm environment, underpinned by mutual respect between pupils and staff, exists throughout Riverside Special School. Pupils behave remarkably well in and out of class. They appreciate the friendships they have in school. Pupils go out of their way to help each other and make the school an enjoyable place to attend and learn.

Lessons are purposeful, exciting and well delivered. During the inspection, inspectors saw very few incidents of poor behaviour. However, the individual needs of some pupils mean that pupils do make mistakes occasionally. When this happens, staff are extremely talented at diffusing situations and supporting pupils to self-regulate. Bullying is very rare.

The sixth-form provision has grown rapidly since the previous inspection. There are now three sixth-form classes and the curriculum in the sixth form has broadened. Sixth-form students enjoy attending regularly and are well prepared for adulthood.

Despite the care and nurturing environment that teachers and support staff provide in school, leaders have not followed aspects of important statutory safeguarding guidance. These failures have potentially put pupils at unnecessary risk of harm.

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

Leaders, including governors, have not prioritised some of their safeguarding responsibilities. They have not followed all government guidance put in place to protect pupils. As a result, the leadership and management of the school is inadequate.

Leaders have had great success in other aspects of school life. Since the time of the last inspection, leaders have overseen extensive building work to improve the school's facilities. A new hydrotherapy pool has been added and is popular with pupils. Leaders have carefully managed a period of transition where the number of pupils on roll has increased. Having now completed this school improvement work, throughout school, in all key stages, classrooms buzz with excitement. Many classes include pupils of mixed ages. Pupils interact with each other exceptionally well.

The school's curriculum is well thought through. As the school has evolved, so has the curriculum. It continues to do so. For example, leaders are currently introducing a range of additional qualifications for pupils in Years 10 to 14. They are doing this to ensure pupils are even more fully prepared for life after school. Pupils already receive a high-quality provision to prepare them for adulthood. This includes, for many pupils, preparation to enable them to live independently in the future.

Pupils also access many national curriculum subjects. They are taught English, mathematics and other subjects on a regular basis. Leaders are currently introducing a new phonics-based reading scheme to support pupils who cannot read fluently. Embedding this scheme is important as there is currently some variation in

the quality of how pupils are taught to read. Sometimes, the books pupils read do not match the sounds they have been taught.

Teachers follow subject plans when teaching pupils. These plans outline what teachers should teach and when. Teachers deliver lessons with passion. They engage pupils in all aspects of the lesson. Teachers have appropriate subject knowledge and use sensible methods to embed important learning into pupils' long-term memory. They check what pupils know and use this information to plan future lessons. Throughout school, lessons are strengthened by pupils' very positive attitudes towards learning.

Many pupils attending the school have complex learning needs. These needs are well known by staff. Teachers and support staff are familiar with the strategies required to meet the needs of individuals. They work collaboratively to make sure pupils are well supported in and out of lessons. As a result, pupils behave exceptionally well. When pupils struggle to self-regulate their behaviour, matters are quickly resolved. Sometimes, pupils take action to support themselves or each other without adults needing to get involved.

A high-profile part of the curriculum for pupils is their 'life' lessons. These lessons are just one part of a high-quality personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum. Pupils learn about the importance of healthy relationships, dignity and respect. They discuss and debate topical matters in lessons and at regular school council meetings. Pupils show each other respect and dignity consistently. They listen to and value the opinions of their peers.

In the sixth form, students study a range of subjects. In addition to compulsory English and mathematics lessons, students also choose two optional subjects such as science, computing, gardening or food preparation. This helps to prepare them for life after school. These lessons are complemented by the PSHE curriculum and other important 'life' lessons. For example, to help students prepare for the challenge of living independently, teachers have recently included geocaching and orienteering into physical education lessons. Similarly, to increase students' resilience and physical development, boxercise lessons are provided.

Pupils access impartial careers advice at several times during their time at school. Some local colleges and employers visit the school as part of the careers programme. Leaders' improvement plans, based on rigorous self-evaluation, include an increase in the number of providers that visit. They expect their improvement plans to further strengthen the extent to which they meet the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about qualifications and apprenticeships.

Staff are very positive about life at school. They say leaders are mindful of their workload and well-being. They are well trained on strategies to manage pupils' behaviour.

The governing body meets regularly. Governors are closely involved with the evolving curriculum offer. They work with leaders to monitor the school's spending of the pupil premium to support disadvantaged pupils. However, they are not fully informed about the responsibilities they hold, such as the duties they have under the Equalities Act 2010. Governors do not know enough about behaviour and safeguarding trends to challenge leaders appropriately. They have failed to ensure that several statutory safeguarding duties are met.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The safeguarding arrangements that leaders have in place when appointing new staff do not meet the expectations of statutory guidance, such as those outlined in 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'. Several of the essential checks that should have been made when appointing new staff, and governors, had not been completed at the start of this inspection. Leaders cannot be assured that external visitors to the school are safe to work with children.

Leaders do not follow statutory guidance consistently when handling concerns about members of staff. For example, a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service that should have been made previously had to be made during this inspection.

Leaders do not have effective oversight of the safeguarding records they keep. They do not routinely analyse the records they have. Safeguarding trends are not identified. Governors are not provided with any useful analysis of these records. Governors have not requested it.

Some staff are not fully confident about the content of the safeguarding training they have received, or how to handle concerns that come to their attention.

Several policies relating to safeguarding were missing from the school's website at the start of this inspection. Others were online but out of date. During the inspection, some of these were updated. However, several continue to contain errors such as referencing out-of-date statutory guidance. The safeguarding policy used at the time of the inspection was unclear about the specific procedures to be followed by staff to raise concerns. This means staff may not be following the correct guidance when pupils need help.

These failings have potentially put pupils at unnecessary risk of harm.

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

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

- The safeguarding arrangements that leaders have in place for appointing new staff do not meet the expectations of statutory guidance. In addition, leaders do

not follow statutory guidance consistently when a member of staff is dismissed. They have failed to take steps to ensure regular visitors are safe to work with pupils. Leaders must conduct a full review of safeguarding arrangements urgently, address all matters of concern and ensure that statutory guidance is adhered to at all times.

- Some staff are not fully confident about the content of the safeguarding training they have received, or how to handle concerns that come to their attention. The consequence of this is that there may be variation in the actions leaders take when safeguarding concerns arise. Leaders must ensure all staff understand the steps they should take should a safeguarding concern arise.
- Leaders do not have effective oversight of the safeguarding records they keep. They do not identify meaningful trends and patterns in concerns. Governors are not provided with this information and do not request it. As a result, leaders miss opportunities to check that pupils are safe. Leaders should ensure record-keeping systems allow them to monitor ongoing and past concerns tightly.
- Leaders' oversight of the school's policies, including those linked to safeguarding, is not good enough. Some policies are missing, others contain errors or gaps, and others are out of date. Leaders must undertake a comprehensive review of all school policies, ensuring they are fit for purpose. They should ensure staff are well trained and clear on how to apply these policies in the school.
- Governors are not fully aware of the responsibilities they hold, such as those linked to aspects of safer recruitment and the duties they have under the Equalities Act 2010. As such, aspects of the core role of governors are not being fulfilled. Governors should ensure they are fully aware of their statutory responsibilities and take steps to ensure these are fulfilled.
- The school's new programme for teaching pupils to read, using phonics, is in the early stages of its roll out. There is some variation between pupils' experience of this curriculum from one class to another. For some pupils, this slows down the rate at which they are supported to read fluently. Leaders must ensure the plan they have to embed the new reading curriculum is implemented successfully.

## 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.

## 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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>                    | 118148   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                            | East Riding of Yorkshire   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                          | 10255573   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                             | Special  |
| <b>School category</b>                            | Community special  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                        | 2 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>        | 136  |
| <b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b> | 36   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                      | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>                    | Helen Caldwell   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                                | Andrew Hall  |
| <b>Website</b>                                    | <a href="http://www.riversideschoolgoole.com">www.riversideschoolgoole.com</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>                | 27 June 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005                        |

## Information about this school

- The school provides education for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties and/or profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- The age of the pupils the school can admit has changed from five-to-16 years to two-to-19 years since the last graded inspection of the school. At the time of this inspection, all pupils who attended the school were aged six or older.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- This was the first routine inspection the school 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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher and several members of the school's leadership team. A discussion was held with four representatives from the governing body, including the chairperson. The lead inspector also met two representatives from the local authority and spoke to a third by telephone.
- To evaluate the quality of education, deep dives were carried out in communication, including reading, mathematics, physical education and PSHE, including life skills. These involved meeting subject leaders, reviewing curriculum plans, visiting lessons, speaking to teachers, talking to pupils about their learning and looking at samples of their work.
- As part of the evaluation of the effectiveness of safeguarding, the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and other records were reviewed. The checks made when appointing new staff were scrutinised.
- The views of parents, carers and staff who responded to Ofsted's surveys were also fully considered.

## Inspection team

James Duncan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Liz Moore

Ofsted Inspector



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