

# Inspection of a good school: Riverside Community Primary School

210 Poole Park Road, St Budeaux, Plymouth, Devon PL5 1DD

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Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 2023

## Outcome

Riverside Community Primary School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Riverside is an inclusive school that is warm and welcoming. Pupils learn to respect and value everyone. Consequently, pupils behave well in lessons and at social times. There is very little low-level disruption to learning. Pupils say that in the past there were incidents of bullying. However, they are unanimous in their views that bullying is now rare. Pupils feel safe and cared for. Pupils describe the school as 'one big happy family'. Pupils speak fondly of their staff. They say that they can always go to a member of staff if they have a concern.

Leaders have high aspirations for all pupils. Staff are determined for all pupils to reach their full potential. Leaders encourage pupils to be a 'beacon' in society. For example, pupils volunteer at the local community centre to support the elderly. Pupils take part in a wide variety of clubs and represent the school in many different events.

The school is an integral part of the community. Parents are positive about the school. One parent's view, which summed up many, is, 'The school is amazing.' Nearly all parents who completed Ofsted's survey, Ofsted Parent View, would recommend the school.

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

Leaders and staff have recently reviewed the curriculum. This is because they want it to be even more ambitious. Children in the early years get off to the strongest possible start. Curriculum planning carefully considers children's starting points. Children form strong relationships with adults and their peers. This enables staff to establish high expectations quickly. Children respond well to these expectations and make strong progress through the curriculum. As a result, children are well prepared for Year 1.

Teaching presents information clearly to pupils. It checks pupils' understanding accurately before moving to the next concept. The early signs are that the changes to the curriculum in most subjects are having a positive impact on pupils knowing and remembering more. Leaders' meticulous curriculum thinking supports pupils with special educational needs

and/or disabilities to achieve well. Nevertheless, some of the choices of activities, in some subjects, do not always support pupils to develop their knowledge. Leaders recognise this and have plans in place to make further curriculum adaptations.

The teaching of reading is a top priority across the school. The school's library is a central feature of the school. Pupils often spend their social time reading the wide range of books available to them. Leaders aim to teach the youngest children to read as quickly as possible. As soon as children are ready, they start to learn the sounds that letters represent. Pupils practise with reading books, using the sounds that they know. This helps them to become confident and fluent readers. Pupils who fall behind are identified and receive support to catch up quickly. Staff are well trained in teaching phonics and comment positively about their ongoing professional development.

Leaders have made recent changes to the key stage 2 reading curriculum. Once pupils have cracked the phonics code, pupils extend their vocabulary and learn how to interpret a wide range of literature. However, in some subjects, pupils do not develop a secure understanding of subject-specific vocabulary.

The large majority of disadvantaged pupils learn the curriculum well. However, governors do not have a sharp enough grasp on the impact of the additional funding provided for these pupils. Consequently, they do not hold leaders to account precisely enough for this.

Leaders and staff support parents to help their children attend school regularly. However, some pupils remain absent from school too often. As a result, these pupils miss too much learning. Furthermore, they do not catch up quickly. This means that they fall behind their peers.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development. The curriculum is underpinned by the school's values. It is carefully aligned to the needs of pupils so prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

Staff morale is high. Staff say that they are well supported by leaders who are mindful of their workload. All who completed Ofsted's staff survey enjoy working at Riverside.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have made sure that keeping pupils safe is the responsibility of everyone. Leaders ensure that staff receive regular training. Staff are astute to the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. They know what to do should they have a concern. Leaders make sure that pupils and families who need help get it. Leaders have robust procedures in place for checking staff's suitability to work with pupils.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. They know what to do should they feel at risk of harm.

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

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

- Some of the recent changes that leaders have made to some subjects in the curriculum do not benefit pupils' learning in the ways leaders intend. This is because the teaching approaches chosen do not deepen pupils' knowledge of important concepts. Leaders need to ensure that curriculum development, and the way in which it is taught, help all pupils to know more and remember more.
- Some pupils' attendance remains stubbornly low. As a result, they are missing out on important learning. This is leading to gaps in these pupils' knowledge of the curriculum. Leaders should continue to work closely with families to ensure that pupils' attendance improves and persistent absence reduces.
- Governors do not have a sharp enough understanding of how effectively leaders support disadvantaged pupils. They do not hold leaders sufficiently to account for the impact of the additional funding provided for such pupils. Governors need to ensure that their oversight of disadvantaged pupils' achievement is more precise.

## 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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2017.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135348
<b>Local authority</b>	Plymouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268576
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	507
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Ruth Sayers
<b>Headteacher</b>	Clare Willcocks
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.riversideprimary.net">www.riversideprimary.net</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in September 2022.
- The school does not use any alternative education provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with a representative from the local authority, the headteacher, senior leaders, curriculum leaders and teaching and support staff.
- The inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, geography and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning, looked at samples of pupils' work and listened to pupils read.
- The inspector examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including

leaders' self-evaluation and improvement plans.

- The inspector scrutinised safeguarding records, tested staff's safeguarding knowledge and spoke with pupils. The inspector also met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. He also took into consideration the responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Matt Middlemore, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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