

Inspection of Riverside Community Special School

Scratchface Lane, Purbrook, Waterlooville, Hampshire PO7 5QD

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe at this inclusive school. A sense of respect and kindness pervades. Pupils treat everyone at school with consideration and encourage each other to do their best. Pupils' relationships with adults in the school are excellent. Staff know and nurture the needs of pupils very well. Pupils trust staff and know that they want the best for them.

Leaders have very high ambitions for pupils' personal development. It is truly at the heart of everything that takes place at school. Through the 'play and interaction' programme, pupils learn how to share their views and thoughts. They value and enjoy the various leadership roles and opportunities that they have. As school council members and 'classroom helpers', pupils learn the importance of making a positive contribution to society.

Pupils know the high expectations that staff have for them. They rise to these in their behaviour and work. Pupils' behaviour is exceptional, and the school environment is often calm and purposeful. Breaktimes are joyous times, and pupils play very well together. On the rare occasions when pupils find it hard to regulate their emotions, staff support pupils with sensitivity. Staff are highly expert in the help they provide for pupils to have positive interactions.

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

Leaders have focused on developments in the curriculum since the previous inspection. In many subjects, they have set out ambitious learning outcomes that span from Reception to Year 6. In these subjects, leaders have carefully sequenced what pupils will learn and when. As a result, in these areas of the curriculum, pupils learn well and build on knowledge over time.

Leaders are still thinking through improvements to some foundation subjects. In these subjects, leaders have not yet confirmed the knowledge and skills they want pupils to learn through their time at the school. This means that in a small number of subjects, pupils do not build on knowledge over time as well as they could. Leaders are aware of this and have plans in place to complete their work on the curriculum.

The curriculum in Reception is fully considered and embedded. It provides an excellent starting point for children. Leaders recognise the wide range of needs of children. They have precisely mapped out an ambitious and engaging curriculum to build children's knowledge in all areas of learning. Teachers make detailed adaptations to support those children with the most complex learning needs. They also make adaptations to deepen knowledge for children who will be able to meet their early learning goals. Due to this, children in Reception are exceptionally well prepared to move into Year 1.

Across the school, teachers have effective subject knowledge and plan engaging learning activities. All staff have secure knowledge of pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers lead meetings well to review pupils' education, health and care plans. They work effectively with parents to set and monitor precise interim targets for pupils each term.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have begun their work to embed phonics as the main approach to teaching pupils to read. They have put in place a sequenced commercial scheme and most staff have been well trained to support pupils with their reading. However, leaders have not yet finished their work on embedding phonics. This means that some staff are not as well trained as others to support pupils to read. In addition, leaders have not yet matched all decodable books to the sounds that pupils learn. This means pupils are not able to secure knowledge of sounds and develop fluency in reading as well as they could.

Leaders' work on pupils' personal development is exceptional. This starts in Reception, where staff plan targeted activities to teach pupils routines and rules. Through personal, social, health and economic education lessons, pupils learn about difference. When pupils talk about each other's differences they are clear that everyone should be treated with respect and kindness. Leaders have a sharp focus on the mental health and well-being needs of pupils and their families. The home-school link team provides high-quality guidance and care for families. The team's expert work, whether through parenting programmes, SEND workshops or individualised support, has made a considerable impact on the lives of pupils and their families.

Leaders have not yet fully addressed some of the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection, especially for the expert teaching of early reading. However, they have taken effective action to improve some other areas of the curriculum. Staff are proud to work at this school and are inspired by the vision of leaders and governors. Governors know the school well and provide useful challenge and support for leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils' safety is paramount. Leaders make rigorous checks on those working in the school. Staff are well trained to spot when a pupil or their family needs help. When they have concerns, they raise these quickly and precisely.

Designated safeguarding leads keep detailed records that show the rapid and robust actions they take to keep families safe. They are tenacious in their work with external agencies to ensure families and pupils have the right support. Leaders also use the school's well-trained home-school link team to support families.

At school, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online and in the community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not yet completed their work to embed phonics as the primary way of teaching pupils to read. This means that pupils are not securing knowledge of sounds or developing fluency in reading as well as they could. Leaders should ensure all staff have the knowledge to support pupils with their reading and that the books used to help pupils learn to read are closely matched to the sounds they are learning.
- Leaders are still making refinements to the curriculum in some non-core subjects. This means that pupils are not learning as well as they could across the entire curriculum. Leaders should ensure that for all subjects taught, there is a progression of knowledge sequenced towards ambitious end points and that these are shared with staff.

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

Unique reference number	116600
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10240314
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	137
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Judit Kallos
Headteacher	Catherine Le Roux
Website	www.riverside.hants.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	2 and 3 November 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Riverside Community Special School provides specialist support for pupils with moderate learning difficulties and autism spectrum disorder. All pupils attending the school have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not currently make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other members of the leadership team. The lead inspector met with the deputy chair of governors and with one other governor. The lead inspector also met with a representative from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, humanities, and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons. They also spoke to pupils in lessons and during playtimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors considered a range of documents, including leaders' evaluations of the school, their school improvement plan and minutes from governors' meetings.
- Inspectors took into account the views of parents and carers through their responses to Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors took account of the views of staff through conversations and the responses to the online staff survey.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements in the school by speaking with leaders, staff and pupils. They met with the designated safeguarding leads to discuss the arrangements for safeguarding. During these meetings, the lead inspector scrutinised records and sampled case files to explore how the school identifies and supports pupils at risk of harm. Inspectors also examined the school's work to recruit and check on the suitability of staff and checked staff's knowledge of their responsibilities.

Inspection team

Nina Marabese, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alan Johnson

Ofsted Inspector

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