

Riverbank Primary School

Unit 2 Ripponden Mill, Ripponden, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX6 4DH

Inspection date

24 January 2024

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(2), 2(2)(b), 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g)

- The previous standard inspection in June 2023 found that there were inconsistencies in how well pupils were taught to read. Some adults have not received training to implement the school's phonics programme.
- Leaders, some of whom are new to the school, have ensured that all adults involved in supporting pupils' early reading are trained to follow the school's chosen systematic approach to help pupils read.
- The school's action plan has guided leaders' intentions well. Leaders have prioritised the development of teachers' skills and knowledge through carefully planned internal and external support. They have developed the role of the subject leaders for reading and English, ensuring a suitably rigorous approach to the teaching of reading and phonics. As such, early reading is taught with precision and skill. Leaders' vision for a 'reading school' is evident. Leaders are reviewing their annual quality assurance procedures to ensure that leaders keep these developments at the forefront of the school's work.
- The previous standard inspection found that some aspects of the wider curriculum were not fully developed. Leaders had not mapped out the knowledge and skills that they wanted pupils to learn or the order in which this should happen.
- Leaders have maintained a high focus on staff development and training in order that all staff have the knowledge and skills necessary to enable pupils to learn well across all areas of the curriculum.
- The school has newly developed curriculum documents for all taught subjects. Some subjects are taught discretely, and some are taught using a cross-curricular approach. These documents clearly outline the key knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn through the year. The curriculum is designed to hook into the interests of pupils. Teachers know their pupils well and can demonstrate what they do to motivate them. For example, they use exciting hooks to grab pupils' imaginations, such as creating an Egyptian mummy. The school ensures that the needs of all pupils are identified and that

appropriate strategies to support them in the classroom are clear. Staff have received training so that they know the needs of pupils well and can adapt learning to plan and support pupils effectively.

- The previous standard inspection found that leaders did not have effective processes in place to check how well pupils were learning across the wider curriculum. At this time, gaps in pupils' knowledge were not identified and responded to as well as they could be.
- Leaders have worked with staff and have developed rigorous systems to understand pupils' learning across the curriculum better. This information is used to inform leaders of pupils' wider progress and development. Future learning is then planned to address any gaps or misconceptions.
- There is now a clear programme of assessment in place throughout the curriculum. All pupils complete regular assessments in English, mathematics and reading. This enables staff to act with agility and to plan for bespoke interventions, as necessary. Staff use a range of methods to check what pupils know and can do at the start of new lesson sequences. They use this information to identify pupils' starting points and then adapt teaching and resources. Staff check pupils' understanding regularly during lessons. They probe the pupils' recall and address any knowledge gaps. Innovative methods are used to check pupils' new knowledge at the end of units of work. Teachers use this information to inform pupils' next steps.
- The standards in this part are now met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a) 34(1)(b)

- The previous inspection found that leaders had not ensured that all the independent school standards had been met. The school had not developed effective strategies to support pupils with their early reading, and it had not fully developed the wider curriculum or processes to check how well pupils were learning in the wider curriculum.
- The action plan, which was submitted to the Department for Education following the school's standard inspection, was not acceptable. The actions proposed at this time included insufficient detail.
- Leaders have taken appropriate action to address the unmet standards from the previous inspection. New leaders have been instrumental in authoring a robust action plan that precisely tackles areas for development identified in the previous standard inspection. Leaders have engaged the support of external professionals and professionals from the group's secondary schools.
- The standards in this part are now met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

The school now meets the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2), is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are-
 - 2(2)(b) that pupils acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills;
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(c) involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
 - 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range;
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress;

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

School details

Unique reference number	141608
DfE registration number	381/6015
Inspection number	10320097

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School status	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	15
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Time Out Childrens Homes Ltd
Chair	Dominic Macauley
Headteacher	Tayyaba Ahmed
Annual fees (day pupils)	£60,000
Telephone number	01422 415529
Website	https://www.riverbank-school.com/
Email address	tayyaba.ahmed@timeouthomes.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	13 to 15 June 2023

Information about this school

- Riverbank Primary School is an independent special school. The school is registered to provide full-time education for up to 20 pupils. A number of the pupils are in residential care.
- All pupils who attend this school have an education, health and care plan. Many pupils have social, emotional or mental health needs. Some have sensory needs and/or a diagnosis of autism or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.
- Day pupils are placed at the school by several different local authorities.

- The aim of leaders is to support pupils to be able to transition back into mainstream school at an appropriate time.
- Some lessons, including food studies, take place at Brearley Hall School, another Timeout Childrens Home independent school.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspection was unannounced.
- The inspector met with the proprietor, headteacher, teacher in charge and designated safeguarding lead and the humanities subject lead.
- The inspector reviewed school documentation relevant to the independent school standards being considered. These included curriculum and assessment documents.
- The inspector visited lessons, met staff and spoke to a group of pupils about their learning. The inspector listened to two pupils read to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record, as there have been appointments to the school staff since the previous inspect. The inspector checked Parts 3 and 6 of the independent school standards as requested by the registration authority for this school. Leaders have appropriate policies in respect of safeguarding, which are available on the school's website. The standards in respect of Parts 3 and 6 continue to be met.

Inspection team

Marcus Newby, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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