

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Two Rivers High School

Torc Campus, Silver Link Road, Glascote Heath, Tamworth, Staffordshire B77 2HJ

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Inspection dates:

20 and 21 February 2024

## Outcome

Two Rivers High School continues to be an outstanding school.

The headteacher of this school is Gail Brindley. This school is part of Endeavour Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Heather Phillips, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Simon Kibble.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Two Rivers High School is more than a special school; it is an inspirational community where pupils are happy and thrive. They thrive because staff see beyond their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to the unique qualities of each pupil.

Pupils have various learning barriers, such as autism spectrum disorder and learning and cognition needs. These and other additional needs could prevent pupils from achieving the best from their time in school. However, whatever the need, staff work hard to understand them and consistently put the right help in place at the right time.

Understanding and patience are the keys to this very special community. Pupils told inspectors they feel that staff listen to them. When pupils need help, staff act quickly, with kindness and care, to respond to what is needed. This means that pupils feel valued and eager to please and work hard. Consequently, behaviour is generally strong in lessons and at all other times.

Pupils experience a range of exciting opportunities to prepare them for the world around them. Litter picking, running a charity shop, gardening or even delivering community magazines provide opportunities for all pupils to develop their sense of community responsibility.

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

Expectations are high for what pupils should learn and when. Leaders have identified the vital knowledge that all pupils must learn. Skilful teachers translate these expectations into exciting lessons that are adapted to the varying needs of the pupils. The school's

work on early reading is particularly strong, and pupils with the most complex needs build their phonic and reading skills quickly through small steps of well-sequenced learning.

The curriculum pathway model ensures that pupils work alongside pupils with similar needs and staff with specialised skills in meeting those needs. For example, in the 'Discoverer' pathway, inspectors saw staff using visual timetables and signing to support those with some form of speech, language and communication need. In other pathways, like 'Pioneers', staff are skilled in adapting GCSE programmes of study for pupils with increasingly complex needs.

Staff and therapists talk to the pupils about their needs and empower them to understand themselves better. Pupils know their needs and what they can do to overcome their challenges. Inspectors saw pupils use ear defenders to regulate their sensory needs, while others were skilful in using brief 'time out' sessions or even playing the school's piano to keep themselves calm and focused.

English, including early reading, is rightly a priority at the school. Some pupils come to Two Rivers with negative views about reading, writing, and sometimes even speaking and listening to others. However, this changes quickly. Pupils told inspectors about the range of books they now read and their favourite authors. Laptops, tablets, and other devices are used successfully to overcome barriers to a love of writing or reading. Inspectors saw pupils happily socialising with friends and chatting with staff informally.

Across all subjects, there is a love of learning and a pride in achievement. In art, for example, pupils create work they can be proud of because the skills they have learned have developed their enjoyment of the arts. Physical education is a real favourite for pupils. Physical fitness is prioritised through a healthy mix of competitive sports. In mathematics, pupils inspectors spoke to not only talked in detail about what they had learned in the past but also how they would be able to use these skills in future careers or jobs.

Many pupils, in addition to their SEND, have other needs that might have been caused by bereavement, difficulties in early childhood or challenging personal circumstances. An impressive range of interventions meets these needs swiftly. Counselling, nurture, play, and music are just some therapies available.

Leaders show tenacity in ensuring that all pupils attend school as much as possible. Since the pandemic, some pupils have struggled to return to school. However, this is changing, and pupils are attending more frequently week by week.

A varied and exciting menu of school clubs and wider opportunities enriches pupils' time at Two Rivers High. Craft, sensory, library, and basketball are just some of the clubs available, and these are well attended. Talent competitions, competitive sports with other special schools, and performances provide the stage for pupils to shine and show off their amazing talents.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They feel well supported and well trained. Leaders welcome the support from a caring and supportive multi-academy trust,

which is focused on empowering the school to make the greatest difference to pupils. One parent, whose comments represent the views of many others, said, 'The staff go over and above what is expected and genuinely care for the children in their care.'

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 predecessor school to be outstanding in December 2014.

## 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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	146727
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10294643
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<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>	255
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	29
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Simon Kibble
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gail Brindley
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.tworiversschool.net">www.tworiversschool.net</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, there have been several changes to the leadership team at Two Rivers High. A new deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2021. Three new assistant headteachers and two senior leaders, some of whom were existing staff, were appointed in April 2021, April 2022 and September 2023.
- The school shares its site with South Staffordshire College, Torc Site, which some students access, and the early years provision from the linked primary school, Two Rivers Primary.
- The school does not use any registered or unregistered alternative provision.
- The school offers an outreach service for local primary and secondary mainstream schools.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school’s education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils’ interests first.
- During the inspection, inspectors completed deep dives in the following subjects: English, including reading, mathematics, physical education and art. In these subjects, they visited lessons, looked at pupils’ work, and talked with pupils and staff about how these subjects were taught. Inspectors also looked at other subjects in less detail to check how they were planned and taught.
- Inspectors observed informal times to evaluate safeguarding and pupils’ behaviour.
- During the inspection, the inspectors had formal meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject teachers, governing body members, the board of trustees, and pupils. They also talked informally with parents, carers, pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- An inspector also spoke with representatives of the multi-academy trust.

### **Inspection team**

Chris Pollitt, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Ellen Taylor

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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