

INSPECTION REPORT

RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Tadcaster

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 121466

Headteacher: Mr Anthony Kingston

Reporting inspector: Valerie Whittington
23832

Dates of inspection: 5 - 6 November 2001

Inspection number: 195349

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Ian Christopher Butler
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Riverside Community Primary School takes pupils from three to 11 years old and is maintained by North Yorkshire Local Education Authority. It is set in extensive grounds and serves the small town of Tadcaster, within a rural setting, midway between the cities of Leeds and York. At the time of the inspection there were 418 pupils on roll in 15 classes including a new nursery which opened in January 2001. Riverside is larger than most primary schools nationally. Most pupils start school with standards of attainment that are broadly average. There is, however, a wide range of experience. Ten per cent of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals which is well below the national average. The percentage (12.4 per cent) of pupils identified as having special educational needs, is below the national average, including seven pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need. However, this percentage has risen steadily from 1997 to the current level with the number of statemented pupils in the school well above average for the local education authority. There is one pupil for whom English is an additional language; this is well below the national average.

At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had been in post for ten years. The school has seen a rapid growth in numbers since then, from just over 200 pupils on roll, to the current level. This is due to its popularity and very good reputation. This has had a significant effect on the school's accommodation including the need for four mobile classrooms. A number of self-help projects involving parents and governors has ensured that pupils have benefited from improvements to the school's environment including a new classroom and information and communication technology suite. Five teachers are new to the school in the last two years. Earlier this year the school achieved a 'School of Excellence' award from the Department of Education and Science.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Riverside is a very good school where pupils attain high standards and make very good progress across the school. There is an outstanding ethos within the school which fosters mutual respect and creates a very positive culture for learning. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and are confident learners. The quality of teaching is very good overall. The headteacher and management team provide outstanding leadership and management and a clear educational direction. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards of attainment are well above the national average in English and in mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is very good across the school.
- The very positive ethos in the school produces very good attitudes and behaviour, and excellent relationships and personal development.
- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and management.
- Children in the nursery receive an excellent start to their school life.

What could be improved

- The use of assessment, based on reception children's prior attainment, to plan activities that meet their developing maturity, skills and abilities.
- Consistency in the effective use of teaching assistants, particularly, in the first part of literacy and numeracy sessions.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1997, and has made very good progress since then. The school's scores in national tests for 11 year olds are now well above the national average in English and mathematics, and the average of similar schools. The quality of teaching has improved and is now very good overall. Pupils' standards of behaviour and attitudes to their work are still very good. The headteacher now provides outstanding leadership and management. The school has fully addressed all of the key issues raised by the last report. There is full and equal access to the information and communication technology and religious education curriculum for all pupils. All curriculum co-ordinators have clear job descriptions. Information technology is now used well and standards have risen significantly. Under the leadership of the headteacher and other key staff, the school is very well placed to continue its trend of improvement and high standards.

STANDARDS OF ATTAINMENT

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	B	A	A	A
Mathematics	A	A*	A	A
Science	A	A	B	B

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

In 2001, standards of attainment were well above the national average in English and mathematics, and above average in science. Standards at Key Stage 1 are well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Riverside achieves the same high standards when compared with other similar schools. These standards have been consistently high over the last two years, any fluctuation relating to differences in year groups. The school sets realistic but challenging targets based on individual pupil data. Targets set were exceeded this year. Inspection findings show that standards are likely to be even higher next year in all three subjects. Standards in information and communication technology have improved significantly since the last inspection; work and lessons seen during the inspection are above the national average. Pupils make very good progress through the school and the standards represent very good achievement. This progress results from the high quality relationships, very good teaching and the pupils' very good attitudes to school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to school. They take an interest in their work, are keen to learn, and sustain their concentration well. They are confident learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	There is a very good standard of behaviour across the school. Pupils have a very good sense of responsibility for the school and are proud of it.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are excellent across the school. Pupils are friendly and open in their approach, and get on very well with each other. They have a genuine concern for others and a very caring approach. This is the result of very good adult models.
Attendance	The rate of attendance is very high in comparison with other schools.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

In the school as a whole, the quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Of the lessons seen, 20 per cent were excellent, 40 per cent very good, 30 per cent good and ten per cent satisfactory. This is a very high standard indeed.

Teachers have excellent relationships with their pupils and work very hard to ensure a good quality of education for all. Lessons are very well focused on the learning objectives and provide a high level of challenge for pupils. There are good systems for supporting special educational needs both in and outside classes. There is a brisk pace to lessons that promotes the very good rate of progress that pupils make. The best teachers have excellent questioning skills that promote thought and understanding and a high degree of interaction. Pupils respond very well to the teaching and are confident in their learning. In order to raise the standard of teaching and learning to that of the best seen, the school should ensure that assessments of the children's prior attainment are used in reception to plan activities that meet their developing maturity, skills and abilities.

There is very good teaching of literacy and numeracy and the school is particularly effective at meeting the needs of all its pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a very rich curriculum for its pupils. There is an appropriate emphasis on the basic subjects of English, mathematics and science that ensures high standards, but there is also good provision for the other subjects with practical and investigative activities. The use of information and communication technology has been very well developed.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes very good provision for these pupils. There are very effective systems for identifying needs and for providing extra support. The individual education plans are helpful in identifying targets, and the Code of Practice is followed appropriately.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is very good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is very good provision for pupils' personal development. Social development is very well promoted from the nursery class where children learn to consider others and co-operate well. There is wide provision for cultural development and clear spiritual and moral guidance. Pupils develop a very good sense of ownership of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is a very positive ethos for learning and a caring environment where pupils are well known as individuals. There are good arrangements for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership and management for the school. He sets a very clear educational direction and has an excellent overview of the school's work. The deputy headteacher provides very effective support, and is a very good role model as a teacher. Other teachers provide excellent subject leadership and management.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have a very good overview of the life and work of the school and are very active in their support. Many visit the school on a regular basis and make a significant contribution.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is outstanding in its evaluation of its performance. There are effective systems for tracking pupils' progress and setting targets. These are analysed and reviewed rigorously and steps taken to amend provision accordingly. There is a very reflective approach that underpins the school's success.

The strategic use of resources	The school has an excellent understanding of budget matters. The governors have clear lines of delegation and plan well for using limited funding; there are always projects in mind. Self-help is a strong feature. In its expenditure, the school applies the principles of best value extremely well. The school gives very good value for money.
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The school building provides adequate accommodation which is used effectively. The grounds are extensive, including a wildlife area, although the designated outside area for children in reception is somewhat restricted. The school has identified this within the school improvement plan. There is a good level of staffing and resources across the school. In order to ensure that the investment in extra staffing resources gives the best value possible, the school should ensure consistency in the effective use of teaching assistants.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children enjoy going to school. • The teaching is good. • The school enables pupils to make good progress in their work. • Expectations are high, the school expects pupils to work hard. • The school is very approachable. • There are good leadership and management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no area where a significant number of parents would like to see improvement, although some are concerned that the school has large classes when groups are set at the top end of the school.

Parents were very supportive of the school in the questionnaires and the meeting with inspectors. The inspection agrees with all their positive feelings about the school. During the inspection large groups were not judged to have a negative impact on learning and standards. The school's emphasis on success in national tests has not narrowed its approach to the curriculum, which is wide.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards of attainment are well above the national average in English and mathematics.

1. The school's scores in national tests for 11 year olds in 2001 were well above the national average in English and mathematics, and above the national average in science. Inspection findings show that standards are likely to be even higher next year in all three subjects. Standards at Key Stage 1 are well above the national average in reading, writing and in mathematics. Standards have been consistently high over the last four years; and the same is true when compared with similar schools. Standards have shown a trend of improvement similar to the national trend. There is no significant variation over time between boys and girls.
2. This is a very high standard indeed and demonstrates good improvement since the previous inspection. This is the result of outstanding leadership and management, high quality relationships and very good teaching across the school. Pupils' attitudes to work are very positive, the vast majority are keen to learn and take an active part in lessons. A strong working ethos and culture for learning results in confident pupils who want 'to do their best'. The school is justifiably pleased with the continuing high level of standards achieved. It sets realistic yet challenging targets for pupils based on prior attainment. These are informed by excellent tracking systems using assessment information gained as pupils move through the school. Targets set are accurate predictors of the success achieved. It is not surprising, therefore, that pupils achieve high standards by the time they leave the school.
3. Standards of reading are high across the school. Reception class pupils are developing a keen interest in books and reading. They recognise a range of simple words, such as 'I', 'go', 'went', 'in', 'on', and 'my'. The highest attainers are able to use these in their writing, and use their developing knowledge of letter sounds to read new words. All know that information can be retrieved from books and computers, and are on track to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception. By the age of seven, most pupils read fluently and with understanding. The most able talk about their favourite stories and have good library skills. All are keen to talk about what they have read and they understand the main points. Reading diaries show that a suitable and wide range of books are read, and include pupils' comments. During the inspection, discussions with pupils indicated that many are achieving very high standards at a rapid rate of progress. One pupil with special educational needs read back his writing with confidence, also achieving very well. By the age of 11, many pupils have developed a sophisticated approach to literature and the highest achieving pupils are able to read with excellent expression portraying character and mood to create atmosphere and suspense. They read with interest such books as 'Carrie's War' by Nina Bawden, or 'Harry Potter' by J K Rowling. Many have already acquired the skills to look for meanings beyond the literal. For example, a Year 6 pupil talking about reading the Narnia series by C S Lewis was able to explain why 'two wrongs don't make a right' even though this is not made explicit in the text.
4. Standards of writing are also high across the school. The youngest children in the reception class are still at an early stage of development in writing, as one would expect at this stage in the school year. A significant minority are at an 'emergent' writing level. The least experienced write some recognisable letters independently,

but as yet they have insufficiently developed co-ordination to support the skills of pencil control. The middle range are developing good letter formation and copy write with some accuracy. The higher attaining pupils are already able to write a sentence independently, for example, 'I went in my jet plan(e)'.

5. By the age of seven all pupils are on target to attain the expected level, and most will exceed this and attain the higher level, where writing is organised, imaginative and clear. Pupils of above average and average abilities are already developing the use of a legible cursive script and are writing across curriculum areas; they are developing accurate spelling and punctuation and well developed story skills. Pupils with below average abilities achieve standards that already meet national expectations and, therefore, they are achieving very well. At present they write using a cursive print and spelling is not yet conventionally accurate but is phonetically justifiable, for example, simple words such as 'she', 'to', 'and' are spelt correctly, and 'gow' and 'sed', which are phonetically correct. The majority show an understanding of story structures supported by the good use of story frames, for example, in structuring the sequence of the story of 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff'.
6. By the age of 11, at least a third of pupils have attained very high standards and are already surpassing levels expected for their age. Writing is often sophisticated and mature with rhythms and literary strategies used to support meaning. For example, a Year 6 pupil continued a story about a bully, 'Jacob was terrified. His heart felt like a lead balloon. It fluttered and beat twice as fast as usual, making Jacob swallow hard. This was fear as he had never known it before. His feelings of terror were intensified by the smirky grin that seemed fixed on the bully's bulging face ...'
7. There are high standards in mathematics across the school and pupils have a very good facility both to handle numbers and apply the knowledge gained to problem solving. Pupils follow a broad mathematical curriculum that involves an understanding of processes. Procedures are in place for identifying the mathematically gifted; individual education plans are drawn up and external advice is sought. The school's systems and set arrangements allow for appropriate strategies to be planned and put into practice to help ensure that all pupils are given work which matches their needs.
8. Most children in the reception class are already able to recognise numerals to ten, others are developing their understanding of 'one more' and the early stages of addition by combining two groups. Some show their full understanding of the process by recording their answers successfully. However, a significant minority are not yet ready for formal recording.
9. Understanding develops very well through Years 1 and 2 so that, by the age of seven, the majority of pupils are performing above the national standards. Most are able to recognise and explain odd and even numbers, understand halves and quarters and use appropriate operations for solving addition and subtraction problems with numbers to 20. The higher attainers have very good recall of mental addition and subtraction facts to ten. These pupils can reliably use place value and apply this when, for example, ordering numbers to at least 100. They know the names for the most common two and three-dimensional shapes and can describe many of the shapes.
10. By the age of 11, mathematical understanding is very well developed. In the current Year 6 class there is a large group of very high attainers. These pupils' needs are very well catered for, particularly in extension work for using and applying knowledge

gained, for example, through mathematical investigation. When investigating, 'How many lines can be drawn when they connect points on the circumference of a circle when all the points join all other points?' One pupil describes, 'I discovered that in the table each number of lines from points on the circumference of the circle goes up the same amount as the previous one, except you add one each time'.

11. The majority of pupils are developing the facility to organise and check their results. Most are confident in explaining their own mathematical thinking and use and interpret their work and symbols. In data handling, most pupils develop an understanding of the median and mode of a range of values, and can interpret a variety of charts and graphs. The least able, including those pupils with special educational needs, gain confidence to interpret and represent information gathered in their work by using tally charts, sometimes with assistance.
12. Higher attaining pupils understand and can explain what a prime number is; they can calculate the area of regular and irregular shapes and have knowledge about shape and space that is particularly well linked to design and paintings. Very good understanding of angles and measurement was observed during one lesson when Year 6 pupils were constructing 'angle makers' and constructing and measuring accurately acute, obtuse and reflex angles. One pupil described a reflex angle as being larger than 180 degrees and smaller than 360 degrees. He then decided to be absolutely precise, restating that a reflex angle is any angle from 181 to 359 degrees.
13. Standards in information technology have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now above the national average. Pupils are involved in a wide range of activities involving word processing, desktop publishing, simulations, data handling and control procedures. A digital camera is used to good effect. They use the computers and other equipment with confidence, competence and enthusiasm. This starts with the youngest pupils using the computer to develop hand eye co-ordination through the use of the mouse, to list words or play a game, for example, based on 'Bob the Builder'. Listening centres are used to good effect in supporting work in literacy.
14. Pupils in Year 2 use the computer to write instructions and stories and to support research in other subjects. An example of this is the class booklet, 'Florence Nightingale'. They have well developed skills, for example, by the age of seven most pupils are able to use shift and space bar, and change font, style, colour and size. Good use of the digital camera is made to record the Year 4 visit to Oakwell Hall. This is recorded as a short piece of 'film' complemented by pupil commentary. Year 6 pupils use sophisticated programs to make pie or bar charts, and line graphs in mathematics. They extend their research skills through the use of the Internet to find out, for example, about landscape artists. Individual pupils consolidate their knowledge of times tables through effective programs and targeting.
15. All pupils, including those with English as an additional language and special educational needs, make very good progress through the school and these standards represent very good achievement. This very good progress results from the good quality of the teaching, the school's thorough systems of targeting, the pupils' very good attitudes to school, and the support they receive from their parents.

The quality of teaching is very good across the school.

16. The overall quality of teaching is high and is a major strength of the school. In the lessons observed during the inspection, 20 per cent were excellent, 40 per cent were very good, 30 per cent good and ten per cent satisfactory. This is a very high standard indeed and demonstrates very good improvement since the previous inspection. This very good teaching extends across the school. It is not surprising, therefore, that pupils achieve high standards by the time they leave school.
17. Teachers have excellent relationships with their pupils and these underpin the pupils' very good attitudes to their work. Teachers listen well and value their pupils' answers and contributions. This supports confidence and self-esteem, crucial factors in learning. The high quality relationships are used to ensure very good discipline and to encourage pupils to reflect openly, as in a Year 6 English lesson where pupils shared thoughts and fears about bullying and encouraged empathy. The teacher's sensitive handling of this subject area made the lesson particularly valuable in terms of developing the quality of writing and personal and social development.
18. Teachers work extremely hard in planning their lessons and the curriculum, and are very well prepared. Clear learning objectives are set and the best lessons focus very well on these objectives. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, all discussion and activities focused precisely on the objective of learning to recognise three-dimensional shape and describe shapes in mathematical terms. This was achieved very effectively as a result of very clear, targeted planning which ensures that pupils work purposefully, quickly, with high concentration and motivation. Effective use of the computer consolidates pupils' knowledge and understanding of the properties of shape. The teachers' insistence on the use of correct mathematical terminology results in accurate use of vocabulary, for example, all know that 'vertices' equates to corners. Pupils are encouraged to explain their reasoning using the correct vocabulary, thus firmly reinforcing their learning.
19. Teachers set a high level of challenge in the majority of lessons, and this ensures that pupils make very good progress. For example, a Year 6 English lesson required pupils to compare and contrast the content, the structure and atmosphere of writing extracts from pupils in the class. These are well presented on an overhead projector slide and given equal status to that from a text book or adult. The pupils are the writers and critics here with an excellent role model presented by the teacher who takes on his role as teacher 'writer expert' to demonstrate writing as a craft. Teachers ensure that the use of quality vocabulary is encouraged by key questions such as, 'Are the characters painted yet?' Excellent questioning extends learning during critical appraisal of the writing examples by challenging further thinking, for example, by demanding, 'How?' or 'Why?' or 'Tell me more'. In response, one pupil explained how an extract conjures up atmosphere and a feeling that something is about to happen: 'Slowly, like a tortoise, John wandered across the playground awaiting a kick or at least a punch.....' He was prompted further and explained the literary device used is a simile and how it created a picture of John moving very reluctantly into and across the playground. Another pupil responded that it would make a good choice for a blurb because, 'it catches your attention, makes you want to read it'.
20. There are good systems across the school for managing the ability range in each year group and class. The curriculum has been planned carefully to ensure that

- topics are not repeated or missed, and the best teachers target work within lessons to the different groups within the class to very good effect. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, the teacher set different tasks for each group within a data-handling exercise to ensure an appropriate level of challenge and support for all, including those pupils with special educational needs. There is some very effective support with activities from teaching assistants in these groups, but there is a lack of consistency across the school in the best use of this valuable support during whole-class lessons, particularly in the first half of literacy and numeracy sessions.
21. The best lessons have a very good structure that takes the pupils through a sequence of thought processes that develops their understanding. For example, in a Year 2 literacy lesson objectives are shared explicitly with pupils and referred back to at several relevant points during the lesson. This keeps the lesson and pupils well focused and learning intentions are made clear. Spelling and word level work relate closely to what is to follow in the next stage of the lesson or for homework. Words are appropriately linked to sentences to provide a meaningful context and, therefore, aids pupils' understanding. Very good involvement, and pupil/teacher interaction, ensures that all take part and ideas are developed. For example, in thinking of interesting sentences using 'ar' words compiled together, one child provides a good example, 'Mummy said I must wear my scarf today because it's cold'. This is valued as a good contribution but is extended further to describe the scarf. Specific questions target individuals and ensure that pupils describe key features of the story with reference to structure. This provides an opportunity for a high achieving pupil to explain, 'We need to tell who's in the story, tell people all the characters, the action is in the middle. What the characters are like. Where the story happens'. The teacher appropriately recaps, where, what, who is in the story and the emphasis is on the start of the story for that lesson. The planned use of writing frames provides further support to reinforce structure. Pupils are reminded of strategies they can employ if they are unsure of spellings, this ensures that the teacher and other teaching assistants work uninterrupted with their focus groups for most of the lesson. Structure, therefore, also underpins the classroom management and organisation. Key vocabulary cards and word books are available on all tables for pupils to use.
22. The best teaching seen during the inspection reflects very good subject knowledge balanced by a very clear understanding of how children learn, for example, a broad range of teaching strategies; direct teaching; teacher demonstration; pupil initiated research; problem solving activities; paired work. An understanding that individuals learn in different ways ensures that a variety of strategies and activities are used to ensure consolidation of previous knowledge and acquisition of new concepts. Probing questions challenge and check understanding. This is exemplified by one Year 4 pupil's response, 'If you cut a prism in half the shape is smaller but the same'. Another, in describing his shape, 'My shape hasn't got any vertices. It's got one face'.
23. In the most successful lessons, the targeting of work to different groups makes very good use of the assessment information that the school collects. When applied consistently it ensures that all pupils have full access to lessons, supporting the commitment to inclusion in the school. The school is particularly effective at arranging extra support for identified groups for specific purposes. This works very effectively for pupils with English as an additional language, special educational needs and for those pupils capable of high attainment.

The very positive ethos in the school produces very good attitudes and behaviour, excellent relationships and personal development.

24. The aims and values of the school are very clearly reflected in its work. High standards are an expectation in all areas and the school has established an outstanding ethos to support the effective learning of all pupils. The school is committed to providing a rich, stimulating, safe and secure environment, and does this very effectively. Pupils' work is celebrated well in, for example, attractive and stimulating displays on walls in classrooms, in corridors, in the hall and entrance. Opportunities are provided to develop individual talents and raise pupils' self-esteem. The school successfully promotes independence, self motivation and enjoyment of work. It fosters a sense of community and prepares pupils well for the responsibilities of citizenship. Staff and governors are strongly committed to continual improvement. The school has established very good relationships with parents and has gained their respect. The headteacher has a high regard for and understanding of the central role that parents have in contributing to and supporting the school's values.
25. Pupils' attitudes to work are very good. They are keen to learn, well motivated, and eager to take every opportunity to extend their knowledge and understanding. Teachers are enthusiastic and act as good role models. They build on their pupils' enthusiasm by encouraging them to share their interests and insights with other pupils during question and answer sessions. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to other pupils. They follow instructions carefully and concentrate well on a range of activities. As a result, pupils work at a brisk pace and persevere until their tasks have been completed. This enables them to increase their skills and knowledge and to make very good progress.
26. Behaviour is very good both in classes and around the school. No inappropriate behaviour was seen during the inspection, with very orderly movement observed between activities. Pupils behave sensibly during lessons and most of their time is occupied in learning. They are polite and helpful to visitors, and are keen to explain the work they are doing. Pupils co-operate sensibly when working in pairs or in small groups, and this helps them to learn more effectively. Most parents agree that behaviour in the school is good. High quality relationships, very good discipline and class management are strong features of most lessons. This provides pupils with a firm sense of mutual respect and security which enables them to work hard without disturbance. This very good behaviour is supported by the excellent relationships at every level of school life.
27. Opportunities for personal development are excellent and are assisted by the high quality of relationships in the school. Pupils get on very well together and learn from one another's ideas and suggestions. They co-operate well during group activities and share equipment sensibly or take turns where appropriate. They chatter happily as they eat their lunch, and play sensibly together in the playground. Such relationships help to develop pupils' tolerance and understanding of others. Relationships between pupils and teachers are excellent. Teachers know their pupils well and are sensitive to their individual needs. This builds confidence among their pupils and encourages them to ask or answer questions without fear of being wrong. Pupils speak of the adults in school with respect, saying how much they enjoy coming to school, and how well they like their teachers. When asked what they liked best about the school, some pupils replied 'The teachers', others 'The headteacher', others said they loved coming to school to be with their friends, others preferred

various subjects. In response to what they like least in the school none of the pupils asked could think of anything to say.

28. The school provides excellent opportunities for pupils to develop personal and social skills. The headteacher considers this to be one of the most important aspects of education because it prepares pupils for citizenship and personal responsibility. Therefore, the pupils are treated like adults and encouraged to look for responsibilities through, for example, the Year 6 'buddying' system and a suggestion box. They show visitors around the school and talk about it with pride. Such activities help to develop responsibility in pupils and build their confidence and communication skills. During the inspection they chatted spontaneously to inspectors as they moved around the school, often greeting each by name. This engendered a genuine warmth and welcome, illustrating how firmly such values as courtesy and politeness are embedded into the ethos of the school. Adults in the school make the pupils feel they belong, thus increasing their confidence, so that they volunteer for jobs and ask to perform a song or dance routine in front of their peers at assembly. The school persuades everyone that they can achieve and succeed. Thus, on Fridays there is a presentation of Good Work Certificates, often including recognition for 'enthusiasm' or 'politeness', or other aspects for celebration. Pupils are prepared well for life in a diverse society through their work in religious education, educational and residential visits, and work in geography, music and art.

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and management.

29. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and management for the school, and sets a particularly good tone for strong, caring relationships. He takes pride in knowing the majority of the families and pupils in the school, all of whom find his style very approachable. Each pupil is made to feel special and valued, which has a significant impact on self-esteem and learning. He has a very clear educational direction and an excellent overview of the school's work. He brings great enthusiasm and inspires confidence in the pupils, staff, governors and parents. The deputy headteacher provides very effective support, and is a very good role model as a teacher.
30. The role of subject managers has been developed significantly since the last inspection. They are empowered to take a very active role and value the flexibility and opportunities that the management group structure within the school offers. As a result, teachers have worked very hard indeed to build up an overview of progress through their subject areas and to ensure that the curriculum is well planned. The structure of planning, from the curriculum framework to individual lesson plans, is very thorough and underpins the very good teaching and the progress pupils make. The school has responded particularly well to the many new initiatives that schools are expected to undertake, such as the Foundation Stage curriculum, but they endeavour to ensure that these external initiatives are evaluated, adapted and made relevant to the needs of the pupils at Riverside. The amount of work put in by subject managers, and the quality of their overview, is impressive.
31. There are excellent systems for evaluating the school's work and a very reflective ethos which underpins the school's success. There are comprehensive systems for tracking pupils' progress through tests and assessments, lessons are evaluated, work is sampled and targets are set for groups and individuals. The school analyses this data rigorously and makes very good use of the analysis to focus resources on areas of identified need. For example, groups of pupils who have been identified as

having particular learning needs, are given extra support to learn a new concept, or to extend their learning. This extra support is often provided through teaching assistants matched to individuals or in supporting small groups. From Year 3 to Year 6, classes are grouped into ability sets for mathematics teaching. The headteacher contributes to this extra support by teaching all Year 6 pupils on a regular basis to extend their opportunities for developing the craft of writing. The school's process of evaluation and resulting action is very good practice indeed.

Children in the nursery receive an excellent start to their school life.

32. The nursery class, offering 52 part-time places, opened in January 2001. It provides an excellent start to the children's education, due to the provision offered and the high quality teaching. Parents are delighted with the experience that this class gives their children and several, including a parent governor, support and help regularly, often sharing a particular expertise such as baking or guitar playing. Shared use of space, with a thriving after school club, shows effective integration and best use of this additional resource for the benefit of the school as a whole.
33. Key staff are highly skilled and knowledgeable in how young children learn and develop. As a result, an appropriate curriculum is supported by the experience of outstanding teaching, and balanced by good opportunities for spontaneous learning through children's self chosen activities. The planned curriculum and its strong, practical approach and commitment to first hand experiential learning is at the heart of the new Foundation Stage for children aged three to five. The nursery, therefore, implements the Foundation Stage curriculum very effectively. Very clear, thorough planning and classroom organisation ensures attractive and stimulating work areas in which children want to write, read, paint and use the equipment. These factors are the essence of the nursery's success and are fundamental in achieving the high level of learning.
34. During the inspection, opportunities for developing the six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development were all in evidence with good access for outdoor play. Support from the staff is excellent. They are aware of who needs help and keep a very careful record of progress and achievement. As a result work is amended to meet identified needs and provides very effective levels of challenge. Both adults ensure that the children are fully involved in all activities; this results in happy, secure and purposefully employed children. High quality planning provides purpose to all activities which results in a brisk pace and rapid learning, for example, how to mix paint and how to sequence numbers to five. The interaction by adults has a demonstrable effect, leading to an increased understanding, for example, in the children's improving ability to listen, follow instructions and co-operate with each other and with adults. This also ensures that all children are included and have the opportunity to take part in a full range of activities.
35. Children with special educational needs, including those who are gifted and talented, are identified early and individual education plans are drawn up to ensure that their particular needs are catered for and their learning opportunities maximised. For example, an individual education plan for an academically gifted and talented child would typically ensure that specific targets are matched to activities across the areas of learning, thus appropriately ensuring a breadth of experience.

36. The Early Years' Co-ordinator is to be commended on the hard work done, behind the scenes, in developing and setting up the nursery with the full support of the headteacher and governors. She closely supports the planning and monitors the development of the nursery, all to good effect.
37. A particular strength, very much welcomed by the parents, is the home visiting programme. This enables child, parent/carer, and nursery staff to meet and learn about each child's needs and stage of development before starting school. Strong relationships are, therefore, set from the start and staff build on the valuable information gained about the child's likes, dislikes and particular stage of development and build on this from the earliest days in the nursery. The nursery staff have used this information appropriately by developing an excellent 'Nursery Profile' for each child. This provides a very good record of individual children's achievements. These are shared with parents and are added to during the year. These profiles provide excellent information for the staff in reception which, when used consistently and effectively, supports them in planning appropriate starting points for the child's next steps in learning. The acknowledgement and respect for parents as the child's first and most enduring educator and the importance the school places on a strong partnership with parents is an important factor in the excellent start made for the children at Riverside nursery.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The use of assessment, based on reception children's prior attainment, to plan activities that meet their developing maturity, skills and abilities.

38. This is because in lessons seen and from work scrutiny a small minority of pupils do not achieve as much as they could. In reception this is a direct result of insufficient use of assessment information to ensure that the least experienced children are given appropriate practical tasks which support their particular learning needs, knowledge and understanding. There is an expectation to use pencil and paper methods of recording before some children are ready to do so. This inhibits the development of key concepts, for example, in mathematics when the scheme work books are provided too soon for these particular children because practical application is necessary to consolidate and support understanding.

Consistency in the effective use of teaching assistants, particularly in the first part of literacy and numeracy sessions.

39. In most classes teaching assistants are used to good effect in group activities as a result of good quality planning and discussion. However, in several lessons this valuable resource is underused in the whole-class teaching sessions, especially during the first part of literacy and numeracy lessons. This is the case when teachers' planning takes insufficient account of how best to utilise such valuable resources. In such lessons teaching assistants are not involved sufficiently well to target individuals or groups or to make assessments of learning. There is, however, some very good use of adults working together in lessons. The school, therefore, should use the expertise that already exists, and should seek further guidance and training on the most effective use of teaching assistants. Support attached to pupils with special educational needs is generally used very well to support the learning highlighted in individual education plans.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

40. In order to raise the standard of teaching and learning to that of the best seen, the school should ensure that assessments of the children's prior attainment are used in reception to plan activities that meet their developing maturity, skills and abilities. (paragraphs 23, 30, 34, 37)
41. In order to ensure full involvement of all pupils throughout lessons and that the investment in extra staffing resources gives the best value possible, the school should ensure consistency in the effective use of teaching assistants, particularly, in the first part of literacy and numeracy sessions. (paragraphs 20, 23, 30, 31)
42. The inspection team fully endorses the school's improvement plan and the order of its priorities. In particular, the school should continue its commitment to high standards of teaching and learning through effective use of its monitoring and evaluation process, linked to performance management. This would support both areas highlighted for further development and ensure consistent and best use of these valuable resources.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	30
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	6	12	9	3	0	0	0
Percentage	20	40	30	10	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	11	407
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	42

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	51

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	27
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	3.1
National comparative data	5.6

School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	30	28	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29	29	29
	Girls	28	28	27
	Total	57	57	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (98)	98 (98)	96 (98)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29	28	29
	Girls	28	27	27
	Total	57	55	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (98)	95 (98)	97 (98)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	35	31	66

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	31	32	35
	Girls	28	28	30
	Total	59	60	65
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (95)	91 (97)	98 (97)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	29	30	34
	Girls	26	27	30
	Total	55	57	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (91)	86 (90)	97 (100)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	358
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR - Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28.1:1
Average class size	29.1

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	314

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	11
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	5.5 :1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	729,001
Total expenditure	756,021
Expenditure per pupil	1,835
Balance brought forward from previous year	36,782
Balance carried forward to next year	9,762

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

444

Number of questionnaires returned

129

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	78	22	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	68	29	1	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	63	34	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	40	6	1	7
The teaching is good.	75	22	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	53	6	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	84	16	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	81	16	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	57	42	0	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	86	14	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	66	31	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	46	2	1	12

Other issues raised by parents

There is no area where a significant number of parents would like to see improvement, although some are concerned that the school has large classes when groups are set at the top end of the school. During the inspection some voiced concerns regarding lack of sufficient car parking space for a school of its size.