

INSPECTION REPORT

RIVERSIDE SCHOOL

Purbrook, Waterlooville

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116600

Headteacher: Mr. David Jones

Reporting inspector: Mrs. Sue Aldridge
8810

Dates of inspection: 26 – 28 November 2001

Inspection number: 195608

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Scratchface Lane Purbrook Waterlooville Hampshire
Postcode:	PO7 5QD
Telephone number:	023 9225 0138
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Linda Atkins
Date of previous inspection:	May 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Riverside is a mixed, day, community special school for pupils from three to eleven. Of the 127 on roll, 113 pupils have statements of special educational need and 12 are being assessed for one. Most pupils have moderate learning difficulties. There are 27 pupils with severe learning difficulties, 12 with speech and communication difficulties, and 21 pupils with autism. Almost all the pupils are white; a very small number come from homes where English is a second language. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is roughly average. Since the school was last inspected more pupils with a greater level of learning difficulty have been admitted. Attainment on entry is very low. Riverside is a Beacon school and is one of several schools in the Leigh Park Education Action Zone (EAZ). It has recently had its Beacon status renewed for a further three years. As part of its Beacon work it has developed an outreach role into local mainstream schools.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Riverside is an excellent school. Although attainment on entry is very low, pupils achieve high standards. Teaching is good with some very good features. The headteacher and senior management team provide excellent leadership as do some subject managers. Pupils are educated at Riverside for a relatively low cost, and the school provides excellent value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Standards reached in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science compare favourably with those in similar schools nationally.
- Teaching and learning are good, with some very good features.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, attendance and personal development are very good.
- The headteacher and senior management team provide excellent leadership; the use of performance measures to support improvements in standards and provision is a particular strength.
- The school makes excellent use of its own and other sources of funding to support teachers and pupils and to promote inclusion.
- The work of governors is excellent.
- There is very good inclusive provision for pupils with autism, and for their parents.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Teaching of a small number of pupils with severe learning difficulties.
- The roles of some subject co-ordinators.
- Evidence to support assessment of 'P' levels and enhance the target setting process.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, improvement is very good. Suitable action has been taken to address the key issues identified at the last inspection. The curriculum for music now meets requirements, and teachers of music have good expertise. Schemes of work for history and geography have been developed, and all subject plans have been revised to make sure that they meet new requirements. Assessment in all subjects has been further developed. The arrangements for keeping the school's curriculum under review have been improved. The school's heating system has been renewed. There have also been improvements in plans to support pupils who experience behaviour difficulties. Substantial improvements have been made to the accommodation and grounds and to learning resources and their management. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching has been improved considerably. The school has also responded well to national initiatives. It has successfully introduced the literacy and numeracy strategies. Its own vision, as an inclusive school that promotes inclusion into mainstream schools, has been taken forward through its work as a Beacon school and as part of developments in the EAZ.

STANDARDS

The table below summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets.

Progress in:	by Year R	by Year 2	by Year 6	Key	
Speaking and listening	B	B	B	<i>very good</i>	A
Reading	B	B	B	<i>good</i>	B
Writing	B	B	B	<i>satisfactory</i>	C
Mathematics	B	B	B	<i>unsatisfactory</i>	D
Personal, social and health education	B	B	B	<i>poor</i>	E
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs ¹	B	B	B		

The setting of whole school targets is exceptionally well established. The school sets very ambitious targets. These are not always achieved but the school's results have improved steadily over the past three years, even though it has admitted pupils with more complex needs. In the summer of 2000, results in national mathematics tests for pupils in Year 3 compared well with those in similar schools nationally. For pupils in Year 6, national test results in English, mathematics and science all compared well with those of similar schools nationally. In swimming, several pupils in Year 6 achieved levels similar to national expectations. Achievement is best for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, and for those with autism. For pupils with severe learning difficulties, and those with speech and communication difficulties, achievement is satisfactory.

¹ IEPs= Individual Education Plans

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. They approach classroom tasks with enthusiasm and work busily during lessons. They are keen to succeed.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are polite and courteous. Their behaviour in lessons helps them to make progress. Break and lunchtimes are amicable social occasions. Pupils with difficulties show clear progress in developing acceptable behaviour. Inspectors saw no bullying or oppressive behaviour, and there are no exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils' confidence and independence increase as they grow up through the school. A few are successful in returning to mainstream schools. Pupils show initiative and willingly accept responsibility. Older pupils are aware of the need to set a good example to younger ones. Harmonious relationships between all members of the school community create an excellent climate for learning.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance compares very favourably with similar schools nationally. Unauthorised absence is particularly low. Pupils arrive punctually for school in the mornings and lessons start on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 –6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	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.

Teaching varies from satisfactory to excellent and is good overall. It is good in English, mathematics, science and in personal, social, health and religious education (PSHRE), which the school considers to be a core subject. The management of pupils is a particular strength. Lessons are very well prepared. High quality, stimulating resources are used well to help pupils learn independently. Staff have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and pupils respond well to this. Lessons have a brisk pace and teamwork between teachers and support staff is well developed. Occasionally, staff do not sign frequently enough and some pupils need this to support their understanding. Despite this, the key skills of communication, including literacy and numeracy, are taught well. The school meets the needs of most pupils very effectively but there is some room for improvement in meeting the needs of those with severe learning difficulties and speech and language difficulties. Pupils show great interest in tasks that teachers present to them. They work hard throughout lessons and develop independent working habits from an early age. When teachers review what pupils have learned, rather than what pupils have done in the lesson, pupils develop a good knowledge of their learning. For pupils who are not able to read well, records of achievement are not as meaningful as they are for other pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum meets requirements. It provides a broad range of relevant learning experiences, and includes effective strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills. The school's programme for personal, social, health and religious education is very good, and well developed links with other schools are helpful in providing experiences of inclusion for all pupils, and in enabling an increasing number of pupils to return to mainstream education.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Since the last inspection, the school has improved its provision for developing pupils' awareness of the many different cultures in British society. Assemblies make a strong contribution. They give suitable moral messages, and opportunities for reflection and worship. There is a wealth of opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills, in school and on visits. Pupils in Year 6 benefit from residential school journeys. Opportunities for moral development include the PSHRE programme, pupils writing their own rules, and good feedback from staff about the acceptability of behaviour. Pupils also raise funds for those less fortunate than they are.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are very good procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare. Levels of supervision are very good, and the site supervisor and deputy headteacher carry out thorough risk assessments of every aspect of the school's work. The school has high quality arrangements for tracking personal development, promoting good behaviour, and keeping a check on how well pupils are progressing.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good overall. The headteacher and senior management team provide excellent leadership. There is a clear commitment to creating an inclusive school, and promoting greater inclusion in mainstream schools by giving support to these establishments. Subject co-ordination is better developed in some subjects than others, and this is linked to staffing – some co-ordinators are relative newcomers to the role. There has been no audit of the school's finances since 1996.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Excellent. Governors fulfil all their responsibilities extremely well. As a group they have a range of useful skills, and they are very supportive. Their strategic role is very well developed. They keep the school's work under close scrutiny, and evaluate their own effectiveness.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. There are clear strategies for evaluating the school's work, including detailed analysis of improvements in pupils' progress, and measurement of improvement in standards of achievement. The use of external sources of evaluation includes feedback from parents, from schools receiving outreach support, and from LEA personnel.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. The school uses its own resources, Beacon funding and EAZ funds to provide exceptionally good support for teachers and pupils, and to promote inclusion into mainstream schools. The

principles of best value are applied very well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school.• The school expects children to work hard and do their best.• Parents are comfortable approaching the school with questions or a problem.• Teaching is good.• The school is well led and managed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A few parents would like to see more homework being given.• A few do not feel well informed about how well their children are getting on.• A few do not feel that the school works closely with parents.

Inspectors agree with the very positive views of the school that parents have expressed. They find that home reading is given as often as most parents request it, and that reports to parents are very informative. Most home link books are completed well, and the school works very closely with most parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards reached in English, mathematics and science compare favourably with those reached in similar schools nationally.

1. Pupils entering the school in the nursery have very low attainment; many are non-verbal and few are toilet trained, for example. The school also admits pupils in Years 3 to 6; these pupils are usually from mainstream schools, where they are not flourishing, and they are usually attaining at levels that are three, four or five years below that expected for their ages. Attainment on entry has decreased since the school was last inspected. Despite this, the school's results in national tests have been maintained or improved over the last three years.

2. Most of the pupils in Year 6 in Summer 2000 were pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Their national test results compare favourably with those obtained by pupils in similar schools nationally, published in the PANDA (Performance Assessment and National Contextual Data) for special schools. In English, 12 per cent of Riverside pupils attained Levels 2 and 3; nationally, only 4 per cent achieved these levels. In mathematics, 18 per cent of Riverside pupils attained Level 2 and above; nationally, only 6 per cent achieved these levels. In science, 37 per cent of Riverside pupils attained Level 2 and above; nationally, only 23 per cent achieved these levels. For the first time, in Summer 2001, a small number of Riverside pupils attained Level 4 in science. Although there are no comparative data for national test results in 2001 in special schools yet, this represents further improvement on the school's previous best.

Teaching and learning are good, with some very good features.

3. During the inspection, inspectors saw 38 lessons or parts of lessons. Of these, two were excellent, ten were very good, 20 were good and six were satisfactory. The quality of teaching is good at each of the stages, Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception), Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) and Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6). It is also good in English, mathematics, science, and in personal, social, health and religious education (PSHRE).

4. There are some very good features of teaching and learning. Teachers are very skilled at managing pupils' behaviour, and they do this successfully. Although there are several pupils with challenging behaviour, teachers' skills in managing this, and the school's effective system for supporting teachers, ensure that lessons are not disrupted. Pupils who do leave class are well supported, and they soon return having had a chat to a member of the senior management team. As a result there is minimal interruption to their learning, too.

5. Teachers make their expectations of work and behaviour crystal clear at the start of each lesson. Pupils respond well to this. Most put up their hands to answer questions, and heed the warnings that are given about the need to work safely. In a science lesson for Year 5 and 6 pupils, pupils carried out an investigation in two groups, and worked very sensibly, despite the cramped conditions.

6. The management of pupils with autism and of those with challenging behaviour is well supported by consistent intervention plans and behaviour management plans. These are drawn up by teachers, with the support of a member of the senior management team, and they are faithfully implemented by teachers and support staff. The consistency of approach creates a security for pupils, who know what is expected of them and they respond very well. A good example of this was seen in a numeracy lesson. Two pupils with autism had completed their tasks, and had chosen to select an activity from a box of resources. The lesson was about to draw to a close with a plenary session. A support assistant set a

buzzer for these two pupils, and warned them clearly, using speech and signs, that they had *five minutes* for their chosen activity. As soon as the buzzer sounded, the two pupils packed their resources away and moved to the side room for the plenary; they did not need to be reminded.

7. Teachers and support staff work very well together as a team. They meet weekly to review and plan formally, although there is much informal dialogue as well. As a result, support staff are well briefed and they make a significant contribution to direct teaching. For example, in a science lesson, pupils were divided into two ability groups to explore light and dark. A member of support staff led one group, and through her interactions with the pupils she encouraged them to predict, and to draw simple conclusions. She made sure they were aware of safety considerations, and encouraged their understanding of scientific language through her use of it, and through her good questioning to assess their understanding.

8. Some excellent, fluent signing was seen being used by support assistants working with pupils with autism. This helped the pupils to anticipate changes, and to understand what was required of them. The use of schedules, showing the sequence of activities in the day, is also well developed, and helps pupils to anticipate changes of activity. As a result, pupils move smoothly from one session to another. Staff are sensitive to the needs of pupils with autism too. When a pupil begins to show anxiety or distress, staff intervene to enable the pupil to make the transition to a different, but relevant, activity. However, staff have high expectations of pupils returning to the wider group, and this promotes their inclusion well.

9. Almost all lessons proceed at a brisk pace, so no time is wasted, and pupils are busily engaged throughout. Because activities are made so interesting the pupils are not distracted at all by the occasional appearance of an adult moving past their class area, a consequence of the open plan nature of the building,

10. Teachers prepare their lessons very thoroughly. They are well supported in this by the resources assistant, who produces resources of high quality, tailor-made for individual pupils. Resources are exceptionally well managed, so teachers do not have to spend time rooting around for those that they need they simply place an order with the resources assistant. Classrooms are well organised, and this helps pupils to become more independent in their learning. From their first days in the nursery, children begin to make choices, and plan their activities in a simple way. Pupils also review their performance when they have completed their work. Older pupils are assisted by the good organisation in classrooms. Where resources are to hand, they soon learn to collect these themselves, then return them to their rightful place. In a science lesson, recording sheets on clipboards were already prepared for pupils, so they could get on with their investigation without any delay.

11. The school has a separate computer suite, and pupils are well supported by a teaching assistant who takes them through their first steps when using new software. When pupils are proficient enough to use these independently, they have access to the same facilities in the classroom. In a numeracy lesson in the computer suite, two higher attaining pupils in Year 2, well supported by a teaching assistant, were seen quickly mastering the use of new software that enabled them to practise adding numbers to ten.

12. Teachers are skilled in planning different activities for high and middle attainers, and challenging higher attainers to do the best they can. As part of a design and technology lesson, higher attainers had designed and fitted a simple burglar alarm in a doll's house. They were able to explain how it worked. In a science lesson, high attainers used a metre rule to measure the distance a car travelled down a ramp. Lower attainers laid out cardboard cut-outs of cars along the path that the car had travelled, making sure there were no gaps between them, then counted these and recorded this as a measurement. Teachers also adapt their questioning well, to enable more able pupils to give a more detailed response. In a lesson on shapes, the teacher asked pupils to describe a shape that had been seen in the

course of a visit to Portsmouth. One pupil would have liked to show the teacher the shape, by drawing on the board, but the teacher insisted, *I need you to tell me rather than show me. I need the words.* The pupil was able to do this, with a little prompting.

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, attendance and personal development are very good.

13. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school; parents commented particularly on this. Those who arrive early take part happily in the activities provided at the *Early Bird* club. When lessons begin, pupils clearly know that they are here to learn and appear to anticipate and relish the challenges that are presented to them. Most observe the convention of putting their hands up to show their willingness to answer questions, and several ask questions, showing natural curiosity. For example, one wanted to know, in history, the purpose of the manufacturer's plate attached to the front of a cooking range in a Victorian kitchen. Pupils are proud to represent the school when taking part in sporting competitions, to show their work to adults, and to discuss what they have done.

14. Pupils behave very well in class, at lunchtime, and in the playground. They are polite and courteous towards their teachers, and to visitors. Several, some very young, held doors open for inspectors. There have been no exclusions since the school was last inspected. Although there are a few pupils with challenging behaviour, this is managed very well, and these pupils make clear progress in improving their behaviour. In lessons, pupils treat resources with care and respect they work together in pairs and small groups, and co-operate well with adults who support them. Even when pupils are carrying out practical activities in groups, in cramped classrooms, their behaviour is very good. They heed teachers' warnings about the need to be careful with equipment, and to work safely.

15. Attendance, particularly in respect of unauthorised absence, compares very favourably with that of similar schools nationally, and has steadily improved in recent years. Pupils arrive punctually in the morning. They settle immediately to lessons, which start on time.

16. Pupils' personal development is supported effectively by the school's very good provision for it. Independent learning begins in the nursery, and develops well throughout the school. Pupils make choices, collect their own resources, and then clear away when they have completed an activity. The school's practice of setting targets for pupils to organise themselves, and its strategies to help pupils achieve targets, encourages this skill. When pupils are given responsibility, they are pleased to take this on. For example, younger pupils are very pleased to be asked to take the lead in line when moving from one class to another. They march proudly at the head of the line. Older pupils are reminded to set an example to younger ones, and they do so, by their mature conduct. *Remember who you are*, the teacher was heard to say to the Year 6 pupils as they went out to play, and this they did.

17. The personal, social, health and religious education (PSHRE) programme makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. Assemblies help to establish a theme each week, and this is further developed in subsequent assemblies, and in PSHRE lessons. Teachers identify the values that they are developing in each lesson, such as caring or empathy, and through their interactions with pupils they encourage the development of these values. For example, in a religious education lesson, pupils were rehearsing the story of Christmas. Through the role play, pupils were encouraged to identify how Mary and Joseph would have felt on finding nowhere to stay in Bethlehem, and they also explored how Mary might have needed to prepare for a new baby. Pupils are pleased to raise funds for those less fortunate than themselves.

18. Relationships are harmonious throughout the school, and are founded on trust and mutual respect. The oldest pupils clearly respect their teachers, yet have the confidence to politely point out that a slip of the pen has resulted in a spelling mistake on the board.

19. Pupils are given good feedback about their performance, as well as well-earned praise, and they learn to evaluate their own success, so they develop self-esteem. At the end of the day, pupils measure their own performance, awarding themselves up to 5 points. They are honest and self-critical, but not self-deprecating, in their assessment.

20. Young children and pupils play amicably alongside one another, without any bickering about resources. Many older pupils play well together and are beginning to form friendships. While at Riverside, pupils acquire many of the social skills, as well as the necessary confidence and self-belief to enable them to succeed at secondary schools. There is careful preparation for this important transition. The school is particularly successful at returning an increasing number of pupils to mainstream schools.

The headteacher and senior management team provide excellent leadership.

21. When the school was last inspected, leadership was judged to be excellent. Since then, there has been no complacency, and there has been very good further improvement. Despite a change in the nature of the school's intake, standards have been maintained or improved. National initiatives have been enthusiastically implemented, and the school has further developed its role as an inclusive school that promotes inclusion into mainstream schools. Highly developed teamwork is an important feature in ensuring that the quality of the school's provision is not compromised by the outreach work that is carried out.

22. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher share a strong commitment to inclusion into mainstream. They share the responsibility for ensuring the high quality of the school's work, as well as that of its outreach role. Their roles are clearly defined, and their management styles are complementary, with each working to their particular strengths and areas of expertise. For example, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher share the management of the curriculum, the assistant headteacher takes a lead in developing provision for pupils with autism, and all three members of the team share the monitoring of the quality of provision by assessing outcomes. The deputy headteacher regularly releases subject managers to enable them to carry out their roles. Staff with management roles, teachers, and support staff are well supported in improving their practice. The school's success in achieving the Investors in People (IIP) award testifies to the high quality of staff development. Staff morale is high, despite the challenges presented by a change in the nature of the school's population, and the rapid pace of change.

23. The headteacher has great enthusiasm and energy. He provides excellent leadership, and is exceptionally well informed on all aspects of school, including individual pupils. Since the last inspection, he has very successfully developed the school's use of performance measures to raise standards of achievement. This work has attracted considerable interest from colleagues in other special and mainstream schools, and it has recently been mentioned in the DfES (Department for Education and Science) periodic publication entitled *SEN Update*.

24. The school has been setting targets for raising achievement since 1998. It sets ambitious targets, and does not always achieve these, but feels that it is improving in its ability to set realistic targets. In English, mathematics and personal and social development, targets for each year group are linked to the DfES/QCA (Department for Education and Science/Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) National Performance criteria for children with special educational needs, also known as 'P' levels. At present the school is working on assessment of pupils in information and communication technology (ICT), in preparation for the setting of similar targets in this subject. A particular strength of the school's target setting procedures is that they are fully integrated with its performance management systems and with its assessment and recording procedures. Target setting is therefore an extension of existing arrangements, rather than an additional, unrelated task to be completed.

25. In addition, the school analyses the results of regular standardised tests, and tracks the achievement of cohorts of pupils through the school. Analysis of data has enabled the school to identify relative weaknesses, across the school, in pupils' achievements in writing, and in shape, space and measure. Similarly, weaknesses have been identified in communicating and responding/speaking and listening at Key Stage 1 and in pupils' independent and organisational skills at Key Stage 2. Each has become a focus for improvement, thus informing the target setting process.

26. The school also sets targets for improving provision. These include targets relating to inclusion, parental partnership and staff development. For example, the school aims to provide every parent with at least one face-to-face discussion with staff each year, with pupils' progress as the focus. It also aims to provide every pupil with at least one experience of inclusion every year. Last year it reached its inclusion target. It did not quite make its target for parents' meetings but has revised its procedures and has set the target again this year. There is an exceptionally strong sense of a school striving for continual improvement. A filing cabinet magnet in the headteacher's office sums up the shared commitment. It reads, *The road to success is always under construction.*

The school makes excellent use of its own and other sources of funding to support teachers and pupils, and to promote inclusion.

27. The school receives significant additional funding from its status as a Beacon school, and as one of the partner schools in the Leigh Park Education Action Zone (EAZ). It makes excellent use of these funds.

28. At Riverside, teachers are extremely well supported, so that they can get on with the key task of teaching pupils. Funds have been used very effectively to further develop the school's central resource area, and Beacon funding pays for a resources assistant and additional clerical support. The central resource area is a highly organised and well stocked store, with equipment and new technology to help in the preparation of high quality resources which the teachers design.

29. A resources assistant manages the area very well. Simple but effective booking systems enable teachers to locate resources that may already be being used in another class. The system of ordering resources means that teachers do not have to worry about that side of lesson preparation. Recently, the resources assistant accompanied a group of pupils on a museum visit to see a display of life in Tudor times. This topic will not be taught until next term, so she made a good quality video recording, showing pupils interacting with the display. This will be used at the appropriate time to remind pupils of their visit.

30. Additional clerical support is used to provide teachers with administrative support, such as photocopying and word processing of reports. Administrative staff carry out the annual updating of the staff handbook and the governors' handbook. The school has recently adopted an electronic registration system which is helpful for teachers.

31. All teaching staff have been provided with a laptop, and all the school's core software has been installed on this. This is useful in preparing lessons and for planning how best to make use of the school's software to support pupils' learning.

32. Additional funds have been used to create a computer suite in the school. This is well staffed by a teaching assistant, who takes small groups of pupils, as part of other lessons, to enable them to become proficient at using ICT as a learning tool. As part of an EAZ project, pupils have benefited from the Reading is Fundamental (RIF) project. All pupils have been able to select books of their choice to take home.

33. The school has seized the opportunity to support inclusion into mainstream schools, by developing an outreach service. This is the main thrust of the school's Beacon work. The service is very well managed by the headteacher and assistant headteacher. The precise nature of the work to be undertaken in mainstream schools is negotiated, and well defined in writing, before support begins. The contributions of both parties are clearly stated, and key objectives, with success criteria, are shown. Time scales are identified, as well as dates for review.

34. Support takes several forms, including training, advice and joint working. Riverside teachers who go out into schools have all received training in consultancy skills. All outreach support is evaluated in writing. A sample of a third of all evaluations carried out up to March 2001 shows that Riverside's outreach work is highly valued. It has helped to promote inclusion, and provided what one respondent described as 'experience' and 'inspiration' to teachers in mainstream. Those at Riverside have benefited too. Teachers have widened their experience of mainstream schools, and extended their professional skills as providers of advice and support. There are frequent visitors to the school, to see practice in the classroom. This opportunity is valued, too. Resources in the central area are used well to support pupils in mainstream.

35. The school's expertise in promoting personal development is being shared widely through the PAVES (Promoting Positive Attitudes, Values, Ethos and Self-Esteem) initiative. The headteacher has taken a lead in this development, which aims to equip school staff so that they can intervene to support pupils. Intervention is intended to enable pupils to become more effective learners and develop age-appropriate personal and social skills. Materials to support this aim have been produced and circulated to all schools in the EAZ. They have been found so useful that the local education authority (LEA) has funded their reproduction for all schools in Hampshire.

The work of governors is excellent.

36. Governors have many relevant skills between them. Several have good experience of being governors in other schools, and one has worked as an educational psychologist. They are extremely supportive of the school, and seek to improve their governance all the time. For example, they now organise themselves in such a way that they ensure that a governor attends each school function, rather than several attending the same ones. One parent governor, who works abroad for several weeks at a time, kept in touch with pupils by email, and supported their geographical learning from a distance.

37. Their strategic role is exceptionally well developed. Each spring, governors join the staff in a twilight session spent reviewing the school's improvement plan, and in setting out priorities for further development. They each join a group of staff, rather than take the form of a separate group of governors. This year about half the governors attended this session. Several suggestions have come from governors. For example, one governor suggested that the school's targets for improvement should include one for inclusion; a second shared what she had seen at another school, and offered ideas for improving the playground. Both of these suggestions have been acted upon, with positive results. More recently, governors

have attended a seminar on the future role of special schools in Hampshire. In response to this, the chair and vice chair have begun to give serious consideration to ways in which the school might continue its outreach work once the Beacon funding comes to an end in three years time, and they have firm ideas to present to other governors.

38. Governors also act as critical friends to the school. Through their three committees, they keep the school's work under scrutiny. Each subject has a linked governor, who visits school and reports to other governors on what has been seen in lessons, and on the quality of pupils' work. This helps to raise governors' awareness of subject-specific matters. Last year governors set themselves a target of one subject visit each. This was not achieved, because of governors' other commitments, but it was an ambitious target. They also receive regular reports and presentations from subject managers, so that they can keep abreast of developments. When they are unsure of something, governors ask about this too. For example, one asked for an explanation of a *writing frame*, and others have asked the meanings of educational acronyms, such as Sulp (Social Use of Language Programme) and PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System). In this way, and through their visits and training sessions, governors build up a thorough understanding of how the school sets about educating its pupils.

39. Governors play a full part in making decisions about the budget. Funds are allocated to subject managers on the basis of their proposed development, and whether their subject is in the development, implementation or maintenance phase. Governors ask questions, to check on the wisdom of decisions. For example, one queried whether a certain LEA service had to be used, as it was felt to be very expensive. Governors budget for capital projects, and longer term savings. In fact, the current sizeable surplus reflects capital accumulated for the garage that is under construction, and for the planned installation of a telephone system that will save money in the long run.

40. The headteacher presents governors with regular reports, including a very detailed end of year report, and through these the governors monitor the progress of the school improvement plan. To evaluate the success of developments, governors request reports from visiting advisers and inspectors. They also send out questionnaires to parents to measure customer satisfaction. To check on the progress that pupils make, governors receive detailed information from the headteacher on progress towards the performance targets. In this way, governors can be sure that the school is doing its best for the pupils.

41. Governors keep parents well informed through their lively annual report to parents. Attendance at the associated meeting this year was good. The occasion was made rather special by the fact that some pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 helped to deliver the report, using a Powerpoint presentation, and showed parents how computers are used in the school, and parents appreciated this.

There is very good inclusive provision for pupils with autism.

42. Since the school was last inspected the school has admitted a larger proportion of pupils with autism. From the outset, its policy has been to teach these pupils in classes with pupils of a similar age, rather than have separate provision for them. A senior member of staff, now an assistant headteacher, has responsibility for this provision. She provides excellent leadership in this area of the school's work.

43. All staff in the school have been trained for at least four twilight sessions, in the teaching of pupils with autism. The school is gradually building up the number of staff in each department who have had more substantial training, including a three-day workshop of TEACCH (Teaching and Education of Children with Autism and Communication Handicaps)

training. A few pupils have additional funding from the LEA, which provides extra support staff. These staff are well trained, and several are fluent in signing. They are assigned to enable pupils to learn individually, and support them in group situations. This works well.

44. The school taps into a variety of external groups. This is mutually beneficial, as it provides valuable support for Riverside pupils and their parents, and is a means of sharing the school's experience and expertise. For example, a voluntary organisation which uses the school's premises for its meetings gives parents valued support when they make requests to Social Services departments for respite care. The school is one of five in Hampshire that run a project which works with families of children with autism in pre-school settings to support inclusion into mainstream. Through this project, parents are provided with information about autism and about school systems. A further group offers support for families of children with autism, including training and speakers on a variety of topics.

45. Through the school's outreach work, expertise and experience are shared both with teachers and with support staff in mainstream. The co-ordinator runs a support group that assists them in a number of ways. It keeps teachers abreast of developing methods and procedures, and introduces them to strategies that have proved successful at Riverside. For example, teachers have been introduced to, and have successfully used, consistent intervention plans which set out a particular way of managing individual pupils with autism. Teachers from mainstream schools are able to come into Riverside to see at first hand how pupils with autism are taught alongside their peers. Evaluations show that teachers have found this support extremely beneficial.

46. Parents also speak highly of the support they have received from the school. One commented that the staff had 'seen them through' the statementing process, and increased their knowledge and understanding of autism. The school is sensitive to the needs of pupils and their parents. For example, it recently organised a special fireworks evening for this group. The fireworks were carefully selected to ensure that they offered a suitable visual spectacle without the loud noises that some pupils find distressing.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Teaching of a small number of pupils with severe learning difficulties.

47. Teaching of pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD) and speech and language difficulties is at least satisfactory, and some very good practice was seen. However, it is not consistent across the school. In the nursery and reception classes, consistently good signing was seen, and children in those classes are beginning to use some signs to make their needs known, and to initiate contact with others. In other classes, certain pupils are supported by assistants who sign very well. However, not all teachers are confident in signing, though they have all received training, and this means that during whole class sessions, when all pupils are focusing on the class teacher, a few pupils are disadvantaged.

48. Many teachers are skilled in planning different activities for pupils of different abilities, and they also devise various ways for pupils to record. However, they do not always take this far enough, and so pupils with severe learning difficulties are occasionally on the fringes of activities. In the best lessons, teachers set out varied learning outcomes for pupils of different abilities, but in others this does not happen. If all teachers were to set slightly different learning outcomes for the same activity, ensuring that they were challenging yet realistic, then all pupils would be able to demonstrate achievement. The records of achievement are meaningful for most pupils, but those for pupils with SLD could be improved by having photographs and symbols to accompany text, so that they are more readily understood.

49. Teachers often make good use of objects to support pupils' understanding. For example, there are story sacks, which accompany some books. These have objects which help pupils to recall characters and events in each book. This approach could usefully be extended to other subjects so that pupils with SLD are supported in their understanding.

50. The school is aware of the need to develop its practice further to ensure that all pupils make equally good progress, and it is taking suitable action to this end,. For example, it has identified a nearby school that caters mainly for pupils with SLD, and there are plans to exchange good practice. Some teachers have targets relating to improvement in this area, as part of the performance management process.

The roles of some subject co-ordinators.

51. All subjects have a co-ordinator, and expectations of what the role should include are clearly set out. All subject managers are released from teaching duties on a regular basis to allow them to carry out monitoring and development work. However, practice is not consistently well developed in every subject. In English, management is very good, and monitoring and support for teachers has helped to encourage effective teaching of literacy skills, and consistency across the whole school. External evaluation has also helped to further improve provision, and good practice has been shared with mainstream schools. In some other subjects, co-ordinators are either new to the role or have not yet been successful in establishing consistent practice across the school. Not all co-ordinators have the skills or confidence to monitor teaching in their subject. There is further work to do to ensure consistently high quality across the school in the co-ordination of subjects, and the school is aware of this.

Evidence to support assessment of 'P' levels and enhance the target setting process.

52. At present, staff meet to discuss pupils' work and achievements in order to assign P levels. This is good practice, but greater rigour could be introduced to the assessment and target setting processes. This could be achieved by providing examples of annotated work as evidence of where pupils were when they were last assessed, and what level they have attained on reassessment. Such examples would also supply useful reference points for teachers new to the school, or for staff in mainstream, who may not be as familiar with the P levels as those currently on the school staff.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53. The headteacher, governors and staff should:

- Improve the teaching of pupils with severe learning difficulties and speech and communication difficulties, by ensuring that:
 - * all staff are competent and confident users of Makaton signing;
 - * teachers identify different learning outcomes for pupils of different abilities;
 - * teachers make wider use of symbols to support the development of reading and writing skills;
 - * teachers make wider use of actual objects to help pupils understand and learn.

- Further develop the roles of subject co-ordinators to ensure that all subjects are equally well managed.

- Develop portfolios of levelled work to assist teachers in assigning 'P' levels in literacy, numeracy and personal and social development, and provide associated evidence of pupils' achievements in these subjects.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	38
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	10	20	6	0	0	0
Percentage	5.3	26.3	52.6	15.8	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 two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	120
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	34

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	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	5.4	School data	0.2

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

Teacher Assessment: Summer 2001, percentages achieving levels. Pupils eligible.

	Level W	1	2
ENGLISH	76	24	0
Speaking and listening	53	47	0
Reading	71	29	0
Writing	100		0
Mathematics	59	35	6
Science	53	47	0

Task and Test Results: Summer 2001, percentages achieving levels. Pupils eligible.

	Level W	1	2	2C	2B
Reading task	71	29	0	0	0
Reading comprehension	0	0	0	0	0
Writing Task	100	0	0	0	0
Spelling Test		0	0	0	0
Mathematics	59	35	0	0	6

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Teacher Assessment: Summer 2001, percentages achieving levels. Pupils eligible.

	Level W	1	2	3
ENGLISH	46	38	13	4
Speaking and listening	46	42	13	0
Reading	46	29	21	4
Writing	50	42	4	4
Mathematics	25	58	8	8
Science	8	38	42	13

National Tests or Tasks: Summer 2001, percentages achieving levels. Pupils eligible.

	Level W	1	2	3	4
English	46	38	13	4	0
Maths	25	58	8	8	0
Science	8	38	25	16	13

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	112
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table shows pupils of compulsory school age only. This is not the same as the number of pupils altogether.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes:

YN – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.48
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	8.9
Average class size	10.9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff:

YN – Y6

Total number of education support staff	23
Total aggregate hours worked per week	579

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, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	881041.00
Total expenditure	873985.00
Expenditure per pupil	7633.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	91017.00
Balance carried forward to next year	98073.00

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out
Number of questionnaires returned

127
125

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	83.3	15.2	0	0	1.6
My child is making good progress in school.	68	25.6	0	1.6	4.8
Behaviour in the school is good.	63.2	30.4	1.6	0	4.8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24.3	36.4	11.2	5.6	22.4
The teaching is good.	74.4	21.6	0	0.8	32.2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	73.6	18.4	6.4	1.6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	88.6	4.9	3.3	0	3.3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78.9	15.4	0	0	5.7
The school works closely with parents.	74.8	17.9	5.7	1.6	0
The school is well led and managed.	81.3	11.4	1.6	0	5.7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71.5	20.3	1.6	0	6.5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51.2	25.6	3.2	0	20