



Riverside Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107529
LEA Calderdale
Inspection number 277768
Inspection dates 5 July 2006 to 6 July 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Kath Halifax CfBT Lead Inspector

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Holme Street
School category	Community		Hebden Bridge
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		West Yorkshire HX7 8EE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01422 842 154
Number on roll	225	Fax number	01422 842 154
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Penny Marrington
Date of previous inspection	15 January 2001	Headteacher	Mrs J Widdas

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Pupils who attend this average size junior school come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. Most are of White British heritage with a small number from Pakistani, Caribbean, Russian and Polish backgrounds. All speak English. The percentage of pupils entitled to a free school meal is average as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, the proportion of pupils having a statement to meet their special needs is well above average. The school has a waiting list for most year groups. It has gained the Healthy Schools Award, the Sport England Active Mark and Investors in People status.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspection findings agree with the school's evaluation that this is a good school, which provides good value for money. Standards are above average and pupils achieve well because of good teaching and a good curriculum. However, this has not always been so. Standards have fluctuated since the last inspection and, on occasions, pupils have not done as well as they should, mainly because of staffing difficulties. Nevertheless, as a result of good leadership and management, the school has turned the corner and things are back on track. This is demonstrated in the above average standards reached by the current Year 6 pupils. While achievement is good overall, pupils' standards in writing do not match those in reading. Writing is imaginative, but sentence structure and punctuation are areas for improvement. Most pupils make good progress in mathematics, but the quality of teaching is inconsistent, reflected in inconsistency of learning. The subject leader and managers recognise the need for more rigorous monitoring of classroom practice.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved and are now good because of the good provision for their personal growth. Pupils especially enjoy taking part in the excellent range of sport and creative activities. Attendance is satisfactory, and pupils are now punctual because of the good systems introduced. Parents and pupils think highly of this school where every pupil is welcomed, valued and prepared for the next stage of education. Under the determined leadership of the headteacher and skilled senior management team the school is in a good position to continue to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' punctuation and sentence structure so they achieve equally well in all aspects of English.
- Ensure consistency in the teaching of mathematics so all ages and capabilities make equally good progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Attainment on entry to the school is average to above, varying from year to year, because the school welcomes pupils with a very wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Taking account of prior learning, progress is good overall and particularly so in speaking and in reading. In 2005, standards were average. The school was disappointed in the national test results for that year and the statutory targets for English and mathematics were not met. In addition, standards in science were a concern. Much of this was due to difficulties with staffing. However, under the firm leadership of the headteacher, the quality of teaching has improved and this is reflected in higher standards. The school's tracking system indicates that test results overall for 11 year olds in 2006 will return to the above average level of 2001. In work seen in school, pupils' progress was good and standards, especially in English, are above average. All pupils make good progress in reading, especially the ones with specific

learning needs. Pupils write vividly and at length for many different purposes, but sentences are not always accurately punctuated. Neither are they complex enough to reach higher levels through, for example, the use of clauses. Standards in science have improved considerably this year and are now back above average. Better achievement reflects a much stronger focus on practical work.

In mathematics pupils are not making as much progress as they do in English and science because teachers' planning often lacks detail about what the differing ability groups will learn. Furthermore, teachers are not using the same approaches, for example in teaching calculations, and this confuses pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being have improved considerably since the last inspection and are now good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as seen in the significant reduction in bullying and anti-social behaviour. This prompted parents to comment, 'the school's anti-bullying and buddy policies really work'. Through the expectations of staff and the good programme for personal, social and citizenship education, the pupils develop harmonious relationships and show respect for those who are different.

Pupils enjoy school, talking with enthusiasm about the many opportunities they have to participate in arts events such as the Hebden Bridge Festival. They relish taking responsibility, such as running the tuck shop, organising playground equipment and being a buddy.

The school council has been influential in bringing about the inclusion of nutritious food on the lunchtime menu as well as producing posters warning parents of the dangers of parking and turning vehicles outside the school. Pupils enjoy the physical and social challenges presented by residential trips and many sporting activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Following the findings of the last inspection, good improvement has been made in managing pupils' behaviour so there is minimum disruption to learning. Teachers are now confident in the use of information and communication technology and this has resulted in improved standards. There are outstanding features of teaching, such as how pupils' skills in speaking and listening are promoted and the range of interesting activities that stretch all pupils. English is taught well and pupils have made considerable gains in their reading. Teachers have inspired them to think creatively and extended their vocabulary, so pupils are articulate and their writing imaginative. However, some teachers have not given enough emphasis to grammar and sentence structure. Nor have some paid much attention to presentation and handwriting and this has affected the standards pupils achieve.

The teaching of mathematics, however, is inconsistent in the way teachers approach certain topics. Lessons are planned conscientiously, but not to a common format and tasks are not always matched to pupils' capabilities. This can affect, for example, higher attaining pupils, who can sometimes find the work too easy, especially as additional exercises tend to be more examples of the same activity rather than tasks that make them apply their knowledge.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the support they receive, but other pupils sometimes find tasks too difficult and become frustrated.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets legal requirements. The school is rightly proud of the way it draws on local expertise to promote a love of sport and the arts in its pupils. In addition to contributing to pupils' physical and cultural development, these activities enable those who are talented to progress further. The curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and well designed to meet their needs and support their development, including effective programmes to raise competence in reading. Provision to ensure pupils adopt a safe, healthy lifestyle is good. Very good links with the local community enrich the curriculum through visits and visitors and pupils are encouraged to appreciate the rich heritage of their town.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff provide good care and support for all pupils, including the most vulnerable and child protection and health and safety procedures are established. Because of this pupils feel safe, talking with affection about staff and commenting, 'I like this school because teachers listen and help you.' The school has a good reputation for caring for pupils with learning difficulties and complex needs. Parents say staff are supportive and helpful: the close links with other professionals contribute significantly to their child's well-being. A very good transition programme with the local high school prepares pupils well for transfer to secondary education.

Academic guidance is good. Oral feedback is almost always immediate and positive, and there are sufficient comments in pupils' books to enable them to recognise how well they are achieving. Learning targets are clear and understood by pupils. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked enabling the early identification of individuals and groups who need extra support and this is the bedrock of the improving standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Staff, parents and pupils appreciate the headteacher's style of leadership commenting, she wants the best for the pupils and the staff. She has ensured that pupils receive a rounded education, placing as much

emphasis on personal growth as on academic achievement. She is very ably supported by a hardworking deputy, whose work on tracking pupils' progress has identified pupils who need help. In addition, the identification of gaps in learning has reversed the decline in standards. Since the appointment of the headteacher much of the senior managers' time has been taken up sorting the legacy of inappropriate behaviour, including bullying, and staffing issues.

Subject leadership has improved since the last inspection. Subject managers know the strengths of their subjects and what needs to be done to raise standards. However, the focus on improving reading, while raising standards, has meant other subjects have been put on hold. Support by the governing body is good. Governors have a good overview of the school and are not afraid to question, particularly when standards fell. Under the leadership of the knowledgeable chair, they are increasingly fulfilling their role as a critical friend.

Parents and pupils report they feel consulted in the school's development. The school improvement plan highlights what needs to be done in order of priority because managers are accurate in their evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their in-depth knowledge of the school has resulted in barriers to learning being overcome. Pupils' achievement is growing and standards are rising, making improvement since the last inspection satisfactory. The vision of the headteacher encourages the continued support of staff in the pursuit of ever-higher standards.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for being so polite and friendly. We enjoyed meeting you, eating lunch with you and joining you at break time. We particularly enjoyed watching you rehearse the end of year concert, though we thought Mr Flack and Mr Denham could have tried harder with their Elvis contribution!

What we liked most about your school

- You work hard and behave well.
- Your achievement is good and you reach high standards because you have good teachers and a good headteacher.
- The very wide range of sporting activities and your work with musicians, artists and writers is excellent and makes a considerable contribution to your skills and enjoyment.

What we have asked your teachers to do now

- Make sure you pay more attention to your punctuation and sentence structure so you do even better in English.
- Make sure you do as well in maths as you do in English and science.

We enjoyed our short time with you and wish you well for the future.