



# Riverwalk School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 124902  
**LEA** SUFFOLK LEA  
**Inspection number** 281830  
**Inspection dates** 24 January 2006 to 25 January 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr. Charlie Henry LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	South Close
<b>School category</b>	Community		IP33 3JZ
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 18		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01284764280
<b>Number on roll</b>	119	<b>Fax number</b>	01284705943
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr.Martin Lightfoot
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14 February 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr. Barry Ellis

<b>Age group</b> 3 to 18	<b>Inspection dates</b> 24 January 2006 - 25 January 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 281830
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

Riverwalk is a school for pupils with severe and profound multiple learning difficulties. An increasing number have additional autistic spectrum disorders, challenging behaviours or complex health needs. The school has an assessment unit for young children, some of whom subsequently transfer to mainstream schools. All pupils, except for those in the assessment unit who are undergoing statutory assessment, have statements of special educational needs. There has been a significant increase in the number of pupils on roll since the last inspection and there are twice as many boys as girls. Most pupils are from white British ethnic heritage and a very few have English as an additional language. The school provides opportunities for some pupils to attend local mainstream schools part-time. There are very few pupils over the age of 16, as most leave at this age to attend local colleges. Pupils are from a wide area of Suffolk.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 3**

Riverwalk is a satisfactory school. The inspection team disagrees with the school that the overall effectiveness is good. This is because pupils only make satisfactory progress due to the satisfactory teaching and learning. Standards are low, but given their learning difficulties and disabilities, and the low levels of attainment on entry to the school, achievement is satisfactory. There are strengths in the good progress made by children working at the Foundation Stage and by the pupils in Years 1 and 2. This is as a result of good teaching and a well planned and organised curriculum. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Staff work well together in teams. Challenging targets are set within individual education plans but do not show overall gains against the broader areas of the curriculum. As a result, procedures for tracking whether progress is adequate are unsatisfactory. The assessment of pupils' progress is not used effectively to plan lessons so teachers' expectations are not always as high as they should be. The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. They enjoy school, feel safe and behave well. The quality of care, support and guidance is good. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has built strong links for the school within the local community. However, pupils' achievements are not sufficiently evaluated and information from monitoring the quality of lessons is not used effectively. Although not all the issues from the last inspection have been met, recent successful developments, such as pupil centred planning show the school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement. Value for money is satisfactory.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 4**

The Post-16 provision is inadequate. This is an area identified by the school as requiring further development, but considered satisfactory. There are only a few Post-16 students and they are in the same class as pupils aged 14-16. This does not sufficiently acknowledge the students' increasing adult status and there is too little difference between what these two groups are taught. Recent developments to improve the curriculum include introducing the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) award scheme. However, the relevance for each student has not been established and as a result, they are not prepared adequately for when they leave school.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve assessment procedures to ensure that pupils' progress can be tracked effectively. - Extend target setting for pupils' achievements in order to raise expectations of what they will learn. - Analyse and use information from monitoring more effectively to contribute to raising standards. - Improve the provision for Post-16 students to prepare them for when they leave school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 4**

As a result of their learning needs, all pupils enter the school with standards that are well below those expected for their age. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress, given their abilities and starting points during the time they are at school. Progress is good for children in the Foundation Stage and for pupils in Years 1 and 2, because they are taught well from an effectively planned and organised curriculum. However, due to weaknesses in how and what they are taught, the progress of Post-16 students is inadequate. They do not gain sufficient skills to help prepare them for when they leave school. There are no significant differences between the progress made by different groups of pupils. Most pupils make at least satisfactory, and at times good, progress towards meeting targets within individual education plans (IEPs) that are established at their annual reviews. The school does not set targets for subjects and areas of the curriculum so it is not possible to measure expected with actual achievement.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Most behave well. Those who have behaviour difficulties make good progress towards conforming to the school's expectations. Attendance is good. Although the absence rate has risen over the last few years this is largely due to hospitalisation or other medical reasons. Children in the nursery develop particularly well; they quickly learn to join in with group activities and play alongside each other. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are clear about what they like. One pupil remarked, 'Ooh, that is lovely' as he worked on the dough to make his biscuits. Pupils learn to stay safe and use equipment sensibly. The Fruit and Veg scheme is successful in helping younger pupils to understand healthy eating. The weekly cafe run by younger pupils, the tuck shop for pupils and the Friday cafe for staff, which are run by older pupils, are very effective in helping pupils make a good and healthy contribution to the school community. They contribute to the wider community, for example, by sending their profits to an Albanian orphanage. These activities, as mini enterprises, also help them develop a good economic awareness. Representatives on the recently established school council have clear ideas about areas that they want to improve. Pupils' economic awareness is further developed through experiences of the world of work.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 4**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There are strengths in the teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and for pupils in Years 1 and 2 where pupils learn well. However, teaching and learning are inadequate for Post - 16 students as they lack an appropriate focus on preparing students for when they leave school. The team work of the staff is a strong feature of the school. Teaching assistants are well directed and have a good understanding of the support required by each pupil. In the most effective lessons, activities are carefully planned to meet each pupil's needs, so all learn well. There are strong relationships formed between the pupils and the staff. As a result, pupils' confidence grows and they work hard. At times, in less successful lessons, pace slows and important opportunities to develop skills are missed; for example, in numeracy. There are instances where pupils become unnecessarily unsettled because the change between activities is not managed effectively. Resources are not always appropriate, such as tables that are too low for wheelchair users and materials that are too young for older students. The school has a satisfactory range of procedures for assessing pupils' progress. However, there is insufficient use of information about standards and pupils' achievement in the different areas of the curriculum. As a result, expectations are not always as high as they should be.

### Curriculum and other activities

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 4**

The curriculum is satisfactory overall, and there are strengths in the provision for the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. Work is carefully matched to the needs of the pupils. There are good arrangements through joint planning by staff to ensure an appropriate amount of time is spent on each area of learning. The school is aware that the curriculum for students in the Post-16 provision is inadequate. It is not suitably different from what they have learned in Years 10 and 11 and there is not a sufficient focus on the purpose of their learning. The curriculum is enriched through activities such as horse riding. Additional support for sport by students from a nearby school is enjoyed enthusiastically by pupils. Activity weeks are highly successful in broadening pupils' experiences. Visitors to the school provide expertise in areas such as puppet making and drumming. The summer holiday scheme is very popular providing interesting and stimulating activities in the long holiday. Older pupils are helped to develop their self-confidence and workplace skills well through a well organised programme where they experience the world of work. They also learn to look after themselves, for example, by shopping for food, and then cooking meals.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The care, guidance and support of pupils are good. Safeguarding pupils' health and safety has a high priority in the school. The provision for child protection works well in practice and training is planned to bring the child protection officers and other staff up-to-date. There are good arrangements for the school to work with the support services. These are being improved through the development of pupil-centred planning. This successfully brings together all those working with a child in order to provide the appropriate support. Looked after children are well monitored to ensure they do as well as they should. There are good arrangements for the 'Connexions' service to work with pupils from Year 9 onwards. Where appropriate, pupils are helped to transfer to college. The personal, social and health education programme, together with initiatives such as the Riverwalk Citizen programme, are effective in promoting healthy lifestyles.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 4**

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The headteacher has successfully promoted the role of the school within the community, for example, in its partnership with other schools and agencies. Most parents feel involved in their children's education. The views of these stakeholders are used appropriately to inform the school's self evaluation. Equality of opportunity is promoted well. The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory. There is, however, not enough analysis of information either about pupils' achievements or from monitoring the quality of lessons. Target setting is not sufficiently broad and does not include overall improvement in subjects such as English and mathematics. As a result, data is not used adequately to identify any areas for improvement and to check if any changes have been effective. The governors are supportive but they are not sufficiently informed about, or involved in, monitoring the work of the school. Therefore they are not able to provide adequate challenge to the headteacher and senior management team. Finance is well managed and the budget links well to the school improvement priorities. Resources are used appropriately and the school provides satisfactory value for money. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory overall, although the Post-16 provision, including accommodation, remains inadequate. Recent appointments and the restructuring of the management team so that they have clear roles and responsibilities are beginning to demonstrate improvements. The capacity to improve further is satisfactory.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	4
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	4
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

As you know we recently visited your school to find out how well you are doing. Thank you for looking after us and making us feel so welcome. We really enjoyed it and learned a lot about your school. Thank you for telling us about the things you do and how you think your teachers and other staff are helping you to learn. What is best about your school - The way you enjoy school and want to learn. - The progress you make towards the targets in your individual plans. - The care that all staff take of you. - The way all staff work so well together to help you. - The links the school has with other schools, businesses and people who help you. What we have asked your school to do now - Make sure teachers use clear ways to check how well you are learning in lessons. - Set targets so that your teachers are clear about what they expect you to learn each year. - Use the information collected about your progress and lessons to help you learn even better. - Improve what the oldest pupils learn and the facilities that they have for learning.