

Riverside Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100808
Local Authority	Southwark
Inspection number	285887
Inspection date	3 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Margaret Coussins

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	299
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P John
Headteacher	Ms W Mortimer-Lee and Ms J Lewis
Date of previous school inspection	21 January 2002
School address	Janeway Street London SE16 4PS
Telephone number	020 7237 3227
Fax number	020 7237 0047

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Riverside is a large primary school situated in an area of considerable social disadvantage and has a culturally diverse population. Over half of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is significantly above the national average as is the percentage of pupils whose first language is not English. Currently there are 21 pupils who are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities is below the national average. Many pupils start or leave the school at times other than the normal times. The school has undergone major rebuilding work which has caused extensive disruption. The school is currently led by two co-headteachers.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Riverside is a good school with some outstanding aspects. Children are happy, feel safe and really enjoy being at the school. They have positive attitudes to learning and are excited by learning new things. The ethos within the school successfully promotes care and respect for others and excellent relationships between staff and pupils. The good care, guidance and support lead to confident, determined learners who feel valued and want to do well. As one child said, 'Teachers give you confidence, they help you think you can do things even when you think it's really difficult and are scared of trying.' Parents are very pleased with what the school offers and the support it gives them and their children. One parent said, 'English is not my children's first language and they receive a lot of support from the school.' They, and the pupils, are particularly pleased with the excellent range of clubs, visitors to school and visits which enhance the curriculum and broaden pupils' personal experience, skills and learning. The school works outstandingly well with parents, other agencies and organisations to promote pupils' well-being.

Good teaching and an interesting curriculum contribute to the pupils' good progress, enjoyment and well-being. Sometimes teachers do not provide enough opportunities in lessons for pupils to develop their speaking, listening and thinking skills by sharing their ideas and responses to questions with each other. Pupils develop good personal skills. They show this in their good behaviour, the way they work and play together and their willingness to take on additional responsibilities. For example, the playground friends actively promote harmonious relationships by making sure everyone has a friend to play with. They take responsibilities seriously and feel they can make a difference.

Pupils achieve well from their below average starting points. They get off to a secure start in the Foundation Stage because of the good quality of the provision. Despite their good progress, standards are below average at the end of Year 2. New, well thought out programmes have been established which are helping to improve pupils' reading and writing skills in Key Stage 1, but have not yet had an impact on standards. Good teaching throughout the school and carefully targeted support for groups ensure that pupils' rate of progress increases as they move from year to year. Their learning skills develop and enable them to catch up so that, by Years 5 and 6, achievement for many is very good and by the time they leave standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science.

Under the good leadership of the co-headteachers, the school has continued to improve. They have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a clear sense of the school's future direction. The results of their work show that the school has a good capacity to improve further. Teamwork is strong and staff provide good role models for pupils. The school has a strong commitment to including all children and celebrates the cultural diversity of its population. Teachers keep a close check on progress, but pupils are not always clear about how they can judge how well they are doing to achieve the targets set by teachers to improve their work.

Coping with the disruption of the building works has been a challenge for staff and children alike and a child expressed the view of many by saying, 'We put up with it, it was terrible, it was annoying, but it's made our fantastic school even better.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in Key Stage 1 by accelerating the progress pupils make in reading and writing.
- Increase pupils' understanding of how they can improve and provide more opportunities for them to discuss their ideas.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Standards are above average. Children start at school in the Nursery or Reception Year with low attainment particularly in their communication, language and literacy skills. They get a good start in the Foundation Stage and make good progress although the proportion reaching the goals expected for their age in reading and writing by the end of the reception year is below average. When they move into Year 3, standards are average in mathematics and, despite their good progress, below average in reading and writing because of their relatively weaker language skills on entry. In Years 5 and 6, achievement for many is very good and by the time they leave standards are well above average. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 is significantly higher than found nationally. Many pupils join the school in different year groups and have complex learning needs. These pupils, as well as those with learning difficulties and those whose first language is not English achieve as well as others because of good additional support from the learning mentor and teaching assistants. The school is setting challenging targets and its evaluation shows it is on track to meet them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Attendance has improved and is average. Although the school does all it can to encourage regular attendance, a small number of pupils do not attend regularly. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and contributes well to their developing confidence, maturity and independence. Pupils demonstrate good, safe practices around the school. They are aware of dangers and risks outside of school as seen by their work to enhance the safety of pupils and the community in their travel plan. They have a good understanding of how to stay healthy from eating a balanced diet and participating enthusiastically in the wide range of physical activities provided. The older pupils are less aware of the dangers of sexual health risks as the school's provision is not yet fully in place. The good level of pupils' academic and personal skills prepares them well for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teaching is engaging and lively with a strong focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers work hard to pitch work at different levels through careful planning to ensure that they challenge pupils of all abilities. Across the school, relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent and help to produce a positive and supportive climate for pupils to learn. Teachers' use of interactive whiteboards engages

pupils and helps them be more motivated in lessons. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking, listening and thinking skills by sharing their ideas and responses to questions with each other. Through their tracking systems, teachers have a good understanding of where their pupils are and what they need to do to improve. Assessment procedures identify pupils to receive additional support in English and mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has improved since the last inspection. Plans to revise the curriculum further are not yet fully established, however, it is good and provides breadth and balance to successfully meet the needs of all pupils. Provision for information and communication technology has been restricted over the last two terms because of the major building programme. Excellent links with various groups and organisations provide enrichment to the curriculum as seen in the dance workshops which are enjoyed by all pupils and make a significant contribution to their healthy lifestyles. Children in the Foundation Stage have a good balance of activities, with particular emphasis placed on their personal and social skills and their early reading and writing experiences. Pupils enjoyed visits to the Tate Modern to stimulate their art work. Art has a high profile in the curriculum as seen by the quality of the displays around the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is a caring community. Pupils trust the staff and feel safe and secure. As one pupil commented, 'We can say what we feel and people listen to us. Everyone in the school is kind to everyone else.' Pupils and their parents agree that children are looked after very well. A parent said, 'How dedicated the team are from the helpers to the very top. Their patience, care and professionalism with all the children including those with special needs are second to none.' Support is extended to children and their families. Communication with parents is good and parents feel they can approach the school with any queries or concerns. All staff understand the school's systems for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare. The school works extremely well with other services to ensure pupils' well-being. Pupils have targets to improve their work in English and mathematics but lack guidance in the skills required to evaluate their own progress towards reaching them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The school's accurate analysis of its work has enabled it to move forward on several counts. Since the previous inspection, standards, assessment and the curriculum have improved. The two co-headteachers' good leadership provides clear educational direction for the school and a strong focus on continual improvement. Together they motivate and support staff, enabling them to do their jobs well. They, with the governing body, have demonstrated that the school is good at evaluating where its strengths lie. It also knows what needs improving and acts effectively to bring this about. This has been shown, for example, by the initiatives put in place to improve writing which resulted in huge improvements in English standards. The governing body provides good levels of support and challenge and hold the school to account for its performance. It fulfils the majority of its statutory duties except for a programme of sex and relationships education which is a priority in its action plan.

The leadership and management structure of the school has very recently been reorganised and team and subject leaders are developing their roles well, but the full impact of their work has yet to be seen.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

14 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Riverside Primary School, Janeway Street, London, SE16 4PS

I am writing to let you know how much I enjoyed my visit to your school and what I found out. I particularly loved your fantastic artwork on display and watching you all enjoy yourselves in the dance workshops. Thank you for making me so welcome, for talking to me about your work and telling me what you think about your school.

- Riverside is a good school.
- You really enjoy being at the school and get on well with each other and all the staff.
- Your teachers are good role models for you and make sure your lessons and all the other activities that go on in the school are interesting and exciting.
- Your headteachers do a good job and the entire staff work very hard to make sure that everyone has a chance to succeed.
- The standards you achieve and your confidence and determination to do well mean you are well prepared to move on to your next school.
- Everyone in the school looks after you really well to make sure you are safe and happy.

These are the things that should be better.

- As you are able to do so well, you could make faster progress in your reading and writing so that you have more skills when you go into Year 3.
- Your teachers should help you understand how you can judge how well you are doing and provide more opportunities in lessons for you to develop your speaking, listening skills by sharing your ideas and responses to your teachers' questions with each other. This will mean that everyone has to think, not just the children who put their hands up.

You and your parents are right to be happy with your school. It is helping you grow into caring, interesting young people. You can help by always doing your best and coming to school every day.

I hope you enjoy being at school even more now the building work has stopped. Thank you again for all your help and for being so friendly and polite and interesting to talk to.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Coussins Lead inspector