

Riverside Community Special School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116600
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	290558
Inspection dates	13–14 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Jacque Cook

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	115
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Mayer
Headteacher	Miss Liz Beavan
Date of previous school inspection	26 November 2001
School address	Scratchface Lane Purbrook Waterlooville PO7 5QD
Telephone number	02392 250138
Fax number	02392 240755

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	13–14 March 2007
Inspection number	290558

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Riverside is a school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD) and autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). Six children are in the Foundation Stage, aged under five. There are almost four times as many boys as girls and pupils are predominately White British. Four pupils are looked after. The school provides an outreach service to mainstream primary schools and pre-school children. Awards include Investors In People, Enhanced Healthy Schools and School Achievement. The school is a member of Hampshire's Excellence Cluster. The headteacher was appointed in September 2005.

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 several outstanding features. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They say they enjoy coming to school and are proud when they receive stickers or tokens. The excellent lunchtime and snack arrangements contribute to their very good understanding of what they should eat to be healthy and to the choices they make. Pupils enjoy contributing to the school community through a range of tasks to help their teachers. The excellent curriculum provides pupils with many opportunities to increase their self confidence as well as to develop the basic skills they will need in the future. Outstanding care, guidance and support ensure that pupils begin to develop safe practices. The youngest children in the Foundation Stage learn to wait and take turns sensibly through the careful guidance of their staff.

Although the attainment of children that join the Foundation Stage is often very low, they make outstanding progress. Most notably they improve communication skills and learn to follow routines. This gives them an excellent start to their education. In Years 1 to 6 pupils' attainment is low and from this low base, pupils achieve well. This is an improvement since the last inspection where the achievement of pupils with SLD was only satisfactory. Pupils with ASD often make very good progress in improving their personal, social and health education (PSHE).

The leadership and management of the school are good. Senior staff effectively monitor and evaluate how well the school is doing. The analysis of pupils' progress is very good for those that are more able. However, procedures to show the achievement of pupils with more complex needs are not adequate to show small steps and to demonstrate to parents the gains being made. The outreach service is managed well and the quality of training offered to other schools is excellent. The quality of teaching and learning is good but it is not consistent. The role of the subject co-ordinators has developed well. They monitor and report on the work in their subjects effectively. However, they have not received training in how to monitor effectively the quality of teaching and learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Train middle managers in the effective monitoring of teaching and learning in order to raise the quality of all lessons to good or better.
- Develop procedures to show the achievement of pupils with more complex needs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Excellent teaching and learning contribute to children's outstanding achievement during the Foundation Stage. A rapid improvement in communication skills helps them to learn effectively because they are more able to express their needs and wants. This also leads to improved behaviour.

Attainment of pupils in Years 1 to 6 is low but they make good progress and achieve well. Good teaching strategies that help pupils to learn from practical activities have improved the progress of pupils with SLD so they now achieve as well as their peers. Pupils with ASD thrive in the structure and routine provided. They make particularly good progress in learning to work with others successfully and in their PSHE lessons. The achievement of looked after children is good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

There is a strong and highly successful focus on improving pupils' personal development and well being. Their spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. Spiritual development is particularly strong because pupils use strategies to reflect on their work and behaviour. They are fascinated by the natural world. Pupils questioned the staff from a visiting farm enthusiastically about the baby animals and their mothers. They marvelled at the perfect shape of a chicken's egg which was laid while they watched.

Pupils' self esteem is raised and is very positive. They respond extremely well to encouraging comments and rewards from staff. A highlight of the week for older pupils is selecting their rewards gained for good work and behaviour from the 'token shop'. An increasing confidence, improved communication and numeracy skills and ability to relate well to others contribute to pupils' outstanding economic awareness.

Pupils say they enjoy learning. One commented that he'd like to come to school every day. Many older pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and they use tools sensibly. Behaviour is good. Pupils with difficult behaviour are helped to improve. They are keen to report to the headteacher during the day to say how good they have been. The attendance of pupils is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Most members of staff are outstandingly good at helping pupils to behave well by praising those who conform and intervening swiftly before incidents can escalate. Excellent arrangements for providing a routine that helps all pupils, but particularly those with ASD, are very effective. Checking the symbols for activities on visual timetables and making choices with the help of symbols ensure that pupils know what is expected and can return swiftly to a task. In most instances teachers plan effectively so that work is very well matched to pupils' needs. Pupils work well in small groups which are often very well led by support staff. Resources such as the interactive white boards grab and sustain pupils' attention. Progress in information and communication technology (ICT) is improved through the good use of computers in lessons.

Where teaching is satisfactory and occasionally inadequate, one activity is often planned for the whole class. As a result, the needs of the less able and the more able are not well met and tasks are not sufficiently stimulating. Too much time is spent in preparation so pupils are not occupied and become restless.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is planned very well and enriched with a broad range of interesting activities. Exciting topics enthuse the pupils. As part of 'let's read and write', for example, older pupils research and design their own super heroes and write and illustrate a comic strip story about them. The stories are collected into a big book and read by the authors to younger pupils. This is one of the many ways in which pupils contribute to their community so well. They also participate in fundraising activities organised during the year. The very good PSHE programme

includes an emphasis on developing social skills and helping others. Everyday tasks such as taking the register to the office are part of learning to be responsible. The many sporting activities develop a good habit of taking exercise. They help pupils to be competitive and manage losing as well as winning. A recent Intercultural Day improved pupils' understanding of the customs and culture of Africa. Strategies such as mind mapping and mind reading are highly successful in helping pupils to think through what they will do.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

There are excellent arrangements and procedures for safeguarding pupils. Levels of supervision are high but effectively organised so that pupils have opportunities to develop their independence. When difficulties are encountered action is taken to ease concerns. One pupil, for example, has a card which he shows when he needs to talk with an adult. Pupils say they will always go to a member of staff if there is a problem. They learn how to keep themselves safe through activities such as practising road safety. A highly successful safety day teaches pupils what to do through experiencing scenarios set up by the emergency services. Lunchtimes and snack times are very well organised to be social occasions where pupils learn to eat together. Snacks provided are healthy and the food at lunchtime is outstanding. It is also healthy and is presented in a way that the pupils find interesting, such as fruit cups with a straw threaded through a lid made of an orange slice.

Most pupils' attendance is very good and they are awarded certificates. However, there are a few pupils whose attendance is unsatisfactory despite the best efforts of the school.

Pupils' academic progress is monitored very well. The progress of looked after children and their well-being is checked regularly to ensure that they thrive. A new system for individual education plans (IEPs) which has reduced the number of targets is beginning to work well. All parents visit the school at least once a year to talk about their child's progress. Most are very supportive and appreciate the regular communication with the teachers. The measurement of pupils' progress, though good, is not sufficiently refined to quantify the small steps made by pupils with complex needs. This restricts the school's ability to analyse progress and give clear information to parents.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and senior management team have a clear focus on improving the achievement of pupils and have been successful in improving the achievement of pupils with SLD significantly. Staff absences are of concern to some parents. However, these problems have been managed well though they are time consuming to ensure that disturbance for the pupils is minimised. Nevertheless, there have been a number of effective changes that demonstrate a good capacity to improve further. An effective development has been the transferring of school documentation to a specialist ICT site. This ensures that all staff, and especially those that are temporary, have information to hand such as pupils' IEPs and lists of resources for each subject. Good strategies have been introduced that are successfully improving weaker teaching and learning through joint planning and closer monitoring.

The outreach service is well regarded by local schools. Training offered on ASD is of particularly high quality. The role of middle managers is developing well. Good procedures are used to

establish the quality of work in each subject. However, there has not been enough support and training to enable teachers to reach accurate judgements when monitoring teaching and learning.

There is now very clear financial reporting to the governing body and the accumulated funds are earmarked for specific developments. Governance is good. Governors provide challenge to the leadership of the school but information gained from those who visit is not formally presented at a governors' meeting. As a result, not all governors have the opportunity to be as well informed. The work of the school is monitored and evaluated well which contributes to an accurate identification of strengths and the areas to develop.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
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	4
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

Thank you very much for your lovely welcome when I visited your school recently. I would like to give a big thank you to those who talked to me; you were very helpful.

This is what I liked about your school.

- It is a good school and there are several things that are outstanding.
- You are all doing well and children in the nursery and reception class are making excellent progress.
- The way you try to stay healthy, look after yourselves, help others, and learn things that will help you when you grow up is outstanding.
- You told me you enjoy school and like getting stickers or tokens.
- Teachers and support staff are good at making your lessons interesting and helping you to behave well.
- The things you are taught are excellent. The school arranges many exciting events, like the farm visit and the safety day.
- Staff look after you exceptionally well.
- Your headteacher and deputy headteacher run the school well.

This is what I have asked your school to do now.

- Provide training for teachers so they can help to make sure all your lessons are taught well.
- Improve the system to show your progress.

With best wishes

Jacque Cook

Lead Inspector