

# Riverside Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	134011
<b>Local Authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	295310
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jacque Buttriss

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	210
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Patricia Wozencroft
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kathy Frame
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 December 2005
<b>School address</b>	St Edmund's Way Rainham Gillingham ME8 8ET
<b>Telephone number</b>	01634 338700
<b>Fax number</b>	01634 267295

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a school of average size in an urban area. There is a funded nursery class within the school which currently operates mornings only. There is a larger than average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, including a specialist provision within the school for 12 pupils with visual impairment. These visually impaired pupils are fully integrated within classes. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This school provides a satisfactory standard of education. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. A downward trend in standards following the last inspection has been halted through recent leadership initiatives and although standards are still below the national average, progress is now at least satisfactory across the school, with good progress in some classes. However, a significant minority of pupils are still underachieving, especially those who are potentially high attainers. Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils feel safe and secure. They are developing healthy lifestyles and are building good relationships with each other and with adults, contributing positively to the school community.

Provision in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Pupils have positive attitudes and enjoy being at school. However, teachers do not always demonstrate sufficiently high expectations and some lessons lack pace and challenge, especially for more able pupils, with the result that work is not always well matched to pupils' needs and a significant minority of pupils are not helped to fulfil their potential. The satisfactory curriculum is enhanced by a good range of additional activities, visits and visitors, providing a variety of motivating purposes for writing. The good teaching and provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities enables them to make good progress and to achieve well. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Visually impaired pupils are particularly well supported and integrated into classes across the school. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. There is very good support for vulnerable pupils and pastoral care is a strength of the school. However, pupils are often not sufficiently well guided to help them know how well they are doing and how to improve their work.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The dedicated headteacher and leadership team have taken appropriate steps to raise standards and monitor progress. Recent initiatives have resulted in improved attendance, good progress in developing writing skills and much improved support for pupils with special needs. However, the headteacher recognises that the school self-evaluation lacks clarity and that it does not identify all the priority areas for improvement. The leadership team is also aware that not all pupils benefit from work appropriately matched to their needs and this is a continuing focus for improvement. Strong staff teamwork is a feature. Governors give good support to the school and parents' responses are generally positive.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement by ensuring that teachers have higher expectations so that they challenge all pupils according to their needs.
- Share assessment outcomes with pupils and involve them more in assessing their own work and setting targets so that they understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Improve the clarity and of the school's written self-evaluation in order to identify all priorities for school improvement.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Attainment on entry to the school is in line with expectations. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good gains in all areas of learning. As a result, they enter Year 1 with standards above national averages. However, in the 2006 national tests the standards of pupils

at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 were significantly below national averages and very few pupils attained the higher levels in core subjects.

Standards of work seen during the inspection were still below average but not as markedly so and are improving at a good pace. Regular assessment outcomes clearly show that almost all pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress and that pupils in some year groups are making good progress. In particular, as a result of recent improvement initiatives, the majority of pupils across the school are making good progress in improving their writing skills. However, the school acknowledges that there is still some way to go to reverse the previous downward trends, to raise standards and eradicate pockets of underachievement. The school however sets unrealistically high targets for end of year tests, with the result that not enough pupils are currently on track to reach them.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils make satisfactory progress in their personal development. They have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. They develop good relationships with children and adults alike. Attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average. Pupils feel safe in school because bullying and harassment are rare and are quickly dealt with by staff. Through the school council, pupils make a strong contribution to the school community and have recently helped develop a house point system and a healthy tuck shop. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to develop healthy lifestyles and most take part in a range of sporting activities.

Behaviour in class and around the school is satisfactory overall, but it is good when pupils are motivated by good teaching. Pupils with special educational needs and visual impairments make good progress in their personal development and achieve well. Pupils are gaining some of the skills and attitudes that will equip them for the future, but standards in basic skills, although improving, are still below average. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory and pupils show consideration and respect for others of all cultures and faiths.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching is satisfactory overall, with outstanding teaching in the Reception class. Most lessons are clearly planned and include stimulating activities to motivate learners of all ages which are helping to raise standards. However, a few teachers do not yet demonstrate sufficiently high expectations of what their pupils could do, with the result that some lessons lack pace and challenge. Older pupils told inspectors that they feel they could work harder and would like more challenge in lessons and in their homework.

All classes set targets for learning in English and mathematics but not all pupils are aware of their targets and many do not know what progress they are making. Teachers and teaching assistants are now helping pupils to develop greater independence in their learning, but few learners are guided to assess their own work. The presentation of pupils' work is often untidy. There is good teaching and support for pupils with learning difficulties, and pupils with visual impairment are integrated exceptionally well. Consequently these pupils make good progress.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The satisfactory curriculum is broad and balanced. The core subjects are carefully planned by teachers and steps have been taken to make the foundation subjects more practical, exciting and matched to individual learning needs. Teachers have identified more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing for a purpose in a variety of subject areas. Plans to improve personal development through assemblies, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and other subjects are now in place. The effectiveness of this provision and the broader curriculum have yet to be evaluated to ensure the desired impact and to raise pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development from satisfactory to good. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The school places a high value on the care and safety of its pupils and good arrangements are in place. Good relationships and the lunchtime opportunity to discuss concerns with an adult (TLC club) ensure that pupils feel able to talk to staff about their concerns. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are very well cared for. They have good individual education plans and the school is forging strong links with external support agencies. Very clear lines of communication have been established with parents, who are generally supportive. While most pupils are aware of class learning targets, they are not sufficiently clear how these targets apply to them personally. Pupils' work is regularly marked, with encouraging comments, but teachers' marking is often not related to learning targets, with the result that pupils do not always know how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve their work. Academic guidance is therefore satisfactory.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher and leadership team are making increasingly good use of pupil performance data to set a clear direction for school improvement. Leaders are actively involved in monitoring standards and provision across the school. Stronger and more precise tracking information is now in place to enable the school to monitor pupils' individual performance. The local authority is providing intensive support to help the school raise standards, and recent assessments show that rates of pupils' progress are increasing, with impressive results in some year groups. The leadership team evaluates provision effectively, but the translation of that into written development plans lacks rigour. The school has taken appropriate actions to address some of the important issues raised during its last inspection, leading to clear improvements in attendance, the development of pupils' writing skills and provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. The success of these initiatives and improvements this year, as measures begin to bite, demonstrate that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. Governors are dedicated and knowledgeable and they robustly challenge the leadership to demonstrate evidence of improvement. This constitutes good governance.

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## Annex A

## 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>
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
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	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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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 for being so friendly and helpful when we came to inspect your school. You made us feel very welcome and we enjoyed talking with you. Yours is a satisfactory school that helps you to enjoy your education.

- These are the things we especially like:
- You are friendly, polite and helpful and you enjoy coming to school.
- The headteacher, the teachers and other staff all work together well.
- The school cares for you all well and helps you to make good relationships.
- The school helps you to understand the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles and gives you good opportunities to take part in extra activities.
- Those of you who have learning difficulties or disabilities are well supported and helped to make good progress.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes have a very good start to their education.
- These are the things we think your school could do better:
- Some of you told us that you could work harder, so we have asked your teachers to make sure that the work they give you is at the right level for each of you and to make your lessons more challenging, to help you improve the standards of your work.
- Some of the teachers could improve their marking and help you to assess your own work so that you know how much progress you are making and what you need to do to improve your work.
- The school checks how well it is doing and writes that down. However it does not identify all the areas that need to be improved, so we have asked the school to write this more clearly to help the school improve.

We would like to wish you all lots of success in your future education.