

Riverview Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118444
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	312942
Inspection dates	22–23 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Selwyn Ward

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	468
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	William Lambert
Headteacher	Rosemary Dymond
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2004
School address	Cimba Wood Gravesend DA12 4SD
Telephone number	01474 352620
Fax number	01474 328476

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Riverview Junior School is a large school, with four classes in each year group. The vast majority of pupils are of White British background. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These are mostly emotional, behavioural and social, and moderate learning difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Riverview Junior School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. A number of features are good. Pupils respond well to the orderly and disciplined structure in this well-resourced school. As a result, the headteacher and school leaders are successful in achieving, for almost all pupils, Riverview's three 'R' objectives of 'respect, reliability and responsibility'. The school has not been quite as effective at translating these into good achievement for all pupils in a fourth 'R' of 'results' in the Year 6 national tests.

Standards in the Year 6 national tests are slightly above average, which represents satisfactory achievement given the pupils' similarly above average starting point when they join Year 3. In the past, pupils have generally done better in English and science than in mathematics, but there are signs that standards in mathematics are improving this year. More able, and pupils of average ability, make the best progress, with many achieving well, but rates of progress are notably lower for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. The school has recognised this and has been changing the way in which these pupils are supported with the aim of boosting their performance. Several of these changes, however, are still in the process of being implemented and not all pupils make the good progress that some are now achieving. Some of the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have targets that are not specific or sharp enough.

Relationships throughout the school are very good, and this typifies the respect with which pupils treat each other. Pupils are well motivated and eager to learn. Their attendance is excellent. Behaviour is good, so that even those pupils with emotional and social problems learn and follow the school's orderly routines. There is reliability too in the way pupils are generally attentive in lessons. Occasionally, however, some pupils' attention wanes and they can be quietly inattentive when, for example, the pace of a lesson is slow because teachers' introductions go on for too long. Pupils enthusiastically take on roles and responsibility within the school, for example as school councillors. As a parent explained, this helps pupils to 'grow in confidence during their time at Riverview'. Pupils' personal development is good because pupils are looked after well and because they greatly enjoy the school's stimulating curriculum. There is a good range of work in the arts and humanities, with much of a high standard. Parents are especially pleased that all Years 3 and 4 pupils learn the violin or cello. The range of extra-curricular clubs is impressive.

The headteacher, governors and other school leaders have a broadly accurate view of the school's strengths and those areas which could be better. This shows the school's sound capacity for improvement. Recent improvements in the monitoring of pupils' progress have increased rates of progress among younger pupils. Lessons are monitored by the headteacher and other school leaders, and these observations are often perceptive in picking out ways of making teaching more effective. There is not enough rigour, however, in following these points up to drive improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. This means that some points identified by school leaders for improvement remain. Classes are managed well and pupils know what they should be doing, even if they do not always have as clear a picture of what it is that they are expected to learn. In some lessons, work is not closely enough matched to the needs of less able pupils. Sometimes this is because teachers expect too little of these pupils. Marking does not always give pupils clear enough guidance on what they need to do to improve their work.

What the school should do to improve further

- Better match work, targets and support to the needs of less able pupils and those with moderate learning difficulties.
- Ensure that all lessons progress at a good pace with all pupils actively involved and knowing what they should be learning.
- Rigorously follow up monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure that areas identified for improvement are acted upon.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards by the end of Year 6 are a little above average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Boys and girls from different ethnic backgrounds achieve similarly. Pupils' work shows that the rate of progress is improving in Years 3 and 4; previously pupils made slower progress in these years than in the older classes. Standards in mathematics have traditionally lagged behind those in English and science. Again, there are signs that this is improving. The school caters particularly well for its more able and average ability pupils, many of whom make good progress, including in mathematics. It is less able pupils and those with moderate learning difficulties who achieve at a much slower rate and do not make as much progress as they could.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are polite and helpful and they look out for each other. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their good behaviour, positive attitudes and their excellent attendance. These, and their key skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education and the future world of work. Pupils take part enthusiastically in physical activities and games and have a good grasp of the importance of healthy eating; so much so that a parent complained that their child was horrified at the prospect of a crisp or chocolate biscuit being put in his lunchbox! Pupils say they feel safe and older pupils develop an appropriate understanding of the dangers of smoking and taking drugs. Pupils contribute well to the school and wider community. In school they readily take on responsibilities of being class monitors, lunchtime helpers and peer mediators. In the community they participate in a wide range of activities, including as 'Busy Needles' where they have helped to create a tapestry for the Queen's Golden Jubilee and which has been displayed as far afield as Melbourne, Australia. The school council promotes pupils' views and is involved in projects to improve the school environment, such as improving the school meals, monitoring the litter and refurbishing the toilets. Pupils feel valued and listened to and know that they can go to staff for help when they need it. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils learn a lot about European art and culture. Although they visit a wide range of different places of worship, their appreciation of the different cultural traditions that make up modern Britain is less well developed.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Throughout the school, teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. This is reflected in pupils' good attitudes and the positive collaboration seen in lessons. Expectations are not always as high for the work that pupils can do, especially less able pupils and those with moderate learning difficulties.

Interactive whiteboards are frequently used well to engage pupils' interest. Most lessons have learning intentions that are shared with pupils. However, these are not always framed in such a way that pupils can assess their achievement for themselves. Often, teachers set out the tasks that pupils are due to carry out rather than what it is they are expected to learn. When lessons are well paced with varied activities, pupils are enthused, concentrate well and produce well thought out work. However, when the pace of learning slows, as happens when teachers' lesson introductions are too long, pupils lose focus. Learning support assistants usually support pupils well but they are not always used to best effect in the introduction to lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils benefit from an exciting curriculum that stimulates their interest. It meets very well the needs of the more able and average ability pupils. It does not, though, cater as well for less able pupils and those with moderate learning difficulties. Pupils' creativity is developed well through a lively programme of activities, including themed days that draw well on visits and visitors to the school. Displays in classrooms and around the school celebrate pupils' work and encourage them to try hard and do their best. In a Year 5 class, pupils are prompted with the notice that 'we all learn from our mistakes', although this makes an amusing juxtaposition with the neighbouring display on Henry VIII and his various wives. The majority of pupils benefit from an exceptional range of clubs, although there are not so many extra-curricular activities on offer to pupils in Year 3.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a calm learning environment that is much appreciated by pupils and their parents. Drawing well on outside agencies where needed, exceptionally good support is provided for pupils' personal, social and emotional development and efforts to improve attendance have been very successful. The school's discouragement of holidays in term time is commendably strong. Care arrangements are also very strong, including memorable reminders that raise pupils' awareness of Internet safety. Arrangements for safeguarding children are robust.

Some marking gives pupils good guidance on how to improve their work but school leaders have not ensured that this is consistent across the school. Older pupils know their targets well and know what they need to do to achieve them but the younger pupils do not.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher ensures a strong focus on discipline, behaviour and good manners, and this is greatly appreciated by many parents. Together, senior leaders ensure a well ordered and organised community where all members are valued and treated with great respect. New staff feel well supported by the experienced management team, and they are helped to quickly fit in and play their part. The strong focus on pupils' personal development and well-being and creative curriculum ensure that pupils are happy and enjoy school. However, leaders' focus on improving teaching and learning and pupils' progress is less rigorous. Although school leaders' lesson observations identify points for development, these are not routinely followed up on subsequent observations to ensure that improvements are implemented.

The governors are committed to and supportive of the school and work closely with the headteacher and senior staff. The headteacher's regular reports give governors an exceptionally comprehensive picture of the school and what needs to be done to improve. However, the timescale and success criteria for measuring the impact of interventions is not made as clear. The recently elected chair of governors is working hard to ensure that the gaps on the governing body are filled and to raise governors' effectiveness in constructively challenging school leaders.

Parents are mostly satisfied with the education that their children receive but, as at the time of the last inspection, many still complain about communications between school and home. Some confirm, however, that this has been dramatically improved with the school's new, helpful and very informative website.

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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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	3

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	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?	3
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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

26 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Riverview Junior School, Gravesend, DA12 4SD

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. The school is giving you a satisfactory education and many aspects are good. We were pleased to see how well Riverview succeeds in helping you to live up to the school motto of encouraging 'respect, reliability and responsibility'. Your attendance is excellent – well done! Staff look after your welfare and you benefit from an exciting curriculum that helps make learning interesting and fun. How lucky you all are to have the chance to learn the violin in Years 3 and 4!

Although the standards you reach are a little above average and some of you make good progress, some of the pupils who find learning more difficult, including some in the lower sets for literacy and numeracy, could be making progress at a faster rate. We have particularly asked the school to do more to help boost these pupils' progress. There is much good teaching in the school but not all lessons help you all to achieve well. We have asked the school to make sure that teachers keep you all involved fully in lessons and that you all know what it is you should be learning. You can help too by concentrating hard. Although we were very pleased to see how well behaved you are, we could see that some of you let your attention drift when teachers talk for a long time at the start of a lesson.

Your headteacher and other staff have a clear picture of what works well in the school and those areas where things could be better. We have asked them to be sure to follow up their ideas for improvement so that you can all be helped to make the best progress in lessons.

Best wishes Selwyn Ward Lead inspector