

# Riverside Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	128077
<b>Local Authority</b>	Herefordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	315594
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Hazel Callaghan

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	408
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Des Brooke
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jim Preston
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Belmont Avenue Hereford HR2 7JF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01432 274653
<b>Fax number</b>	01432 274653

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Riverside Primary is a larger than average school that was created by the amalgamation of an infant school and a junior school in September 2006. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. An above average proportion of pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and on entry to the Nursery children's levels of knowledge and skills are well below those expected nationally. The headteacher took up post just prior to the formal opening of the school. A new school building is being constructed on the site. This has caused significant upheaval over the last year and considerably reduces the available play space and areas for physical education.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Riverside has effectively overcome the many difficulties of amalgamating two very different schools and provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The headteacher has a very clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the new school and there is a strong commitment from all of the leadership team to make it a real success. The headteacher has introduced many improvements and appropriate strategies to raise pupils' achievement, which can be seen to be having a positive effect. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have not made enough progress in the past, and this has left them with significant gaps in their knowledge and skills. This is being addressed and pupils' progress is now satisfactory, although standards are still below average. The provision for the youngest children in the Foundation Stage is good and a real strength of the school. Children make good progress in all areas of learning, especially in the Reception classes.

There has been a strong focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. The school has introduced a wide range of positive strategies and teaching is now satisfactory overall. There are many good aspects to the teaching but the quality of lessons is inconsistent, and work set by teachers does not always match pupils' needs. Clear strategies to improve behaviour have had a positive impact on pupils' progress and most pupils enjoy school and want to do well. They feel safe and secure in school and even within the restricted playground space most get on well. This reflects the good pastoral care provided by the staff, who really feel that every child matters. Pupils' personal development and their understanding of how to be healthy and safe are satisfactory overall. Their spiritual development is well promoted in various ways but pupils have few opportunities to become aware of the diversity of English society. Despite the school's good efforts, attendance remains well below average and this slows the learning of those pupils who do not attend sufficiently regularly.

Time has been given to ensuring that there is a smooth transition in the curriculum from the infant school to that used in the junior classes so that pupils' learning progresses effectively. A good range of additional activities is used to enrich pupils' experiences but the space for physical education is very restricted at present by the building works, and the use of natural links between subjects, for instance the use of history to extend pupils' writing skills and to stimulate pupils' greater interest, is still in the developmental stage.

The headteacher has taken decisive action to improve the quality of teaching and to develop a strong and effective management team. Not all the plans have had time to bear fruit and further appointments are yet to be made. The new team already in place, however, work well together and they are developing satisfactory systems for monitoring the work of the school and ensuring improvement continues at a steady pace. Although only a small proportion of parents returned questionnaires, many of them felt that positive changes were being made. The successful impact already made on improving teaching and raising pupils' progress shows that the school has the capacity for further improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children make good progress in their learning, especially in the two Reception classes, but standards on entry to Year 1 are below average because of children's low starting points in language skills and personal and social development. Teachers provide a stimulating curriculum that builds on children's experiences well so they become confident in their learning and enjoy

their tasks. The basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics are introduced well and systematically developed in Reception. Children's curiosity about the world they live in is also promoted well and children are given many opportunities to learn within adult-led activities and through their own independent choice of activities. Children's work and progress are monitored well and the next steps in learning are shared with the children so they understand what it is they are about to learn. The outside area for both the Nursery and the Reception classes is not well developed at present, but staff are eagerly awaiting the move to the purpose built classrooms in the new school so that their plans for a more stimulating outside learning area can be developed.

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

- Raise the quality of teaching, particularly by ensuring that lesson activities consistently match pupils' needs and build effectively on prior learning.
- Work closely with parents to improve attendance.
- Ensure that the curriculum enables pupils to develop their skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) further in other subjects, and promotes pupils' awareness of the diversity of British society.

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**

The legacy of past underachievement is being addressed, but means that Year 6 pupils are not yet reaching average standards. Due to the concerted programme to improve teaching throughout the school, pupils of all abilities are making satisfactory progress as teachers' skills improve and their expectations rise. For example, standards in Year 2 in the 2007 national tests were below average but this is being successfully built upon by teachers in Year 3 so most pupils are now reaching the standards expected of them, especially in English. Standards in mathematics are the weakest aspect through the school. They are not as strong as in reading and writing, but are improving as the gaps in pupils' skills are addressed.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Pupils' spiritual development is good and they enjoy the opportunities to reflect on their ideas and the feelings of others in the 'philosophy room'. There is less focus on developing pupils' cultural development, with the result that pupils' awareness of the diversity of English society is not strong enough. The behaviour of most pupils is good, but a small minority have difficulties in behaving appropriately. This is generally managed well by most staff. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to take responsibility and make a positive contribution to the school. The 'listeners' who help sort out difficulties at playtimes, for example, are proud of the work they do. Pupils' opportunities to contribute to the wider community are rather limited as yet. The remaining gaps in pupils' basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and ICT mean that they are not yet adequately prepared for their later lives when they leave school at the end of Year 6.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is improving. It is good in several classes but there are still some elements of unsatisfactory teaching that slow pupils' learning. This is being addressed. A general weakness is that activities are not always sufficiently well matched to pupils' needs, or do not build successfully on what has already been learnt. The teaching of mathematics has been a particular weakness for many teachers, but staff training and strong guidance are turning this around. There are a number of important strengths in the teaching, and where these feature in lessons the pupils make good progress. This is particularly true where teachers explain very clearly what the pupils have to do and how to succeed and provide good support to help this to happen. Good progress is also linked to high expectations of pupils' behaviour and of the amount of work they will produce. This is an important aspect of lessons in Year 6 and in Year 3. The use of support staff with the younger children in the Reception class, for example, is particularly effective and children enjoy their tasks.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The school's curriculum meets the needs of pupils of all abilities satisfactorily. Some natural links are made between subjects to make learning more meaningful, such as the use of mathematics in science, but opportunities for pupils to use their knowledge and skills in other subjects are often missed. The provision for the teaching of ICT is underdeveloped and pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to practise and apply their skills to support their learning in other subjects. This is partly to do with the restriction in the current building and the fact that there are too few computers in classrooms. The school has begun to enrich the curriculum through themed weeks such as the Healthy School Week, and regular visits and visitors help to stimulate learning. There is a good focus on developing aspects of pupils' personal development, which is enhanced by the focus on 'Values for Education' that has been recently introduced. An understanding of how to develop healthy lifestyles is well promoted, but at present the curriculum does not reflect the diversity of the United Kingdom and is not preparing the pupils well enough for their role as global citizens.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

The pastoral support provided by the school is good. The staff keep a careful watch on how the pupils feel and monitor personal or family difficulties that may affect their well-being. Staff work effectively with small groups or individuals who have social or emotional problems so they are able to take a positive role in the school. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and effective. The school is working hard to encourage better attendance. Staff have been appointed to work with families to support regular attendance and they try to contact parents on the first morning of any absence. The educational welfare officer is also involved but these measures have not yet improved the situation.

Systems for monitoring pupils' work and progress are satisfactory and the information is used effectively to identify those who need additional support. A new marking policy has been introduced to help pupils understand how well they are doing but the guidance given to pupils

about how to improve their work is not yet clear and consistent. There are good examples where pupils understand how they can improve, but this is not fully embedded.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The school's self-evaluation provides an honest and accurate reflection of what needs to be addressed so that pupils can achieve well and are able to reach the standards expected of them. The reluctance of many staff to consider management positions that would support school improvement slowed initial development but this has been overcome and the new team is working effectively to ensure new initiatives are successfully in place. At the school's request the local authority has added its support and professional training so that teaching and learning, particularly in mathematics, have improved. The governors from the two schools now form a united and experienced team that supports the school well. They are kept well informed and involved but do not as yet fully participate in evaluating the school or in school improvement planning. Despite the fact that the planned management team structure is not yet complete, a lot has been achieved in creating a new ethos for the school and in raising standards. The headteacher has been tireless in removing barriers to this process but until the new appointments are made the capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

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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?	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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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	3

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	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	4

### 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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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 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

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

Dear Children

Inspection of Riverside Primary School, Hereford HR2 7JF

Thank you for making us so welcome and answering our questions when we visited you. You are rightly proud of the way your school is changing. It is providing you with a sound education. Here is a summary of what we found out:

- You make satisfactory progress and you are beginning to reach the standards expected.
- The children in Reception classes make good progress in lots of their work.
- Most of you behave well in your lessons.
- You try to do your best.
- Teaching is satisfactory but many of your lessons are planned well and you find many of your activities are becoming more interesting.
- You enjoy your activities in the Philosophy room, where you have time to talk and think about a wide range of issues.
- Staff look after you well and help you to feel safe.
- The headteacher leads the school well and is successfully supported by the other staff.

These are the things that we have asked the school to improve:

- Raise the quality of teaching, particularly by ensuring that lessons build on what you already know and contain activities that are not too hard or too easy.
- Ensure that your teachers give you regular opportunities to practise your writing skills, mathematical knowledge and computer skills in other subjects.
- Work closely with parents to ensure you all attend school regularly.
- Help you to find out about the many different cultures in England and about people around the world.

Thank you again for being so friendly and helpful, and remember, you can help to make your school even better by working hard and trying to do your best.

Mrs Callaghan Lead inspector

25 February 2008

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