

Riverside Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107529
Local Authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	324585
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Carmen Markham

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 (total)	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Halliday
Headteacher	Mrs Anne Walker
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2006
School address	Holme Street Hebden Bridge West Yorkshire HX7 8EE
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Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Riverside Junior School is an average size primary school. It serves an area of broadly average social and economic advantage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is a little below the national average. The majority of pupils are White British and the proportion from minority ethnic groups is well below average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is increasing and is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational need is almost twice the national average. The school shares a provision for before and after school care with the local infant school. It has been awarded Investors in People status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Riverside Junior is a good school with some outstanding features in relation to pupils' personal development and well-being, and the rich and varied curriculum. Outstanding use is made of extended services and outside agencies to improve outcomes for learners. Therefore, the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. Pupils are justly proud of their excellent school council that gives them a strong voice. Pupils are listened to and fully involved in all aspects of school life. They enjoy school and are well motivated to learn.

On entry, pupil's standards are broadly average. By Year 6, standards are above average in English and mathematics, but average in science. Pupils' achievement is overall is good. The achievement of those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is always good and often outstanding because their needs are quickly identified and high quality support is provided. The school attracts pupils with additional learning needs because it has justifiably earned a good reputation for enabling them to succeed. Pupils make the best progress in their last two years in the school and this reflects the quality of teaching.

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Although there is some satisfactory teaching, there is some outstanding practice in Years 5 and 6 that enables pupils in these classes to meet, and often exceed, challenging targets. While pupils' progress is very effectively monitored and their work is carefully marked, with areas to improve identified, personal target setting is not consistently developed throughout the school. This means that not all pupils know how to improve their work. Provision for care, guidance and support is good.

The recently appointed headteacher has done much to foster the ethos of inclusion and trust that pervades all aspects of school life. Her strong vision for the school is reflected in the school aims and rules that are shared very effectively with all the school community. Communication within the school and with the local community is very good and this enables everyone to be sensitive to the needs of others and to feel valued. The close links governors have with the school's local area help to ensure that the needs of that community are well served. The senior management team works very effectively with middle managers and staff to monitor pupils' progress and the effectiveness of provision. The school's evaluation of its own performance is generally accurate. It is too modest as regards pupils' overall achievement and the quality of the curriculum. The actions identified to improve provision are well planned and implemented in order to raise standards and to support pupils' well-being. Therefore, the school's capacity to improve is good.

The school provides good value for money. Staff and resources are used very effectively. The use of specialist teachers and facilities in some areas is very successful in raising standards and enthusing pupils, for example in French, music, art and sports. An overwhelming strength of the school is the range of excellent enrichment and extra-curricular activities that meet the interests of all pupils and foster enthusiasm for learning in the broadest sense. The outstanding curriculum also ensures that pupils understand how to stay safe and healthy, value themselves and others and become very effective young citizens.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in science
- Improve the quality of teaching to ensure that it is consistently good or better across the school

- Consolidate the use of personal target setting throughout the school so that all pupils know how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Currently, standards in English and mathematics are above average, but average in science. This reflects the provisional national test results in 2008. Boys, girls and minority ethnic pupils achieve equally well. Reliable school data shows that pupils in Year 6 in 2008 made good progress overall during their time in the school. Currently, pupils' overall achievement is good. The analysis of pupils' work indicates steady progress in Years 3 and 4, with much faster progress in Years 5 and 6. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make consistently good and sometimes outstanding progress, because their needs are quickly identified, their progress is carefully checked and they are very skilfully supported.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, they behave well and their attendance is good. They are useful members of the school and local communities. The excellent school council involves all pupils and has initiated many positive changes with skill and confidence. Pupils work very effectively in groups and teams. Recently, pupils received an award for their sportsmanship and teamwork. Pupils have forged strong links with their local community. They relish the many opportunities provided to work on projects such as planning new equipment for the local park, tree planting and participation in local traditions in the Hebden Bridge arts festival. Pupils understand extremely well how to stay fit, safe and healthy and they are very responsible in the choices they make. Most make healthy eating choices and the majority participate in some additional sports activity as evidenced by the number of sporting awards they have received. They take very good care of each other as demonstrated by the 'buddy system', the peer support scheme and the good care and understanding they show pupils who have disabilities. Many responsibilities around the school prepare them well for the world of work, in particular their management of the tuck shop and sports day. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The supportive relationships they share with each other make them feel valued and cared for so they act very sensibly and responsibly. They benefit from thought provoking assemblies and consider the needs of the global community as well as their own. Pupils make thoughtful contributions to those in need and have a good understanding of a full range of cultures and traditions through links with a variety of multicultural and faith schools.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching ranges from outstanding to satisfactory. The best lessons were seen in Years 5 and 6, but there is also some good teaching in Years 3 and 4. Less effective lessons are characterised by pupils having too little involvement in their learning and spending too long working on individual tasks in class without their progress being checked. Classrooms are usually well organised and managed. They provide a high quality learning environment where pupils feel happy and safe and make good progress. Pupils are motivated to achieve well as there is an

increasing emphasis on practical and investigative work in most classes. Overall, teachers' planning is very good and it meets the wide range of pupils' needs. A strength in planning and of teaching is the carefully developed lesson structure where pupils are able to build very effectively on previous learning. Questions are used well to extend learning and staff have high expectations. Teachers regularly assess pupils' work and check their overall progress termly. Marking is usually good. It celebrates success while helping pupils to improve their work. Good use is made of a range of resources, for example, music and puppets. These help to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills very effectively. The good use of information and communication technology (ICT) is very effective in helping pupils to grasp difficult concepts and to take an active part in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum has a very clear emphasis on the development of basic skills in English and mathematics. Lesson plans and high quality personal education plans ensure that the curriculum is accessible to all pupils. Lessons in personal, social, health and citizenship education promote pupils' effective personal development. French is a very successful aspect of the curriculum and special days such as the Italian Day help to develop global awareness and understanding. The strong partnerships with the local community and links with other schools enhance provision in sport and creative arts. For example, the excellent provision for music and drama was well exemplified in the school's 2008 Christmas Spectacular. Pupils are justly proud that their poetry team won a regional Key Stage 2 anthology award. Many parents and pupils have commented on the wide variety and good quality of enrichment activities, which include all Year 5 pupils learning to play the violin. The school further enriches the curriculum through educational and residential visits. A wide range of extra-curricular activities including sport, art and ICT are very well attended.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is outstanding and is supported by the school's child centred approach to all aspects of school life. The school has a friendly, happy, calm and welcoming atmosphere conducive to a safe and productive learning environment. Excellent procedures are in place to ensure regular attendance and punctuality. Procedures for child protection and to safeguard pupils meet statutory requirements. Pupils say that their teachers and support assistants make them feel safe valued and secure. They are fully aware who to turn to if they have any worries or concerns. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good. Teaching assistants work alongside teachers, parents and other agencies to provide effective support to ensure that these pupils make good progress. Parents are happy with the care and guidance their children receive, including the support given when they enter the junior school and move to their secondary education. Academic guidance is effective overall. While pupils' work is regularly assessed and their progress monitored at regular intervals, there is some inconsistency in how targets are set, collated and the information used. This means that not all pupils are aware of what they need to do in order to attain higher standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The able and dedicated headteacher provides a clear vision and direction for the school. With her effective management team and committed staff she ensures that pupils' personal development is excellent and that an outstanding curriculum motivates pupils and provides them with effective basic skills and a love of learning. The team is fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has implemented sensible actions for improvement which are now coming to fruition. Improvements in the quality of pupils' writing, in assessment and in the accuracy of checks on pupils' progress are evident. This boosted standards in 2008 and has led to pupils' good achievement. All pupils are valued, have equal opportunities to participate in all activities and to achieve in line with their abilities. Much has been done to promote the understanding of cultures and traditions both in and beyond pupils' immediate locality, which has resulted in good community cohesion.

Governors have a very good understanding of the school so that they are able to be supportive and challenging. They play an important role in school life and have done much to ensure the success of the after school provision. They were also very proactive in the work they undertook to help the newly appointed headteacher to improve financial management in the very early days of her headship.

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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
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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?	2

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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you for making us so welcome in your school. You were all very helpful and polite. I admired the beautiful displays of your work, particularly those about Boudicca and other aspects of history and those about the surreal world. Some of your poetry on display was really outstanding too. I also enjoyed talking to you and finding out about your school council; it is excellent as it is so well managed, represents all your views and it makes a real difference to the school.

I think that your headteacher and the staff all work hard to make your school so successful. It is a good school with some things, such as the curriculum and your personal development, being outstanding. The staff look after you all very well and you feel safe and happy in school. Your teachers know how much progress you are each making so they can plan lessons to make sure that you all have work that suits you. Although you make good progress in lessons and your standards are above average in English and mathematics, you could do better in science. Teachers make sure that they involve you in a lot of interesting lessons, activities and visits. Your residential visits look a lot of fun too.

Your behaviour is good so you listen and learn well. I noticed that you take very good care of each other so that you can all enjoy school. Many of you said that you love school because, 'there are so many interesting and exciting things to do and teachers make learning fun'. Most of you attend school regularly and arrive on time. You also know how to stay healthy and safe and make the most of all the exciting activities and clubs the school provides.

One of the reasons for my visit was to see how your school can improve. You could do better in science so I have asked your teachers to help you to do this. While most of you are well taught, in some lessons teachers could involve you more and check more often how well you are getting on with individual tasks. Finally, I have asked your teachers to improve the way in which they give you personal targets to improve your work so that you all know what you need to do to improve.