

Riverside Special School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118148
Local Authority	East Riding of Yorkshire
Inspection number	326771
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Alastair Younger

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	82
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Judy Armitage
Headteacher	Mrs Jenny Speight and Mr Andrew Hall (acting headteachers)
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Ainsty Street Goole East Riding of Yorkshire DN14 5JS
Telephone number	01405 763925
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Age group	4–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Riverside is a day special school for boys and girls aged between 5 and 16 years. Very occasionally, children aged 4 are admitted. There is also only one pupil in Key Stage 1. Most pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 have moderate learning difficulties and/or disabilities but increasing numbers in Key Stages 1 and 2 have more complex needs including autistic spectrum disorders and severe learning difficulties. Pupil numbers have grown considerably in recent years, putting the limited amount of accommodation and storage space under pressure. Attainment on entry is almost always very low, except for occasional pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. Each pupil has a statement of special educational need. Boys outnumber girls by about two-to-one. Most pupils come from a White British background. Some pupils face journeys of over an hour to get to school, such is the geography of its catchment area.

The school has been led this term by two acting headteachers following the resignation of the substantive headteacher at the end of last term and pending the assumption of duties by a newly appointed headteacher next term. The two acting headteachers are the school's assistant headteachers.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has outstanding features. Parents who responded to a questionnaire circulated before the inspection were all very happy with the way the school is helping their children to secure successful futures. Parents are particularly emphatic in the view that their children are happy, safe and well looked after at school. This is totally in line with the findings of the inspection which found that pupils' personal development, well-being and the care, guidance and support they receive are outstanding. The parental comment 'Lucky to have our child at Riverside' rings very true.

Awaiting the arrival of the new headteacher the school has maintained a clear educational direction through the good leadership and management of the two acting headteachers, whose skills complement one another. They are greatly helped by good subject leaders who are perceptive in their analysis of aids and barriers to further progress. This has helped the school to improve since its last inspection and gives it a good capacity to improve in future. Governors are hugely supportive but do not do enough to challenge leaders or hold them sufficiently to account for management decisions.

The nature of pupils' learning difficulties and/or disabilities means that the standards they attain are well below expectations for all pupils nationally. Most pupils make good progress from their starting points and leave the school with some appropriate qualifications. Last year these included many passes at GCSE and no pupil left without a nationally recognised qualification, most left with several. This represents good achievement. It also reflects good teaching and excellent systems for checking the progress of each pupil.

The promotion of pupils' personal development and well-being is central to the work of the school and in these it excels. Riverside is a place of security and happiness. Pupils contribute to this through their exceptionally good behaviour and their consideration for others facing more difficulties than themselves. Typical of this was the way a more able pupil, totally unprompted, helped a less able one to slice a bread roll in a science lesson. He did not do the job for her but skilfully guided her through the task and helped her feel good about her achievement. Gestures such as these, alongside the strong promotion of awareness about how people in other societies live, demonstrate the outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Attendance is good but was weakened last year by higher absences in Year 11. The Key Stage 4 curriculum caters exceptionally well to the needs of more able pupils by providing a wide range of nationally accredited academic courses, but has fewer attractions for those more interested in more work related courses. Pupils' futures are very well promoted through their academic progress but less well through their experience of working situations. One of the reasons pupils enjoy coming to school is that the curriculum is outstandingly well enriched through a huge programme of visits, visitors and activities which allow pupils to demonstrate their talents through musical and dramatic productions which are immensely enjoyed by parents. The school has extensive outdoor grounds which are rarely used by the local community.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is satisfactory as is pupils' achievement. The provision is adequate but underdeveloped, largely because it is so rare for

children under the age of five to be admitted. The same excellent care, guidance and support extended to other pupils are equally in evidence in the EYFS. Very good records are kept which recognise the tiny steps by which the children can be seen to be making progress. The personal development and well-being of children is satisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory. A suitable indoor area has been created to help children learn through play, experience and experiment but there is no outdoor learning area. Leadership and management of the EYFS have been assumed by the acting headteachers. They are hindered by the unpredictability of whether there are any EYFS children in any particular year. This makes the strategic planning difficult.

What the school should do to improve further

- Devise better strategies for the strategic planning of provision in the EYFS.
- Extend the work-related curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 4.
- Extend the role in which the school can contribute to the local community.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement, measured against individual targets, is good. The school ensures that these targets are suitably challenging by carefully monitoring success rates. The rigour of this monitoring contributes enormously to excellent assessment procedures which ensure that learning always builds on prior knowledge, allowing pupils to make good, systematic progress.

The nature of pupils' learning difficulties and/or disabilities means that standards are well below average when compared with national expectations for pupils in mainstream schools. Pupils typically start school at a very low level of attainment, often measured using P Scales, which identify levels of attainment below those of the National Curriculum. Most pupils make rapid progress through Key Stages 2 and 3. Most of the higher attaining pupils attain Level 4 during Key Stage 4 and they all leave school with good qualifications which, for about a half of all pupils include GCSE passes at the lower levels in English, mathematics and science. Lower attaining pupils occasionally remain below the limits of the National Curriculum throughout their stay at the school. They still make good progress but the severity of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities limits their attainment.

When all of their differences are taken into account there is very little variation in the rate of progress of different groups of pupils. This is because teachers take great care to address the needs of individuals and promote equality.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their well-being are outstanding. Parents are unreserved in their praise, gratitude and relief that their children are so happy and well looked after in school. Short moments of reflection at various times through the school day, for instance just before lunch or at the end of assemblies, give pupils opportunities to think about their own and other peoples lives. Social skills and moral values are instilled in pupils at every opportunity, with staff always making it clear to pupils what they are getting right or how they can correct the infrequent errors of their ways. An extensive range of residential visits gives pupils many excellent opportunities to develop their social skills in unfamiliar settings. Visits to prestigious theatre venues have contributed particularly well to pupils' cultural development. Other visits have contributed significantly to the development

of healthy lifestyles through vigorous and adventurous outdoor activities. These visits are made possible because staff are confident that pupils' behaviour will be excellent, as it nearly always is in school. This sensible behaviour adds considerably to pupils' enjoyment of school and contributes enormously to everyone's safety. The good progress pupils make in developing their literacy, numeracy and computer skills, coupled with their outstanding personal development, stands most pupils in good stead to contribute to the community and secure successful futures. Attendance is good. For over a half of all pupils it is outstanding, but frequent absences amongst a cluster of Year 11 pupils last year brought the school average down on the previous year.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Parents are very happy with the progress their children are making in class as a result of good teaching. The evidence of inspection tallies closely with the results of monitoring by senior managers and confirms this. Nearly all teaching is good. There is no record of any that is less than satisfactory. Whilst many lessons have outstanding features, few are outstanding overall. It is very evident that teaching aides have a good impact on the quality of teaching. Teachers excel in deploying them to best effect and making expectations clear. Duties frequently include observing and recording the smallest signs of progress as well as supporting individuals or small groups in their learning and personal development. Classroom activities are exceptionally well planned, taking close account of pupils' prior learning and the pursuit of clearly stated individual targets. Excellent use is made of good resources, including the frequent use of computers, to help pupils with their learning. Minor imperfections include the way lessons are drawn to a conclusion. Occasionally, not enough time is set aside to involve pupils in talking about what they have learned in a lesson or how they evaluate their own and other's work. Similarly, not enough time is allowed to make sure that pupils clear up after themselves after practical activities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is enhanced by outstanding enrichment opportunities which include many residential trips and an invigorating programme of visits and visitors. The formal curriculum fully meets statutory requirements. It also includes many good opportunities for promoting the personal, social and health education of pupils, which is so vital for the population it provides for and fully reflects the wishes of parents. There is scope for further development in providing pupils in Key Stage 4 with more opportunities to learn about the world of work. There is an excellent range of opportunities for them to gain nationally recognised qualifications but preparation for work related experiences are not quite as good. The reality is that nearly all pupils leave the school to move on to further education or training. They are very well prepared for this by being involved in college courses which, in combination with the good Key Stage 4 curriculum in school, prepare them well for the future and greatly enhance their prospects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils receive outstanding care, guidance and support. The school takes great care in ensuring that pupils are kept safe and secure at all times. This is of paramount importance to parents and pupils and both groups are fulsome in their praise. The school meets all requirements regarding the safeguarding of pupils. Parents are reassured and pupils feel happy and secure. All requirements for ensuring the safety and protection of pupils are in place. The school works closely with the many agencies and professionals involved in pupils' lives. It goes out of its way to ensure that parents, often living many miles away, are fully involved in discussion about their children's progress and planning for their future well-being. An exceptionally close check is kept on pupils' progress, both in terms of their academic achievement and their personal development. Excellent analysis of assessment details provides the information to ensure that all groups of pupils share equal opportunities to learn and thrive.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and governance is satisfactory. The assistant headteachers who have led the school through a period of change have done a good job. Subject leaders play a good part in analysing the effectiveness of their departments and setting clear objectives for raising standards and improving provision. Leaders and managers have high expectations, based on a very good understanding of what pupils could and should achieve. The school runs extremely smoothly on a day-to-day basis and enjoys productive relationships with many other schools and colleges, which promote increasing inclusion of pupils in mainstream settings. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. Opening up the premises for the local Brownie pack on a weekly basis has been a good example of how the school reaches out into the community. Governors are extremely supportive of the school but do not set a firm enough agenda for change and improvement.

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

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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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/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	1
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 learners' needs?	2
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?	1

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 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	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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	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

20 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Riverside Special School, East Riding of Yorkshire, DN14 5JS

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I had an enjoyable couple of days with you. Much of my enjoyment came from your wonderful politeness, your excellent behaviour and the welcome you gave me. Thank you.

Your staff and governors have created a good school and some things about it are very special. Most importantly, you are safe and happy in school; you told me so and your parents agree. You are also well taught and as a result you are making good progress. You are contributing a lot to this by working hard and being very kind and helpful to each other. The trips that you have gone on over the past year must have been very exciting, what a good idea it was to go to Birmingham to see a professional production of 'Mary Poppins' following your own, hugely successful performance.

I spent a lot of time talking to your headteachers and staff and we came up with some ideas to make your school even better. We agreed that something needs to be done to make sure that provision for the youngest children fully meets their needs and that the oldest pupils get more opportunities to experience what it is like having a job. We also agreed that, although very few of you live nearby, the school could get more involved with the local community.

Good luck for the future.

Alastair Younger

Lead inspector