

Riverhead Infants' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118453
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	326829
Inspection date	21 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Eileen Chadwick

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	Middle deemed primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	270
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	Jenna Leight
Headteacher	Emma Pape
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Worships Hill London Road Riverhead Riverhead TN13 2AS
Telephone number	01732 452475
Fax number	01732 452475

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- The evenness of high standards and progress across the school, especially in mathematics, and impact of initiatives to improve mathematics.
- The extent of good and outstanding teaching and its impact on pupils' achievement.
- The impact of leadership and management on improving achievement, especially through monitoring and evaluation.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, discussions with pupils and staff, a review of the assessment data the school uses to track pupils' progress, and analysis of pupils' work. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

Description of the school

Riverhead Infants' is an above average size infant school whose pupils are often drawn from relatively advantaged backgrounds and few are entitled to free school meals. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including statements, is lower than that seen in most schools. These pupils' difficulties are mainly speech and language and moderate learning although a few pupils have severe learning difficulties. Most pupils are of White British background. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) children are in the Reception classes.

The acting headteacher, previously the deputy headteacher, took up post in September 2008 following the retirement of the substantive headteacher. A permanent headteacher has been appointed and is due to take up post in April 2009. The school has gained Active Mark, Healthy Schools, Investors in People and Eco Schools awards. In 1996 and in 2006, the school received recognition as being an outstanding school from the Chief Inspector of Schools. A daily breakfast club is held on the same site as the school but this is separately managed.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This school is outstanding. The academic performance of the pupils in reading, writing, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) is exceptional. The vibrant curriculum gives pupils very good opportunities for developing their creative, practical and sporting talents. From the minute they set foot in the school, pupils are nurtured and receive exceptional levels of care. This is a significant reason why their personal development, including their behaviour, is outstanding and they love coming to school and learning. The talented and greatly committed staff have high expectations and prepare pupils extremely well for learning and adult life. The vast majority of parents justifiably see the school in a very favourable light and one expressed the views of many, saying 'My child rushes to school every morning with sheer excitement about what a new day will bring; fantastic teachers, fantastic school!'

Pupils' achievement is excellent. From starting points that are above those seen in most schools, children make good progress in Reception and their progress is excellent in reading and phonics. Their standards on entry to Year 1 are well above average. The momentum builds in Years 1 and 2 and outstanding progress results in exceptionally high standards at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing, mathematics, science and ICT. Pupils produce work of high quality in other areas of the curriculum.

The very high standards found at the previous inspection can still be seen and have risen even further because the school continuously seeks ways of improving its performance. Initiatives to improve mathematics teaching have a strong impact on pupils' learning, though in calculation there is a little more to do to step up the challenge for the most capable children in Reception. The school is already working to improve this. The exceptional progress of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the steps taken to make sure pupils catch up, should they fall behind, are major reasons why standards are so high.

The sustained and accomplished leadership of the school is central to ensuring that accelerating pupils' progress is always a priority. The acting headteacher has earned the respect of parents and staff by the excellent way in which she is building on the existing strong foundations. Other senior leaders provide excellent support. Governance is first class. Senior leaders, governors and all teaching and non-teaching staff are a seamless and very effective team.

The quality of teaching is excellent. Teachers have considerable subject expertise and manage their pupils very well. They are skilled in planning work and promoting good learning for all pupils. Teachers' skills are up to date and are rigorously monitored by senior and middle managers. These strengths are built upon, with identified areas for improvement leading to professional development. This has produced consistent levels of teaching and learning, which are invariably good and very often outstanding. In Reception, whilst teaching is a little more variable than in the rest of the school, new teachers are settling well and bringing a wealth of expertise to the teaching team. The school's arrangements for self-evaluation are thorough and very effective. Teachers and school leaders make very regular and informed checks on pupils' progress. They observe each other teach and are open and honest in their evaluations. It is to everyone's credit that standards are so high.

The rigorous focus on teaching and learning and thorough assessment of pupils' performance have led to standards rising to their current levels. The very rich curriculum is planned so that high quality, practical starting points underpin academic learning and one subject enhances

another. For example, an exciting visit and practical work in art and design and technology brought history alive for pupils in Year 2 when learning about Henry VIII. Teachers carefully plan work that includes activities from the year ahead so that the many more capable pupils are challenged. Further enrichment for gifted and talented pupils ensures these pupils' needs are met successfully. The school does a very good job in helping pupils to lead healthy lives. Pupils enjoy eating healthy food and taking part in the many sporting activities.

Support from local churches and strong links with the community help to promote the school's family atmosphere and pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Of special note is pupils' respect for other cultures and religions. The school celebrates cultural diversity and, where possible, uses pupils' wide range of experiences as starting points. Initiatives such as 'International Fortnight' and 'African Fortnight' enhance pupils' understanding. The school makes an outstanding contribution to community cohesion. It strives, with much success, to reach out to all different groups within the school, with the local community and further afield. Pupils' contributions to the school and wider community are excellent. They take good care of their beautiful school and their eco work is impressive. Pupils contribute regularly to local events and raise money for charities. The thriving school council is a very good vehicle for enabling pupils to contribute to whole-school decision making. The school has excellent partnerships with other schools, including its linked junior school.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Parents talk very positively about their children's first experience of school and one expressed the views of many saying, 'My child has just started school and I have been amazed at the progress he has made in one term. I have every confidence in the teaching methods.' Children arrive with skills that are above those levels typical for their age. They get off to a good start and do extremely well in developing their reading and phonics skills. By the time they leave Reception, nearly all reach the expected levels and many exceed them. The quality of teaching is good and occasionally outstanding. Children greatly enjoy being in Reception because there is a rich range of learning activities and a lively and practical curriculum. The focus upon exploration and play, both indoors and outside, does not detract from the strong teaching of basic skills. Staff ensure that routines are well established and that children are exceptionally well cared for. Recently appointed staff are well qualified and have settled well. The school is currently raising achievement in mathematics but acknowledges that teaching does not consistently extend the most capable children in calculation. Children make excellent progress in all areas of personal development. They show high levels of ability when working with others and sustain interest very well. Assessment of children's progress is very thorough. There are very close links with parents and pre-school settings. The school has funding to provide cover for the outside area but the project has still to be finalised. The EYFS is well led and managed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the most capable children in Reception are consistently challenged in calculation aspects of mathematics.

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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?	1
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	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
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?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

21 January 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Riverhead Infants' School, Worships Hill, London Road, Riverhead, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 2AS

I am writing to tell you how much we enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for being so friendly and helping us with the inspection. Your views are important as you are the school's customers. This letter is to tell you what we found out about your school.

- Your school is outstanding and that means it is a really good school. Here are some things that are first class about your school.
- You make excellent progress and, by the time you leave, you reach very high standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science and ICT.
- You have some really good learning opportunities for history, sport, art and design and technology.
- You are a credit to your school and behave extremely well.
- You are very helpful and you take good care of your beautiful school.
- Teaching is often excellent and teachers take superb care of you.
- Your headteacher leads you all extremely well and your teachers and the school governors are always working hard to make the school even better.

Here is something we are asking the school to improve.

- Make sure those of you in Reception are always given hard enough calculation problems in mathematics. I hope you will continue to enjoy school and keep on trying hard in all you do.

Yours faithfully

Eileen Chadwick Lead inspector