

Riverside Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120092
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	327196
Inspection dates	14–15 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Bogusia Matusiak-Varley

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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	445
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	D Bark
Headteacher	Andy Hayman
Date of previous school inspection	21 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Wanlip Lane Birstall Leicester LE4 4JU

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	14–15 January 2009
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Telephone number
Fax number

01162 107373
01162 107373

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is part of a soft federation comprising of eight primary and three secondary schools. Most pupils are White British. A very small minority of pupils are from Indian backgrounds and there are no children at the early stages of acquiring English. An average number of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the number of pupils with statements of special educational needs is just above the national average. These pupils' needs comprise of physical disabilities, behavioural problems and autism. Prior to the appointment of the substantive headteacher in January 2006 the school had experienced many changes in leadership. Since September 2008, several middle leaders have taken up positions of responsibility and are new to their posts. The school received its Level 2 Health Promoting Schools Award in 2007 and has recently been awarded the Eco Schools Bronze Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education and care for its pupils. It is improving in a number of key areas, including in pupils' good behaviour, the commitment of the staff to raise standards, and improved achievement in reading throughout the school.

Attainment on entry to the Reception classes is broadly similar to that of four-year-olds nationally. Throughout their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) children make satisfactory progress in all areas of learning other than personal, social and emotional development where progress is good. Children attain the expected standards and exceed expectations in personal, social and emotional development. However, there is insufficient attention to the development of early writing and number skills both in indoor and outdoor provision. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils attain average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science and their achievements are satisfactory. Recent good achievement in reading is noticeable but this is not yet reflected in national test results.

What prevents pupils' achievements from being better is that information from good assessment procedures, devised by the deputy headteacher, is not always used fully to move all groups of pupils on in writing, using and applying mathematics, and investigative science, especially for the more capable pupils. There are also missed opportunities to develop writing in other subjects, an area which the school is addressing.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory across the school with examples of consistently good teaching in Years 2, 5 and 6. Planning, whilst detailed, does not fully identify the skills which different ability groups need to acquire during lessons.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is enriched with a good range of extra-curricular activities, especially sport, which contribute to pupils' personal development and well-being. Its strong emphasis on personal, social and health education contributes to pupils' good knowledge of healthy lifestyles and keeping safe. Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils are adequately prepared for the next stage of their education and future lives. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pastoral care is more developed than academic guidance because marking does not always inform pupils of the next steps of their learning and pupils' targets are not always reviewed often enough to ensure that they are consistently challenging.

School leadership and management, overall, is satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are resolute in raising standards and accelerating pupils' progress. School self-evaluation is accurate and is used to target resources accurately. Not all subject leaders are fully aware of how best to monitor the impact of provision on pupils' standards. However inspection evidence showed some effective work in English, mathematics and science. The positive impact of key initiatives, for example in raising standards in reading, mathematics and science, demonstrates the school's sound capacity to improve further. The astute governing body fulfils its statutory duties and holds the staff to account. In the words of one parent, 'The school is a different place since the arrival of the headteacher. He knows all of the pupils and is very approachable. We are always made to feel welcome.'

The school is a harmonious community where pupils get on well together and support a wide range of local charities. They contribute well to the school's local community but their knowledge of global communities is limited.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children's achievement is satisfactory. It is good in personal, social and emotional development because of the good welfare provision, together with secure and warm relationships. In this safe and secure environment, children enjoy learning and 'have a go' at the learning experiences provided. Teaching and learning are satisfactory but too few opportunities are provided for both indoor and outdoor play for children to practise correct letter and number formation. Staff regularly assess children's learning but do not yet analyse their findings thoroughly enough to support and develop the range of learning opportunities provided. Parents are very pleased with the good quality of care that the children receive and the way in which they are made to feel welcome when they want to see the class teachers. Leadership and management of the setting are satisfactory. However, progress reviews with children are not yet as frequent as they might be, and this is an area which the school is addressing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing, using and applying mathematics, and in experimental and investigative science throughout the school, and especially for more able pupils.
- Improve opportunities for children in the EYFS to develop their basic skills of writing and number both in indoor and outdoor provision.
- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that staff know how to use information from assessment to provide all pupils with the right level of challenge.
- Develop the role of subject leaders so that they can raise standards in their subjects quickly and effectively.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The school has had a turbulent time over the past four years in raising standards and pupils have not always met their targets even though target-setting was realistic. This year, ambitious targets have been set, and pupils are on course to achieve them. The recent focus on guided reading has improved pupils' rates of progress which are now good. Writing is the focus of this year's school development plan. At present, the vast majority of pupils are not writing enough in other subjects. More capable pupils are not always given challenging enough work and are sometimes too content with writing very little. Overall, all groups of pupils, including those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those of Indian origin, are making satisfactory progress. Nevertheless, rates of progress are inconsistent with the best progress being made in Years 2, 5 and 6 where teaching is consistently challenging. Pupils' progress in using and applying mathematics and investigative science, up until very recently, has not been good enough and this has dragged down end of Year 2 and Year 6 national test results. Standards are improving and are, overall, now in line with national averages. This is a result of good collaboration with the local authority, the implementation of catch up interventions and very secure monitoring of both teaching and learning and pupil progress by the headteacher and deputy headteacher.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory. Where teaching captures pupils' interest levels, such as that of guided reading, they display good attitudes and are keen to learn. Behaviour around the school is good due to rigorous and consistent implementation of the behaviour policy by all staff. Pupils make friends readily and say they feel safe. One pupil commented, 'Bullying rarely happens here because we have so much to do in our new playground.' Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to school and community life. In particular, the school council is a credit to the school. Pupils make sensible suggestions as to the wide range of charities they contribute to, such as the local hospice, and this enables them to have a growing awareness of their local community and people in need. Pupils do not yet know enough about global communities although they do contribute to several overseas charities such as Food for Africa. Pupils are knowledgeable about healthy eating and love their snacks of carrots and fruit. Pupils' moral and social development is good while their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Attendance is average and pupils arrive at school on time. Pupils' skills of independent learning are not yet securely developed because knowledge of their academic targets is variable.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory and improving. In lessons, common strengths are good relationships, clear explanations of what is expected in lessons and good questioning. Progress is good when teachers set appropriately challenging tasks and provide pupils with the opportunities to learn through practical and interesting learning activities. This was seen in Year 5 and Year 6 where teachers challenged pupils to explain their thinking in mental mathematics. However, assessment information is not always used well enough by teachers to plan work which is sufficiently well matched to the capabilities of each group of pupils. Teaching assistants play a valuable role in supporting the individual needs of pupils in class. All staff are keen to improve their teaching and have individual action plans devised by the headteacher and deputy headteacher which customise the areas that they most need to work on. Marking is variable. Whilst it is satisfactory overall, it does not always show pupils what is expected of them and valuable opportunities for learning through mistakes are missed because pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to undertake their corrections.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The satisfactory curriculum is greatly enhanced by a good range of after-school activities. Whilst all subjects are taught they are not always covered in sufficient depth to ensure secure progression of subject-specific skills. Valuable opportunities are missed to develop writing skills in other subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as a second language have full access to the curriculum and eagerly join in all activities. The linking of subjects to make learning more meaningful, interesting and relevant is only just starting, with effective practice seen in Years 3 and 4.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The pastoral care of pupils is good but the academic guidance they are offered is only satisfactory as pupils' targets are not always renewed often enough to ensure that they are always sufficiently challenging. Parents and pupils appreciate the good level of care the school provides. Pupils say they feel safe because their teachers are 'really friendly, good fun and helpful'. Safeguarding and child protection procedures are rigorous, robust and meet statutory requirements. Satisfactory links with external agencies ensure pupils receive the appropriate support when required. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well cared for and parents are delighted with the school's inclusive practices. Induction procedures are good and support pupils well both when they join the school in the EYFS and when they move on to secondary school. Good assessment systems have been introduced and underachieving pupils have been given support to get them back on track.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and deputy headteacher, ably supported by a very well informed chair of governors, have made a significant impact on the school. Their strong and purposeful leadership has contributed to raising staff morale. Self-evaluation is satisfactory. As a result, resources are deployed adequately. However, the role of subject leaders in monitoring, evaluating and developing the quality of provision is underdeveloped. Under the guidance of the headteacher and deputy headteacher this process has recently started. Community cohesion initiatives are satisfactory and are being driven by the headteacher. Governance is good. All statutory requirements are met and governors are very aware of the school's strengths and areas for development.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	3

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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	3

The quality of provision

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

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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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**

16 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Riverside Community Primary School, Leicester, LE4 4JU

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for taking the time to talk to us. We enjoyed our visit very much and this letter is to tell you some important things we found out while we were with you.

- Your school is satisfactory and improving. All of your teachers are working very hard in order to help you get higher standards. Your parents are very pleased with the way they are made to feel welcome in the school and the fact that you are happy.
- You are all well behaved and you feel safe. You enjoy all of the extra clubs provided for you. You get on well with one another, relationships between you and the teachers are good and all the adults take good care of you. Support staff help you at all times with your learning.
- You have made good progress in your reading. Well done!
- Your school is soundly led and managed. Your headteacher and deputy headteacher are having a positive effect in raising standards, and it is good to know that your views are taken into account.
- You achieve levels in English, mathematics and science that most pupils of your age attain by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 but there is still room for improvement especially in developing your knowledge of using and applying mathematics and developing your skills of investigative science and writing.

To make this school even better you can help by ensuring that you use the correct mathematical operations in problem-solving and that, in science, you explain how your conclusions support your hypothesis. You also need to write more in other subjects. We have asked the school to ensure that those of you in Reception improve the way that you form your letters and numbers. We have asked your teachers to set you even more challenging tasks by using information from assessing your previous work. We have also asked teachers responsible for subjects to develop their skills in knowing what to do to help you get even higher standards.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Bogusia Matusiak-Varley

Lead inspector