

Riverside School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116600
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	338834
Inspection dates	26–27 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Stuart Charlton

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ken Bowen
Headteacher	Liz Beavan
Date of previous school inspection	13 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 10 lessons and all 10 teachers were seen. Inspectors held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, the governor with responsibility for safeguarding, the school improvement partner, staff and pupils. The work of the school was observed and the inspectors scrutinised the improvement plan, the minutes of the leadership team and governing body meetings, a range of other documentation and 36 questionnaires from parents and carers. The majority of pupils completed their questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the roles and responsibilities of leaders and managers to determine if they are sufficiently rigorous and robust to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can
- the effectiveness of systems to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning
- how well the curriculum meets pupils' specific needs and their entitlement to a broad, balanced and creative provision
- the systems to set and track challenging targets for all pupils to determine if these ensure that all make the progress of which they are capable
- the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

Riverside is a school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties and autism. The needs of pupils are changing over time and a significant number have additional behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and/or communication, speech and language needs. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or are being assessed for one. Ten children, taught in the same class group, are in the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are almost four times as many boys as girls and the vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The school provides an Outreach Service to mainstream primary schools and pre-school children. Awards include Investor in People, Enhanced Healthy Schools and School Achievement. The school is a member of Leigh Park Community Improvement Partnership. The deputy headteacher and an assistant headteacher are relatively new in post.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Riverside School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Although there are strengths in many aspects of the provision and in the progress and achievement of pupils in Years 1 to 6, weaknesses in the Early Years Foundation Stage mean that the school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory rather than good. However, staff provide all children and pupils with good care, guidance and support, ensuring that they gain the personal, social and learning skills which prepare them well for their future lives.

In Years 1 to 6, pupils make good progress in their learning regardless of ethnicity, gender, special educational needs or communication needs. This is based on good quality teaching and learning. Many children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly the higher attaining children, do not always make the progress of which they are capable. This is because they are not consistently challenged to do their best. Across the school as a whole, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There is a considerable proportion that is good, and some, particularly in Year 6, which is excellent. However, there are weaknesses in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In many lessons, particularly in Year 6, teachers give discerning feedback to pupils about how to improve their work. However, this practice is not sufficiently consistent in every lesson across the school because planning does not always clearly identify the needs of individuals and how these will be met

Safeguarding procedures are excellent, and pupils say that they feel safe and secure in Riverside. Relationships are very good in Years 1 to 6 and are a significant factor in the progress that pupils make. Pupils generally enjoy school and say that lessons are fun. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now above average. Behaviour is good, based on consistent application of the behaviour policy by staff. At break and lunchtimes, behaviour is exemplary and parents speak highly about the school and the positive effect it has on their children. The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 is carefully tailored to match pupils' needs, with a clear focus on the development of communication skills. Children's learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage generally covers the expected areas and contributes well to children's personal development. However, staff do not make the best use of the excellent facilities and resources to ensure that learning through play is fully effective.

Parents and carers are actively involved in their children's learning. This is made more relevant to pupils because their academic targets and their individual action plans are made available to parents and carers on a regular basis so that they can be partners in their children's learning at home. The school's work with parents and carers to help them to understand and meet their children's needs is of high quality and they are very positive about its effectiveness.

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The headteacher leads by example and has the interests of pupils at the heart of her work. She has the support of the overwhelming majority of staff so that there is a shared vision across the school. In Years 1 to 6, effective teamwork between teachers and support staff is the cornerstone of pupils' personal development. There are now good systems in place to set challenging targets and track pupils' progress. In Years 1 to 6, teachers' assessments are generally accurate. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, assessment is less secure and does not give an accurate picture of the progress children make. Staff development is given high priority and the input of staff is valued and acted upon so that all strive to improve the school even further. Partnerships with other professionals are used extremely well to promote the well-being of pupils. Governors provide satisfactory challenge to the school. They are not always sufficiently discerning in their interpretation of the data and the feedback they are given about the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses and this puts it in a satisfactory position to move forward in future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the provision of the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring that staff drive children's learning more effectively through purposeful play activities
- Improve the quality of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage through more rigorous monitoring of the provision.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that teacher's planning in all lessons clearly identifies the needs of pupils and how these will be met
 - ensuring that teachers' judgements about progress and attainment are consistent across the school, notably in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

In Years 1 to 6, pupils of different abilities make good progress. The progress made by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not as good as it should be because assessments are not sufficiently accurate and teaching does not provide a clear focus on how learning will be developed through play activities. This undue variation in progress means that achievement is satisfactory overall. In Years 1 to 6, the use of spoken English, signing and pictorial strategies ensures that all pupils, regardless of their communication needs, make similarly good progress. Excellent learning was seen in a Year 6 mathematics lesson where team teaching of the highest quality enabled pupils across a very wide spectrum of ability to make excellent progress.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Through the school council, pupils are closely involved in helping to contribute towards the school community. The way in which older pupils 'buddy' younger ones and the 'transition day' for older pupils are excellent examples. Through a wide range of charity events,

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particularly those for children in India, support for Portsmouth food bank and the Waterlooville Music Festival, pupils make an excellent contribution to the local community. In discussion, they showed good understanding of the need for a healthy lifestyle, emphasising the importance of the wide opportunities for physical development and the high take-up of the healthy lunches. This is reflected in the award of Enhanced Healthy Schools status. The positive links with the partner schools are very successful in helping pupils manage their difficulties in large group situations.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Generally, teachers and support staff work together well as a team and have a seamless approach to managing pupils' behaviour. In Years 1 to 6, teachers plan their lessons conscientiously and provide interesting activities, with considerable detail about how these will be organised. However, planning does not always clearly identify the needs of

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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individual pupils and how these will be met. In Years 1 to 6, relationships are good and, linked to teachers' good subject knowledge, lead to pupils making good progress in their personal development. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, relationships are also generally good, but teachers' knowledge about how to teach children with a very wide range of needs is less secure. Consequently, although children's personal development is satisfactory they do not make as much progress as they should in developing their learning skills, particularly through play.

Pupils receive a good curriculum in Years 1 to 6, but it is not as carefully planned for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Excellent use is made of a wide range of therapists and other professionals, particularly speech and language, to enhance the provision and ensure that the range and complexity of pupils' needs are met. Enrichment activities, such as the sports clubs, visits to the theatre, museums, a local sports centre and a farm, add to pupils' enjoyment of school and link their learning to real-life experiences.

Staff make sure that all pupils, including those who arrive at different times in the year, settle quickly and happily into school life. Parents and carers are partners in their children's education and the school works with them well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides the commitment to drive the school forward and is doing so successfully. The deputy headteacher and particularly the assistant headteacher are relatively new to the school. They are still coming to terms with their roles and responsibilities and are not yet contributing fully to driving forward school improvement, particularly in monitoring the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The governing body is actively involved in school life and promotes the school and its aims well. However, it does not always interrogate the data it is given about pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning in sufficient detail to be sure that all areas in the school are performing as well as they can. Consequently, although the school fully meets its commitments to eliminate discrimination, its promotion of equality of opportunity for all pupils and children is only satisfactory.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate, but is not always acted on with sufficient rigour. Safeguarding and child protection are high on everyone's agenda and all are rigorous in ensuring pupils' safety. The work of the governor with responsibility for safeguarding is

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exemplary. The Outreach Service provides very effective support for children before they move into the school, when they move to their new schools at age 11 and during lessons when necessary. The school has carried out a detailed audit of its provision and as a result has established good links at local and national levels through which it promotes community cohesion. The school has clear plans in place for developments at an international level to provide pupils with additional opportunities to learn more about the lives of those who live in other countries.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The number of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and the complexity of their needs, has increased significantly in the last year, although numbers remain small. Consequently, teaching and learning are not consistent enough at present to ensure that the needs of all children, particularly the higher attaining children, are fully met. In more formal teaching situations, children make satisfactory progress. In sessions involving activities chosen by the children themselves and those which focus on play to support learning, planning does not clearly focus on children's needs and how these will be met. As a result, teaching assistants do not receive clear guidance about how to promote learning and the work of therapists is not well supported. The assessment of children's achievements by staff is not sufficiently accurate to enable robust targets to be set or to give a clear view of their progress. The good levels of support provided by the teaching assistants ensure that children's personal development is secure. Children have appropriate opportunities to make choices and their behaviour is good. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is inadequate because the

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provision is not monitored with sufficient rigour.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	4

Views of parents and carers

Over one third of parents and carers returned the questionnaire. The views expressed have been supplemented by using information derived from the school's own surveys. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and the support and guidance they receive. One parent summed these feelings up very well, saying 'Riverside has offered my child and our family great support.' The inspection team fully agrees with these sentiments.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Riverside School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 36 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 104 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	72	10	28	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	86	4	11	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	25	69	11	31	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	72	9	25	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	75	9	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	69	10	28	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	64	13	36	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	26	72	8	22	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	75	8	22	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	67	9	25	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	75	7	19	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	30	83	6	17	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	78	8	22	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



28 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Riverside Community Special School, Waterloo, PO7 5QD

We really enjoyed coming to visit you. You helped us by letting us see your lessons and look at your work.

The school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education. We found that in the main school, the teachers help you to make good progress, but we want them to make some changes so that the youngest children do better.

You showed us how happy you are at school and your parents and carers told us how you look forward to coming every day. The school keeps you safe and there is always someone to help and look after you.

We could see that you really enjoyed the after-school clubs and visits out of school. You all behave very well, especially at break and lunchtime.

We have asked the staff to do three things to make the school even better. We want them to improve the lessons for the youngest children, to plan lessons more carefully to take better account of your needs and to improve how they assess your progress.

We hope you will help staff by doing your best all the time you are in school.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Charlton

Lead inspector

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