

Two Rivers High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124513
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	340587
Inspection dates	10–11 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Alan Lemon

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	32
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr L Newnham
Headteacher	Mrs V Vernon
Date of previous school inspection	5 April 2007
School address	Deltic Silver Link Road Tamworth
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 22 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of the school's policies, the school development plan, minutes of governor's meetings, an external evaluation of the school's work and 71 parental questionnaires.

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

- whether, across the school, pupils' progress is consistent
- the quality of provision for pupils with severe and complex special educational needs
- the capacity of leadership and management to deal effectively with the school's widening remit.

Information about the school

Two Rivers is a hard federation of a primary and secondary special school. Each school has its own budget but the two schools are led and managed by one headteacher and governed by a single governing body. They are on two sites, which are a mile and a half apart. The primary school has pupils aged two to 11 years old, with 83 on roll including eight children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The high school has pupils aged 11 to 18 years old, with 147 on roll. It plans to increase the upper age limit in the sixth form to 19 in September 2010. The high school moved into new premises in September 2008 on the Torc campus, which houses the Tamworth Special Educational Needs Nursery, a vocational centre, Connexions careers service, community paediatricians, social services and community police.

All of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The range of special educational needs and/or disabilities the school provides for includes profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD), moderate learning difficulties (MLD), autistic spectrum disorders (ASD), sensory impairments and medical conditions.

The school has many awards, which include ArtsMark Gold, Healthy School Award, ActiveMark, Dyslexia Friendly Status and the Quality Gold Mark for the teaching of geography. In 2009, the school was awarded specialist school status for cognition and learning.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

The primary and high schools are outstanding in their own right and together as the hard federation of Two Rivers. The whole school, overall, was outstanding at the time of its previous school inspection, building on this as the federation continued to consolidate its provision, and leadership and management. Both schools work as one, which is the result of outstanding leadership and management, particularly that of the headteacher. There is a unity of purpose and aims, clear direction, ambition and high expectations. Every detail of both schools and their work has been very carefully considered.

Self-evaluation is systematic and rigorous: both schools have not stood still because the headteacher, governors and staff have all steadfastly driven them forward towards even greater effectiveness, sustaining a very strong capacity for further improvement. The new high school campus is a testament to ambition and improvement. It provides the highest quality of accommodation and specialist resources for its pupils and staff and this contributes hugely to pupils' outstanding outcomes. The high school sits at the centre of comprehensive community resources within the high school campus and these serve pupils, their families and the community. The care arrangements for pupils on both sites are very comprehensive and provide them with outstanding guidance and support throughout their time in school. In this respect, in particular, partnerships are exceptionally effective and, likewise, the engagement with parents. The parents who expressed their views of the school were very positive about the primary and high school's work and often delighted by its impact on their children's progress.

Both schools are regaled with awards, one of the latest of which is recognition as a specialist school for cognition and learning. This achievement reflects the substantial specialist expertise developed by the schools, and the significant investment in the continued professional development of staff on both sites. It is too early to see the full effect the contribution of specialist status is having beyond the school. This is clearly set out in plans to develop the school's existing remit for extended services to schools. The skills and experience of staff mean teaching, assessment, learning and progress are all outstanding across the schools, in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in the sixth form as well. The curriculum in the primary and high school respond exceptionally well to the range and complexity of pupils' needs. It is an outstanding blend of relevant, interesting and enjoyable work and activities. Pupils have many opportunities for enterprise and to use their initiative. The impact on pupils' achievement and enjoyment is enormous, especially for many in relation to communication, literacy and numeracy. They acquire many useful skills which they learn to apply to everyday demands. This includes staying safe and leading a healthy lifestyle, an appreciation of which pupils develop to an exceptional extent. The Healthy Schools Award and ActiveMark reflect the

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great extent to which the school promotes these aspects of pupils' well-being. From September 2010, students in the sixth form will be offered the opportunity to stay an extra year. At present, a curriculum is not fully established to contend with this, although appropriate developments are in the pipeline.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend sixth form provision to provide for those students who will opt to remain for a further year after September 2010 by:
 - ensuring that the quality of their educational experience continues their preparation for leaving and matches that of the rest of the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Outcomes are outstanding in every respect because both schools share considerable consistency in offering each pupil excellent opportunities to achieve and to enjoy their learning. Attendance in both schools is high. In the classroom, pupils are interested and stimulated by their activities as well as by the interaction with staff and each other. Pupils are extremely well behaved. They engage really well in learning, often showing high levels of enthusiasm and motivation, PMLD pupils in particular. This extends to a great many making positive contributions in school and beyond. An active school council takes its role seriously and makes many recommendations for improving school facilities. Pupils are also concerned to help others by raising money for several good causes at home and abroad.

The huge expertise staff bring to bear on promoting learning ensures every pupil makes significant progress no matter how complex their learning difficulties may be. High quality learning resources and many specialist facilities support pupils in making best use of their time to learn and make progress. The tracking of pupils' performance over time shows consistently that pupils make progress well above the average for similar pupils. Most SLD, MLD and ASD pupils, by the time they leave school, gain a broad range of accreditation, including in English, mathematics, information and communication technology and personal, social and health education. They also all gain from a wide range of experiences, including work experience, that prepares them exceptionally well for their future well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers, and the good number of assistants supporting them, work as very effective teams in classrooms, using substantial expertise to help pupils and engage them in learning. As a result, their work in relation to PMLD and ASD in particular is outstanding. Assessment in the primary and high school contributes exceptionally well to planning pupils' work and their individual targets. Where possible, pupils' evaluate what they have learnt and profit from the way teachers mark their work. Lesson planning contains considerable detail around meeting each pupil's needs. In both schools, work is challenging and the pace of learning is very good. The management of pupils' behaviour is very consistent leading to a positive rapport, which encourages their motivation and effort. Clear learning objectives for individuals and groups means staff stay sharply focused on pupils making progress.

The curriculum is fully flexible and extremely well matched to the range of pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities. From the youngest to the oldest, pupils are offered an imaginative and exciting range of learning experiences precisely tailored to their individual needs. Additional activities provided at lunchtimes and imaginative curriculum-related visits and visitors, which include regular visits to a local professional football team who provide coaching, further enhance learning. In addition, each student is given the opportunity to take part in a residential course such as those that feature caving, rock climbing and archery.

Adults provide exceptional care, support and guidance for all pupils. In the primary and high school, highly-trained staff provide expert support for pupils' wide range of medical and physical conditions, allowing all to take a full and happy part in school life. Very

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strong links have been established with other agencies and professionals. Staff conscientiously carry out programmes devised, for example, by speech and language therapists and physiotherapists. Pupils' personal care is undertaken sensitively.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Pupils in the primary and high school benefit enormously from the enduring ambition and huge capacity for continuous improvement resulting from the exceptional leadership and management of the headteacher and her staff. The hard federation of the two schools has been exceptionally well managed. Both schools work in great harmony, pursuing one set of aims and achieving very high standards in provision and equality of opportunity across the full age range. Governors are involved to an outstanding extent with both schools in supporting their improvement and helping to set their direction. They make sure safeguarding procedures are effective and, especially because of the continual close scrutiny and very good office administration, these are excellent. The governors' allocation of a substantial annual budget for training comes from their insistence on retaining a highly qualified staff, which has been a key element in the school's unfaltering success. Along with the staff, governors promote community cohesion outstandingly well. The school's contribution is carefully audited and this informs development planning. Exceptionally strong partnerships embed the school in its community and it actively contributes locally, nationally and globally, by taking part in many community events and supporting projects in Kenya.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1

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	
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make outstanding progress as a result of the high quality teaching, care, support and guidance they receive. In particular, the significant proportion of PMLD children is provided with exceptional care and support. Outstanding leadership and management ensure the range of provision from within school and beyond is available and co-ordinated in meeting all needs. Staff possess a high level of expertise in meeting children's needs and providing the full range of learning opportunities indoors and outside. Particular strengths stand out in relation to improving children's communication, physical skills and their personal development.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Sixth form

Sixth form students make excellent progress in their learning and in their personal development, whatever their individual needs. This is because they benefit from expert teaching, and a curriculum sensitively matched to individual needs, offering a range of interesting and useful courses providing opportunities for external accreditation. Students' learning and personal targets are agreed in discussion with them and their parents, with whom the school enjoys strong partnerships. Against this backdrop, students thrive and are highly supportive of each other. Outstanding care and guidance ensure that attention to developing students' personal skills and preparation for their future lives is given a very high priority. As a result, when students leave they are very well prepared for moving on to further forms of education or training. There is emphasis on work-related learning and experience. Community links are very well developed and contribute to securing smooth transition into future placements. Currently, opportunities for continuing at the school through to Year 14 are not provided. All aspects of

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leadership and management are excellent and contribute fully to students' exceptional learning and progress.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

While the response to the parental questionnaire was low, almost all of those returned expressed positive views of both schools. Several contained additional parental comments, very largely praising both schools' work, the relationship between parents and the schools, leadership and management and the very positive impact on their children's progress. The views expressed by parents fully reflect inspection findings.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Two Rivers 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 71 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 221 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	53	75	16	23	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	79	15	21	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	53	75	16	23	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	49	69	21	30	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	56	79	15	21	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	56	79	12	17	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	63	25	35	1	1	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)	48	70	19	28	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	55	77	15	21	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	51	72	20	28	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	44	62	24	34	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	53	75	18	25	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	55	77	15	21	1	1	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



14 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Two Rivers School, Tamworth B77 2HJ

We enjoyed our visit to your school very much and thank you for making us feel so welcome.

Your school is outstanding. We were delighted and very impressed with everything we saw.

All of the staff who teach and support you work very hard to make sure you are very well looked after. They have made school a lovely place for you to come to and learn in. As a result, you make excellent progress. You behave really well, attend school as much as possible and thoroughly enjoy the time you spend there.

In all of the lessons we visited, your teachers made the activities interesting for you and you made very good efforts with your work.

Your headteacher and all of the staff have done an exceptional job to make your school outstanding and they are determined to go on making it better. They want to make it possible for the oldest students in the high school to stay a year longer, starting in September 2010. If you stay on the extra year in the high school, this could really help you even more to get ready for leaving school. I have asked your headteacher to make sure everything is ready for this by September 2010.

You and all of the staff have a lot to be proud of. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Alan Lemon

Lead inspector

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