

Riverside Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135348
Local Authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	341640
Inspection dates	7–8 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Carolyn Carnaghan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	443
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr B Gray
Headteacher	Mr B Jones
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 15 lessons taught by 15 teachers, scrutinised the school's policies, documents and 172 responses to questionnaires completed by parents and carers. The inspectors also held meetings with pupils, staff, governors, and parents and carers.

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

- how well the current level of teaching and learning provides sufficient opportunities to improve progress
- the effectiveness of the school's monitoring of its teaching how well the school's leaders and managers understand what needs to be done to raise the attainment for all pupils.

Information about the school

Riverside is an above average-sized primary school. It was formed two years ago after the amalgamation of two local primary schools and is housed on a modern, purpose-built site that affords excellent facilities for learning, both inside and outside. There is a larger-than-average proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals. There is also a greater-than-average proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/disabilities, such as dyslexia and speech and language difficulties. Most pupils come from a White British heritage.

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

2

Main findings

The school provides a satisfactory education and is a very safe and secure haven that supports and cares for its pupils well. The calm and caring ethos, enjoyed by all pupils, contributes to their enjoyment and relative academic successes.

Teachers and leaders provide strong role models who expect their pupils to behave well, grow in confidence and contribute strongly to their school community. The school ensures its impressive new building provides an exciting and highly secure learning environment. Classrooms are beautifully enlivened with pupils' artworks and examples of work that help inspire further efforts. Parents are equally happy with their children's school and most say they think the headteacher has managed the amalgamation of the two previous schools very well.

Pupils enter the Nursery with low starting points but make good progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage because provision is good. As a result, they enter Year 1 with approaching-average levels of age-related skills. During the two years of its existence, pupils have made satisfactory progress in the main school, and leave at the end of Year 6 with broadly average levels of attainment. The school's accelerated progress has come about because the senior leaders have ensured staff understand how important it is for everyone to pull together as a team. They have risen to this challenge and many have taken on new roles and responsibilities that have further helped the pupils to progress. Pupils behave well and understand how to live healthily, they are generous with their time in support of others and many members of the school council feel they are genuinely empowered to make a difference. One council member said, 'We make all the important decisions here!'

Senior leaders work hard to make sure that pupils have equal opportunities although progress is not yet consistent across all classes. The school has a good capacity to improve because the whole staff team, its leaders and governors having pulled together two groups from different schools, have forged a learning community that is developing good understanding of what it needs to do next. Teaching is monitored, with a clear focus on the learning needs of the pupils. However, teachers' use of questioning is sometimes weak and assessment is not consistently used effectively by teachers to speed progress. This means pupils are not always clear what they need to do next. The curriculum provides exciting opportunities for pupils and is becoming more effective in developing their basic skills, as well as helping them know and understand their own local community better. Attainment is rising and good plans are in place, monitored and supported by the governing body, to accelerate progress still further. Pupils make a very good contribution to their own community but have not yet had sufficient opportunity to

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fully develop newly forged links with others from different places and beliefs. The school is a harmonious place and promotes community cohesion effectively at the local level but its strategy with the national and global dimensions is at an early stage of development.

□ Governors have helped senior leaders develop exemplary safeguarding procedures that are continuously monitored for their effectiveness. This has meant the school now shares its expertise with others and is considered a leader in this field by the local authority.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment and accelerate progress by:
 - ensuring teaching is consistently good across the school by July 2011 and for all groups of pupils
 - making more effective use of assessment in the classroom so that all pupils are clear of their next learning steps and are given tasks and activities that really stretch them
 - ensuring all teachers use probing and incisive questioning throughout lessons to provide opportunities for pupils to strengthen their learning.

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

In the school's first year, pupils' progress was slower than now; it has since accelerated, as better teaching and higher aspirations have started to raise attainment. This is stronger in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1 and is not consistent across all classes. However, the effective monitoring of teaching, and the sharing of the good practice resulting from that, has meant that lessons now focus more clearly on what and how pupils need to learn. Pupils are placed in groups according to the results of recent assessments, and although this is not used effectively everywhere, pupils are beginning to work at the level their ability suggests they can. Girls do not achieve consistently as well as boys across the school, however. More-able pupils make much faster progress than they did last year. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, such as dyslexia or speech and language difficulties, make progress that matches or betters that of their peers because they are supported effectively in and outside lessons.

Good behaviour in lessons means learning can generally go on apace and pupils' positive attitudes to learning, and to one another, ensure that it is enjoyable too. Pupils might take the opportunity to extend their work into unexpected areas, such as by measuring the angles of objects all around the school. Much work has been done to ensure pupils, parents and carers know what constitutes good and poor behaviour, including bullying. Pupils develop good understanding of the need to eat healthily, take regular exercise and sport and of how to work cooperatively. They enjoy using information and communication technology (ICT). It is not uncommon to see the youngest pupils recording ideas on camera, taking control of the whiteboard in class and making the

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most of the excellent ICT provision that is available. These skills are helping them develop satisfactory skills that will be useful in education and adult life. Attendance is average, with a marked drop this year in the numbers of persistent absentees.

□ Pupils show how much they enjoy the arts and culture through their regular performances to parents and each other, their explorations in art and drama and the confident way they express themselves through artworks. Bullying is very rare and pupils clearly understand what to do if they feel worried or threatened in any situation. They express their ideas and emotions clearly, showing a sense of wonder about their world. They serve their school community well, raise money for local charities and are beginning to forge new links with pupils in other countries.

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	3
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	2
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is not consistent across the school, but where it is good, lessons provide stimulating tasks that suit the ability of each pupil. Consequently, pupils are interested in their work and make good progress. A range of resources is used effectively and ICT, for example, often speeds progress and stimulates learning amongst boys, particularly.

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

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The pace of lessons is variable, however, and does not always challenge pupils of different abilities. Sometimes, questioning is too simple and does not probe pupils' learning sufficiently. Although lesson objectives are generally shared, teachers do not always find out how much learning is really happening. Assessment is often used well to plan lessons and pupils' progress is faster as a result. This is not yet the case in all lessons.

Those pupils withdrawn from lessons by teaching assistants for catch-up time, extra reading or help make good progress in those sessions. The excellent library makes a genuine contribution to the curriculum, helping to encourage pupils and their parents and carers to enjoy what they find there. Reading for boys has been a focus and there are many superb books available. The curriculum provides a firm and developing base for learning though its clear strengths are not yet fully exploited by all teachers. There are opportunities to explore and use the facilities of the local community and surroundings that are built into many topics. The forest school initiative, for example, provides chances for all pupils to get outside and learn, and there is regular sailing and swimming for everyone who wants, or needs, to pursue them. Pupils all learn a foreign language.

The school cares for and supports its pupils well. There are some outstanding systems to promote pupils' personal development, such as the inclusion room where those who might struggle to take part fully are helped to do so. Pupils all have their own profile document that helps track their development from the Nursery up to Year 6 and into secondary school. Parents and carers receive home visits at times of transition to ensure everyone is confident and understands the process.

□ Before- and after-school clubs are very well attended and there are residential trips that help all pupils experience life outside their local environment. Pupils are proud of their school and some, who may be faced with challenging circumstances, receive support for both themselves and their families.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team has a clear vision and ambition for the school that is shared by all teachers, including those with responsibilities for subjects and groups. Self-evaluation is accurate and there is clear planning for the future. Governors are highly involved throughout the planning process and they continuously monitor its

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outcomes. Lessons are regularly monitored and this has been key to the school's developing team spirit. Teachers are aware of how to improve their practice and are working hard to raise attainment through better teaching.

Parents and carers are in regular contact with school and the majority are highly supportive of its efforts. There are extensive local partnerships forged with other Plymouth schools, sometimes helping to provide extra help for those who are vulnerable. External educational agencies provide additional care and support for families. The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily and works to eradicate discrimination. However, there are still too many inconsistencies in academic attainment between classes.

The school is a positive force in its neighbourhood, but has, until recently, focused heavily on building its own community. There are positive initiatives afoot to build links with other schools around the country and the world, but these are at an early stage. The school has, however, made good efforts to bring in visitors from different cultures and religions to help broaden pupils' experiences.

The procedures for safeguarding pupils are outstanding. The school has an impressive range of effective policies to ensure every child is safe and secure. Policies and procedures are robustly monitored by governors who are key players in all aspects of safeguarding. They review every facet of school life thoroughly. The records of every incident, even very minor ones, are rigorous and detailed.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

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

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Children enter the Nursery with below-average age-related skills. The good teaching and support they receive means they soon start to progress well towards age-related expectations. Social skills are a focus and all children quickly learn how to get on and play together. They enjoy eating and exploring together and most are soon confident and outgoing learners.

The staff organise the day very well, with the two Nursery classes joining in with Reception activities from time to time through the day. This allows Reception children to develop as role models for the younger ones. Children are encouraged to be creative and they often use this in singing and dancing, enthusiastically composing new lyrics to well-known songs. They explore science through mini-beasts and materials, enjoy using ICT, work out how to build and construct through using the large range of apparatus and toys inside and out, and learn numbers and letters through play and phonics. Children in Nursery can all recognise the letters of their name and very quickly make links with other words and sounds. The use of number is less strong and the coordinator is making this a priority for the future.

Relationships are strong and the team makes this beautiful area a harmonious and extremely safe haven for its children. Teachers use assessment to inform their planning for learning and every child enjoys building up a learning diary that charts their development and successes.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents who responded to questionnaires felt the school provides their children with a good education. There was a small proportion of negative comments, such as that some parents believed their children had been subjected to bullying. The inspection found that the school's procedures for dealing with bullying and difficulties between children were extremely robust. All incidents of poor behaviour were very well documented and checked by governors. This has been a focus for discussions with pupils and some parents throughout the period since the school has been opened. The majority of parents felt that school is safe and healthy, that behaviour is good and that their children make good progress.

There was a small minority of parents who felt they were not informed about their child's progress; the inspection found no evidence to support this view.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Riverside Community Primary 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 172 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 443 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	81	47	86	50	2	1	3	2
The school keeps my child safe	94	54	72	42	0	0	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	72	42	82	47	13	8	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	81	47	86	50	5	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	79	46	89	51	3	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	76	44	85	49	9	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	69	40	102	59	0	0	1	1
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)	55	32	101	58	4	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	70	40	91	53	6	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	60	35	89	51	12	7	7	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	46	27	103	60	8	5	5	3
The school is led and managed effectively	79	46	82	47	3	2	6	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	93	54	74	43	2	1	1	1

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.



9 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Riverside Community Primary School, Plymouth PL5 1DD

Thank you for making the inspectors feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. You were helpful, courteous and friendly throughout our time with you. Your school gives you a satisfactory education and some of the things that are good are:

- your behaviour in lessons and around school
- your care for one another, and how well you know how to eat and live healthily
- the excellent procedures the school has to ensure you are safe, both in school and when you go out on visits
- the superb library, with spaces to curl up and read a book
- the care and support you receive from teachers and their assistants
- the lively areas in the Nursery and Reception where children can play and learn together.

We have asked the school to do a few things to make school even better:

- ensure that teaching is good in every lesson
- make sure teachers really question you about your learning
- carry out more regular assessments in lessons so you can progress more quickly.

You can help by continuing to behave well towards each other and making sure you come to school every day.

Yours sincerely

Carolyn Carnaghan Lead Inspector

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