

Riversides School

Thorneloe Road, Barbourne, Worcester, WR1 3HZ

Inspection dates

3–4 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well in each key stage and in a range of subjects so that they are well prepared for the next stages of their education.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has improved pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and attendance.
- Teaching is good and some outstanding teaching was also seen. Lessons are well planned and interesting, and where possible related to pupils' everyday life. Staff convey high expectations of learning and behaviour to pupils.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils make every effort to be courteous and they try hard in lessons.
- The interim headteacher has sustained the rate of progress the school has been making since the previous inspection. Staff morale is high, and robust plans are in place for the school's continued leadership.
- Governors effectively hold the school to account. They have a clear picture of provision and the next steps for the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, work for pupils in lessons is not precisely pitched to ensure the maximum progress.
- Long-term planning does not ensure that the widest possible range of subjects provide precisely planned opportunities for pupils to apply literacy and numeracy skills and improve these skills further.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons on three sites and covering all the school's key stages. One lesson was observed with the headteacher.
- Two meetings were held with pupils and meetings were held with two governors, senior staff and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector heard individual pupils read when talking to them about their work in lessons.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including ones relating to safeguarding, assessments of pupils' progress, and records of behaviour and attendance.
- There were not enough responses to register on Parent View (an online questionnaire) but the inspector examined surveys of parents' and carers' views carried out by the school and spoke to a small number of parents and carers collecting their children after school.

Inspection team

Michael Farrell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Riversides is a special school for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties who come from the south part of the county of Worcestershire.
- Many pupils have been excluded from previous schools and have missed significant amounts of schooling.
- A very small number of girls and a very small proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups educated at the school.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- Currently 15 pupils are looked after by the local authority.
- The majority of pupils are entitled to pupil premium (the additional funding from central government for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority, or who have a parent in the armed forces).
- The school currently comprises three sites in the city of Worcester. The Thorneloe site educates pupils in Key Stages 2, 3 and 4. The Spring Gardens site provides for pupils in Key Stage 4. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are educated at the Perryfield site. From September 2013, the Perryfield site will no longer be used and these pupils will join others at the Thorneloe site. A very small number of pupils are educated by staff from a private company through one-to-one tuition at various public venues, such as the local library or technical college and through work experience.
- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has retired. From January 2013, the former deputy headteacher was appointed interim headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by ensuring that pupils' work is always precisely pitched at a level that secures the maximum progress in lessons.
- Develop all learning programmes so that the widest possible range of subjects provides pupils with opportunities for applying literacy and numeracy skills, and improving them further.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- On entering the school, pupils' attainment is low often because they have missed schooling and in previous settings have been disaffected. Pupils have a 'baseline' assessment and their progress is then further assessed each term. This data indicates good achievement, showing that the longer the pupils have attended Riversides, the better their progress. Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics, and in a range of other subjects. Lesson observations and examples of pupils' work confirm this.
- Pupils educated through private arrangements make good progress because work is individually tailored to their needs, and outcomes are regularly and rigorously monitored by Riversides staff.
- The range of examinations that older pupils take has increased and includes GCSEs, Entry Level Certificates and a variety of well-chosen vocational qualifications. Pupils' success in these examinations has improved since the previous inspection and they are well prepared for the next stages of their education.
- Different groups progress well, including the small number of girls and pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Pupils eligible for pupil premium funding achieve similarly to other pupils in the school because of the small class sizes, individualised approaches to learning, and intensive interventions. These include support in reading and numeracy, developing 'emotional literacy' to help ensure good academic progress, and promoting pupils' personal and social development. Particularly vulnerable pupils are intensively supported and their families given every assistance.
- In a numeracy lesson, Key Stage 2 pupils progressed well in solving real-life mathematical problems because well-pitched questions kept the pupils on their toes and behaviour was managed very skilfully. In a science lesson on developing hypotheses, Key Stage 3 pupils achieved well because the lesson was carefully structured and moved along at a brisk pace so that pupils were fully engaged and tried their best.
- Pupils read widely and often at school, and Riversides does all it can to encourage reading at home and elsewhere.
- While progress in literacy and numeracy is good, it is slowed because planning does not always ensure that as many other subjects as possible provide maximum opportunities for pupils to apply these skills and develop them further.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The great majority of teaching observed during the inspection was good and some outstanding teaching was seen. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The school's own observations agreed with those of this inspector and school records of lesson observations show good teaching over time.
- Lessons are well planned and clearly structured so that pupils gain a quick sense of where the lesson is going. Behaviour is skilfully managed using a wide range of effective strategies, ranging from warm and deserved praise and the consistent application of rewards and sanctions to the

judicious ignoring of attention-seeking behaviour. Modern technology is effectively used to enliven lessons, for example the confident use of white boards.

- Lessons create a positive climate for learning which engage even newly arrived pupils so that they settle in quickly. Well-paced lessons help ensure pupils maintain good concentration. Lessons are interesting and related to pupils' everyday life wherever possible. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution through good individual and small group work with pupils, and use questioning effectively to check understanding.
- In a design and technology lesson, pupils in Key Stage 2 progressed well because the teacher used praise effectively. This included affirming the pupils' good opinion of themselves where this was justified: 'I've got a good imagination me - haven't I?', 'Yes you have'. In a Key Stage 4 English lesson, pupils made good progress in developing persuasive descriptive writing. The lesson tapped into pupils' personal experiences very well and trusting relationships enabled pupils to contribute from their personal experiences.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is up-to-date and encouraging. It clearly shows pupils what they should do to improve. Pupils know their learning targets, for example to improve certain spellings or to use a richer vocabulary.
- Broadly, the level of pupils' work in lessons is pitched at a suitable level to challenge pupils. Occasionally, this is not precise enough to lead to the maximum progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- When pupils enter school their experiences of previous schooling often mean that their attitudes to learning are negative. The school quickly transforms these attitudes through its positive climate for learning and through the high expectations of staff.
- Staff manage behaviour well so that pupils can break away from previously poor habits of learning and start to catch up and progress well. There have been no permanent exclusions in the past three years and fixed-term exclusions are rapidly reducing.
- Pupils are courteous and polite, and in lessons and around school behave well. Occasional lapses in good behaviour are dealt with calmly so that the pupil quickly resumes learning. No disruption to lessons was seen during the inspection, indeed pupils worked hard and concentrated well. Pupils enjoy their learning.
- Attendance is lower than national figures because when pupils first enter the school they often have a long record of poor attendance that the school has to tackle. It does this successfully, helped considerably by the effective learning mentors who work with the whole family. As a result, attendance has improved since the previous inspection, getting better each year. Pupils are punctual to lessons so that learning gets off to a good start and no time is wasted.
- Pupils say they feel safe and feel a sense of the support of the school community. One said, 'You've got your mates with you.' Staff agree that pupils are safe. No concerns about behaviour or safety were expressed by any parent or carer.
- Pupils know about bullying and can give examples of different types. The day before the inspection started, several pupils had been anti-bullying ambassadors at a meeting of various schools and spoke proudly of this, showing the certificates they received. Pupils say there is

some bullying but that staff deal with it effectively. They state that teachers 'give the consequences' if there is any bullying. Speaking of the lack of discrimination pupils say that people are readily accepted at the school.

- Pupils know about internet risks and can explain in detail how to keep safe when using new technologies. They are aware of risks and what to do about them in other areas, for example water safety.

The leadership and management are good

- The interim headteacher is maintaining the school's momentum for improvement built up since the previous inspection. Leaders at all levels communicate high expectations. Staff roles are clear, staff views are positive and morale is high. Plans are in place to secure the school's long-term leadership.
- The school has a good capacity to develop further owing to its track record of improvements since the previous inspection. Strong systems ensure that data is effectively used to improve standards and provision, making self-evaluation accurate.
- The local authority provides effective support, including during the school's interim leadership arrangements. The school co-ordinates the work of other agencies, such as the health authority, well to ensure that pupils benefit.
- Parents and carers are fully involved because the school makes sustained efforts to engage them. This was shown by the recent very high attendance of parents and carers at a sports day and at an evening to discuss plans for Key Stage 3 pupils.
- Equal opportunities are promoted well because the school's tracking of progress helps to ensure swift interventions for any pupils slipping behind. Pupils are acutely aware that discrimination of any kind is unacceptable. Safeguarding meets current government requirements
- Well-structured programmes of study are adapted to the needs of pupils, help provide interesting and relevant lessons, support good behaviour and strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Special days focus on multi-cultural themes, religious education covers a range of faiths, and art celebrates Native American designs. Opportunities to apply and develop literacy and numeracy skills are not as deeply embedded or systematically built into planning of other subjects as they could be.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body are increasingly seizing the initiative in challenging the school and support it effectively. Governors have an accurate picture of pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching, and a clear overview of safeguarding to help ensure pupils' safety. They are fully involved in the appraisal of the interim headteacher and maintain oversight of the performance management of other staff. They have a clear overview of the use of resources, including staff deployment, making sure they are used to good effect. Governors know how much pupil premium money the school gets, how it is used, and how effective the outcomes.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	131492
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	406434

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	7–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	52
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Askin
Headteacher	Peter Bayly
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2011
Telephone number	01905 21261
Fax number	01905 22247
Email address	administrator@riverside.worcs.sch.uk

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