

Riverside Primary School

St Edmund's Way, Rainham, Gillingham, ME8 8ET

Inspection dates

28–29 November 2012

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

- This is an inclusive school where pupils of all abilities and needs make good progress from their starting points and achieve well.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 shows a strongly improving picture in both English and mathematics. Pupils for whom the school receives extra money do especially well.
- Pupils who need extra help achieve well because of the care and support the school plans for them.
- Teachers set work at the right level for pupils and are ably helped by other adults in the classroom. Together they effectively support the learning of all pupils.
- Behaviour is good, and a strong feature in all lessons is the calm atmosphere in which pupils work together.
- The monitoring of the school's performance by the headteacher and senior team has improved the progress of pupils and raised the quality of teaching to good overall, with some that is outstanding.
- Governance is strong. Governors understand exactly how effective the school is and are fully engaged in raising standards even further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always move the pace of learning on quickly enough or provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their learning creatively across subjects.
- Targets set for pupils are not always used to show them how to move to the next level in their learning.

Information about the school

- Inspectors saw 15 lessons or parts of lessons, which included the teaching of phonics (letter patterns and the sounds they represent) and intervention sessions. Senior staff accompanied the inspection team on a number of these. Inspectors also listened to pupils read and observed pupils during break times.
- Meetings were held with pupils, senior leaders and the inclusion manager, three members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the four responses to the on-line Parent View survey as well as talking to parents and carers informally during the inspection. The school's own survey of parents was also considered, along with questionnaires from staff.
- Inspectors looked at a range of the school's documentation, including policies relating to safeguarding, data on pupils' progress and attendance figures. Inspectors visited the school's website.

Inspection team

Howard Jones,	Lead inspector
Carol Vant	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average primary school.
- The school has recently completed a programme for pupils who have autistic spectrum disorder and pupils with visual impairment to be taught alongside others in mainstream classes.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs and receive support at school action, school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average. This includes pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- More pupils than average join or leave the school throughout the school year.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching to enable more pupils to make outstanding progress by:
 - actively engaging pupils in their learning through sharply focused questioning so pupils progress at a faster pace
 - planning opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning.
- Accelerate progress for all pupils across subjects by:
 - ensuring pupils have opportunities which inspire them to think creatively and apply their learning in a variety of contexts
 - setting clear expectations so pupils understand what they need to do to progress to the next level.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Attainment at the end of Year 6 has risen sharply. There have been marked improvements in standards in English and mathematics. Pupils do especially well in writing and the most able pupils attain higher standards in mathematics than nationally.
- Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities lower than those expected for their age. There is variation in attainment in communication and language, but an increasing proportion of children leave the Reception class having achieved the levels expected for their age.
- Standards in Key Stage 1 remain below average. A number of pupils arrived at different times through last year and the school's actions to tackle underachievement are showing marked benefits, with all pupils currently making good progress and some exceeding this.
- Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics. This is because the school's consistent focus on checking pupils' progress has enabled teachers and other adults to plan activities to meet pupils' needs more closely and speed up progress.
- Pupils who receive extra funding through the pupil premium do exceptionally well. These pupils make at least good progress and achieve as well as other pupils nationally. In English, they make even better progress.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. The school's inclusive ethos has made a strong contribution to their achievement in both English and mathematics and some pupils make even faster progress.
- Achievement in reading is good. Pupils enjoy reading and talk enthusiastically about the books they enjoy. Pupils consistently use the sounds that letters make to read different texts which are new to them.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching has improved considerably. This is because of the depth of training provided for both teachers and other adults to make this an inclusive school. Consequently, teachers set work that is suitable for every pupil's needs and adults have a flexible approach in responding to pupils' learning as it develops in the classroom.
- Teachers ensure learning is of a good quality. In most lessons, they ask questions to explore and deepen the understanding of pupils, but occasionally, at key points in weaker lessons, teachers do not plan opportunities to actively engage pupils through sharply focused questioning that moves learning on at a faster pace.
- The school's policy of displaying 'steps for success' is used consistently. Consequently, pupils confidently move forward in their learning. However, there are few planned opportunities for pupils to reflect on their work and understand ways of improving it even further.
- Teachers plan activities using a range of resources. They often link learning to a real-life context. Pupils clearly value this approach. However, planning does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to apply their learning creatively in a variety of contexts.
- Teachers have high expectations. Pupils respond positively to this and can talk about their learning and some of the specific literacy and numeracy skills they are using. However, although marking is consistent, in lessons teachers do not make clear to pupils what they need to do to progress to the next level in their learning.
- Additional adults are especially well deployed within the classroom. They are skilled in targeting support in lessons or providing extra guidance in small groups. For example, in Year 2 phonics sessions, groups of pupils made outstanding progress because of the confidence they developed through the guidance they received.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in lessons. A strong feature in all lessons is the calm atmosphere in which pupils work together and enthusiastically talk about their learning with each other. They enjoy their work and pupils in Year 6 especially mentioned the topic on 'planets and space' as their favourite.
- Pupils are resilient and persevere to complete tasks. They respond positively to guidance on how to improve their work. However, sometimes pupils become distracted when teachers do not always move the pace of learning on quickly enough.
- Around the school and in the playground, pupils say they feel safe. The school has recently appointed an adult play worker and pupils of all ages say how much they value joining in the games and activities organised for them.
- Pupils willingly take on responsibilities. For example, Year 6 pupils listen to younger pupils read. The older pupils support the younger readers very well as they enthusiastically talk with them about new words and characters in the stories.
- Parents and carers and pupils say bullying is rare. Pupils feel secure and they know who to speak to if they have any concerns. Pupils who need extra help are fully included in the life of the school. Both pupils and adults ensure they are involved and treated equally.
- Pupils are aware of how to keep safe. They understand how to safely use information and communication technology (ICT). The school makes sure messages about respect and safety are understood by pupils and parents and carers.
- Attendance is currently average. This is so for all groups of pupils. The school has in place a range of measures to address this. Most pupils are punctual and persistent absences are low.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides highly effective leadership. Her vision for an inclusive and successful school for all pupils is obvious in every aspect of the school's work. Consequently, there has been much improvement in achievement for all pupils.
- The roles of leaders at all levels have been developed well. Leaders carry out rigorous checks through regular meetings with class teachers to discuss their pupils' progress. This leads to effective extra help being adapted to meet the needs of individuals and groups, such as those pupils for whom the school receives extra money.
- The school looks closely at how well teachers are doing. Leaders set targets for teachers that are securely linked to the school's priorities in raising pupils' attainment. The governing body is particularly impressed with how this is managed.
- The school recognises and appreciates the support it has received from the local authority. It has also drawn on strengths within its own leadership team to provide specific training to develop teaching. For example, teachers are now highly competent in planning the next steps in learning so that work is set at the right level for pupils.
- Subjects are taught through themes. Pupils say they enjoy this approach to their learning and especially value the visits they have made, for example to the Royal Observatory. Year 6 pupils have prepared gourmet meals with local chefs and served these to their families.
- The school provides many opportunities to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, children in the Nursery and Reception have visits from 'people who help us' and older pupils have visited Parliament and a Gurdwara. Pupils explore ideas through their high quality artwork.
- Partnerships with parents and carers are strong. They are involved in the life of the school and attend open days and 'stay and play' sessions. Parents help tend the allotment and the sensory garden.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body is highly effective. Governors are actively involved in supporting school improvement, checking the quality of teaching and setting targets for teachers. They know how the school links salary progression to the quality of teaching and check the effectiveness of these arrangements. They have an in-depth understanding of data about pupils' progress and ask challenging questions to hold leaders to account. Statutory duties are comprehensively addressed, as are safeguarding issues. Governors have made effective decisions on spending the pupil premium funding and have monitored the impact of this on pupils' achievements.

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	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. 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.

School details

Unique reference number	134011
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	402589

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	143
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patricia Wozencroft
Headteacher	Kathryn Frame
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2010
Telephone number	01634 338700
Fax number	01634 267295
Email address	office@riverside.medway.sch.uk

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