

Riverside Community Primary School Birstall

Wanlip Lane, Birstall, Leicester, Leicestershire LE4 4JU

Inspection dates

15–16 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since their appointments, the executive headteacher and the head of school have made many improvements to the school. Standards are rising and pupils now make good progress.
- The great majority of parents regard the school highly and recognise that the school is much improved recently.
- Leaders have a clear and accurate view of the school and know exactly where to direct school improvement activities. The school is well placed to continue to improve in the future.
- The governing body plays its part in ensuring that the school is focused on improving pupils' academic and personal development.
- Effective staff training and guidance provided by senior leaders have ensured that teaching and the use of assessment are now good.
- Children are helped to make a good start to their school life in the early years and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Disadvantaged pupils, pupils who speak English as an additional language and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. This is because their needs are accurately assessed and good-quality, extra support is provided.
- This year, pupils are benefiting from a much more extensive range of out-of-school clubs that enhance their experience.
- The curriculum provides particularly well for pupils who find learning difficult, but is less well modified to fully meet the needs of the most able. Even more could be expected of these pupils and more pupils could attain above the standards expected for their ages.
- The school knows pupils' pastoral and academic needs well. Pupils are kept safe and are supported and cared for well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Pupils show a good understanding of British values. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils work hard in class and enjoy learning. They are well mannered and polite.
- High expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct and a consistently implemented behaviour policy result in pupils behaving well and enjoying school.
- Progress in reading and mathematics is stronger than in writing.
- Pupils do not sufficiently develop their writing skills, particularly their extended writing skills, across a suitably broad range of subjects.
- Guidance for learning is not yet consistently effective in some classes, and thus pupils are unclear about where to focus their efforts to improve their work.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and pupils' learning by:
 - continuing the upward trend in pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly concentrating on improving the proportion of pupils who attain above the standards expected for their age
 - ensuring that pupils undertake more extended writing and apply and develop their writing skills in a wide range of subjects
 - ensuring greater modification of the curriculum and teaching to fully meet the needs of the most able pupils
 - ensuring that pupils in all classes are helped to see which particular aspects of their work need to be improved, as required by the school's assessment and marking policy.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leadership and management are much improved since the executive headteacher and the head of school took up their posts. These leaders work together well and form a very effective team. Their leadership of teaching and learning is a particular strength and has resulted in great improvements to the quality of teaching and learning this year.
- Many staff are now enjoying taking on important leadership roles and are helping make the school better. Staff know that they are receiving clear and effective guidance from senior leaders and enjoy being part of an improving school. All staff work as a team and are fully committed to improving pupils' academic and personal development.
- School leaders and staff have a clear knowledge of where further improvements are needed and the school is well placed to continue to improve in the future.
- Staff receive good-quality guidance about and support for their work. The school now has clear policies and procedures in key aspects, such as how pupils' behaviour is managed and how pupils should carry out calculations in mathematics. Staff are also helped to fully understand school policies and in the main implement them effectively. Staff value the guidance they receive and say that the school is now much better led and managed than previously.
- Twice a term, after each pupil is assessed by their teacher in reading, writing and mathematics, teachers meet with the head of school to discuss the progress of each pupil in the class. Any pupil who may be not doing as well as could be expected is discussed and additional support is allocated to those who are most in need. This programme is playing a key role in improving pupils' progress. The greatest effect of these meetings to date has been on the progress of those pupils who find learning difficult, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Parents are kept well informed by the school of their children's learning needs.
- Leaders regularly observe each teacher working, look at pupils' books and provide good-quality guidance for staff on how to improve their teaching. Teachers value leaders' feedback. However, leaders' reports on these activities focus insufficiently on the progress made by the different groups of learners in the class.
- Middle leaders are increasingly involved in improving the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. Their increasing involvement is well planned by the head of school and they are about to increase their role by undertaking observations of teaching in their areas of responsibility.
- The leader for the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities works closely alongside other leaders and teachers to check the progress these pupils are making. Leaders target additional funding for these pupils successfully and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities progress well. Several parents of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities told inspectors of their high regard for the way in which the school supports their children's needs.

- Because of historical underachievement in English and mathematics, leaders have appropriately focused the curriculum this year on improving pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics, especially reading. However, other subjects have not been ignored. For example, pupils enjoy and benefit from improved provision for games and physical education; they also enjoy French lessons. Information and communication technology has a secure place in the school's curriculum.
- On their return from their residential visit on the second day of the inspection, many Year 4 pupils were keen to share their excitement at the extensive programme of outdoor pursuits they had enjoyed.
- The school is fully committed to equal opportunities for all pupils and the curriculum is effectively modified to meet the range of learning needs of those who find learning more difficult. A lot of additional support is now provided through the school's wise use of the pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils. Disadvantaged pupils are now making much better progress this year than last.
- Sometimes the curriculum is varied to meet the needs of the most able pupils, but at other times, the most able could cope with more challenge to fully meet their needs, particularly in writing.
- Primary physical education and sport funding is used well to enhance the quality of the curriculum provided for physical education and games. Teachers have benefited from working alongside coaches and have improved their teaching skills. Many pupils are very keen on the basketball and football coaching they receive.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their good understanding of British values help prepare them well for life in modern Britain. In all classes, staff continually refer to the school's 'Five Riverside Rs' of responsibility, resilience, respect, reflection and resourcefulness, and this helps pupils develop a positive code of conduct and self-belief.
- Following last year's national assessment results, reading this year has a much stronger place in the school's curriculum. In Reception Year and key stage 1, good-quality phonics teaching is helping to raise standards in reading and spelling. Special programmes and support are provided for those who struggle with reading and they soon begin to develop their skills and confidence as readers. Teachers, teaching assistants, volunteers and many parents often listen to reading and pupils receive good-quality, guided reading sessions. Reading standards are rising well throughout the school.
- The school has effective links with other schools, mainly through its membership of the Lionheart Academies Trust and the Oadby Schools Learning Partnership. These help staff work with the staff of other schools to learn from one another. The trust provides good-quality support and challenge for the school and has been particularly effective in improving the quality of governance. Strong arrangements for the transition to secondary school are helping prepare Year 6 pupils to make a quick start to their secondary education.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a clear and detailed understanding of the great improvements that have taken place at the school over the last year. The chair of the governing body knows what remains to be done, but is rightly confident that the leadership team will continue and consolidate these improvements.
- Governor training is effective and governors know how to use national information to compare the performance of the school with that of other schools and to challenge school leaders to continually improve the school.
- Specialist governors for such key issues as safeguarding and each subject of the curriculum work closely with school leaders and support and challenge the school to serve pupils well.
- Governors understand how leaders use the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and have played their part in accelerating the learning of these pupils this year. They check that funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and other funding, such as physical education and sport funding for primary schools, are used to good effect.
- The governing body has good procedures to find out about the quality of teaching and ensures that decisions about pay are related to whether staff have met their targets. Since the arrival last year of the executive headteacher, performance management arrangements have been transformed and made effective in improving the quality of teaching.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have put in place effective policies and practices to ensure that all pupils are safe. Staff training is up to date and staff are kept fully informed. The chair of the governing body is the lead governor for safeguarding and fully recognises the priority that must be given to safeguarding throughout the school. A culture of safeguarding is effectively promoted by senior leaders and governors.
- Leaders ensure that there are clear systems, understood by all, for reporting concerns. The school has good links with other agencies when following up concerns.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and they act with respect for the safety of others. They understand about such themes as online safety and the different forms that bullying can take.
- Care for the welfare of pupils is strong throughout the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Because teaching and learning, including the use of assessment, are now much better managed, staff are continually guided on how they can improve their work. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good throughout the school.

- Staff form good relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour well. Staff ensure that pupils throughout the school adhere to the school's code of conduct. Pupils mostly concentrate in lessons and work hard. They enjoy their learning. There are few disruptions to learning, and the quality of relationships and pupils' positive attitudes to learning help them make good progress.
- The teaching of reading is much improved this year. In the early years and in key stage 1, good-quality, daily teaching of phonics has accelerated the progress pupils are making in reading and spelling. Reading has a much more prominent part in the school's curriculum this year and pupils are given regular guided reading lessons, which helps pupils of all abilities, including the most able, make good progress. A well-organised, home reading programme means that many parents are supported in making a positive contribution to their children's reading.
- Standards in mathematics are rising due to the more effective teaching of calculation, measure and problem solving. Pupils show good knowledge of number facts and many older children are quick with their multiplication tables.
- Punctuation, spelling and grammar are well taught and standards in writing are also rising. However, too few opportunities are provided for pupils to undertake extended writing or to develop their writing skills in other subjects, such as in history or geography.
- The use of assessment and the quality of teaching are much improved this year for pupils who find learning more difficult. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have good-quality, additional support, often by teaching assistants, in lessons and in small groups. The rates of progress of disadvantaged pupils have improved particularly well this year. Pupils who join the school speaking little English are well taught and supported and soon grow in confidence in their written and spoken English.
- Although the most able pupils are better taught and making improved progress this year, still more could be expected of these pupils in some classes, especially in their writing.
- In some classes, teachers are not fully clear with pupils about where they should focus their efforts to improve their work and this slows pupils' progress a little.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and they act with respect for the safety of others. They know that there is always an adult to turn to if they have any concerns. Because of constant reminders and the school's good-quality curriculum, pupils are well aware of the risks presented by the internet and they know how to keep themselves safe online.
- Pupils talk knowledgeably about aspects of British values. They learn to respect differences in other people's faiths and backgrounds through their lessons, assemblies,

and the school's values (especially the 'Five Riverside Rs'), and through visits and visitors to school.

- Apart from rare lapses in attention which are more common in Year 1 than in other year groups, pupils show good attitudes to learning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves around school in a mature and responsible fashion. They move in and around class without disruption and little learning time is wasted. In assemblies they listen attentively and participate well when asked. Pupils are polite and well mannered.
- Rates of attendance this year are around the national average and the school's procedures for assuring and rewarding good attendance have improved well this year. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is much improved this year. This is one of the factors that has led to these pupils making much better progress than previously. Leaders are aware that, although far fewer pupils are now persistently absent, rates of persistent absence are still too high. Some useful work is under way to make further reductions in persistent absence.
- All staff and pupils are fully aware of the school's behaviour policy. Pupils are proud to say that behaviour is much improved this year and that behaviour at their school is always good.
- Pupils show good understanding of the various kinds of bullying, such as racist or homophobic bullying, and say that bullying is very rare in the school. They say that adults manage any conflict that does arise both swiftly and effectively.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' work and the school's accurate assessment records show that throughout the school pupils are making much better progress than previously and standards are rising. Owing to good teaching, pupils are now making good progress from their various starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress in writing is not quite as strong as in reading and mathematics, and in writing, not enough pupils are working beyond standards expected for their age.
- Senior leaders recognised that national comparative information indicated that too many Riverside pupils were not making good enough progress in their learning last year. The particular weaknesses were in reading and the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders placed an urgent focus on bringing about necessary improvements, particularly in the teaching of reading and in the provision for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils throughout the school are making good progress in reading and disadvantaged pupils are doing much better. Those pupils who are not doing as well as could be expected are quickly identified and any additional support needed is provided. Consequently, pupils now progress well.

- In reading, an average proportion of Year 1 pupils are on track to reach the expected level in the national phonics screening check.
- Many pupils show skills in speaking and listening that are above standards expected for their age.
- Disadvantaged pupils are this year receiving far better additional support. Much-improved provision is resulting; for example, in Year 6 disadvantaged pupils are attaining in line not only with other pupils at the school, but in line with national expectations for all pupils.
- The school's records and pupils' work show that progress is similarly good in other subjects, such as French, history and geography.
- Children make good progress in all areas of learning in the early years and, by the end of Reception Year, more children are attaining a good level of development than is typical nationally.
- Compared with last year's national assessment results, considerably more Year 2 pupils are working at or beyond the expected standards and are on track to achieve greater depth in their learning by the end of the year. This is due to more demanding and effective teaching.
- This year, because pupils are consistently well taught throughout the school, pupils' work shows that a higher proportion of pupils are on track to meet or exceed standards expected for their age by the end of Year 6, particularly in reading and mathematics. In writing, some of the most able pupils are still not doing as well as could be expected.
- Those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities progress well. Their needs and any problems in their personal development or learning are quickly identified and supported well by teachers and teaching assistants.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics. They are making good progress in number and calculation skills. The school has adopted an effective and consistent approach to teaching calculation, and this has helped teachers improve the quality of their teaching. The school is currently introducing a consistent approach to help pupils solve mathematical problems more confidently.
- Pupils make consistently good progress in their grammar, punctuation and spelling. However, because the curriculum places too little emphasis on extended writing and because opportunities are missed to develop writing skills in other subjects, standards in writing, especially those of the most able pupils, are not as high as in reading and mathematics.
- Support for pupils learning to speak English as an additional language is good and these pupils quickly grow in confidence in their spoken and written English.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders and the early years team have an accurate view of the quality of provision. This year, the main focus for improvement has been on reading, writing and the outdoor provision. The positive effect of the changes made is clear to see.

- Teaching and the use of assessment are good. Staff consistently assess and monitor the learning needs of all children and adapt their teaching and interventions to meet their needs. This means that all groups of children, including the most able and more vulnerable groups, such as children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress in their learning. Additional funding for disadvantaged children is used wisely so that they make good progress.
- The vast majority of children make at least expected progress and many children are making better than expected progress. Children achieve well in the early years and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Children's behaviour and their personal development are good. They behave very well and are highly motivated and eager to join in activities. They love exploring the stimulating and vibrant learning environment, demonstrating a willingness to try things out and learn with and from others. They are taught how to resolve any conflicts that arise with minimal support, enabling them to quickly resume their learning and concentrate on their tasks.
- Parents recognise that standards of welfare, care and safety are high. Many parents regard the early years provision very highly, describing the staff as 'amazing'. The school works in close partnership with parents and many parents provide great support for their children's learning at school. Safeguarding arrangements fully meet requirements.
- Partnerships with parents are further enhanced by the provision of coffee mornings, workshops and family activities, such as the school's programme for outdoor learning.
- The early years curriculum is well planned and effectively modified to adapt it to children's interests. The curriculum is rich with exciting and useful play-based and teacher-led opportunities for learning. Many children find learning great fun, whether investigating the flow of water through pipes, experiencing the texture of 'Monster Slime' or creating environmental art.
- Staff skilfully build children's language through probing questions, the use of ambitious vocabulary and by modelling increasingly complex sentences. Good-quality daily teaching of phonics is helping all children, including those who find learning difficult, to make good progress in their reading and spelling.

School details

Unique reference number	140746
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10023065

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	455
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Christine Swan
Headteacher	Scott Fewster (Executive Headteacher) Chelsea Norman (Head of School)
Telephone number	0116 210 7373
Website	http://office@riversideacademy.org.uk
Email address	Office@riverside.leics.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than most primary schools. It converted to an academy in April 2014.
- The school meets the requirements on the publication of specified information on its website and complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- An average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and are from families who are believed to speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is around the national average for primary schools. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is also average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

- The great majority of school leaders, including the executive headteacher and the head of school, were appointed during the last year. Since September 2016, half the class teachers are new to the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. Some lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders. In addition, a number of shorter visits to see particular aspects of the school's work, such as the teaching of reading, were carried out.
- A range of other school activities, including at playtimes, lunchtimes and assembly, were observed.
- Inspectors scrutinised past and current work of pupils of different abilities in all year groups and heard some pupils reading.
- A meeting was held with four governors, including the chair of the governing body. A meeting was held with a representative of the academy trust.
- Inspectors analysed documents, including plans for school improvements and reports showing the school's view of its own performance and minutes of governing body meetings. The school's website was evaluated. Safeguarding documents, as well as policies and records relating to pupils' personal development, behaviour, welfare and safety and attendance, were inspected.
- Inspectors analysed information on the performance of the school in comparison with that of other schools nationally and the school's own records of pupils' progress.
- Inspectors took account of the 60 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Inspectors also took account of the results of the school's most recent survey held in March 2017 when 27 parents responded. Inspectors spoke with 59 parents of 70 pupils at the start of the school day. Pupils' views were gathered through pre-arranged meetings and informally around the school, and by analysing the results of an online survey provided during the inspection. The views of staff were gathered throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Roger Sadler, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Joanna Hall	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Moore	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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