



# Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd

1<sup>st</sup> August 2016

Ms Kim Williams  
Headteacher  
Riverside Primary School  
St Edmund's Way  
Rainham  
Kent ME8 8ET

**Assessment Date: 20<sup>th</sup> July 2016**

## Summary

Riverside Primary is a warm and welcoming school that lives out its motto (Happy, Helpful, Hard-working) highly successfully through its vision, practice and sense of community. From talking to pupils, staff, parents and governors, the strength of the Riverside attitude of working together for the benefit of all children is tangible throughout the school and a joy to see. This drive for continuous improvement is led by the outstanding, purposeful and caring leadership of the Headteacher. She is ably supported by the Deputy Headteacher, Inclusion Manager, staff and governors and is successfully leading the school forward with a passion and enthusiasm that has the full support of the whole school community.

The feel of the school is very positive, as evidenced by the learning environment and from what pupils, parents, staff and governors had to say about Riverside. Staff and parents were particularly keen to point out how pleased they were with the progress that the school has made since the Headteacher's appointment. The way ASD and VI provision is embraced within the school is to be commended. As the hall display proudly asserts, "We may be different fish but we swim in the same river." The school's vision statement includes the following: "Our vision is to enable the whole Riverside community to achieve, aspire and be the best they can." It is clear from the consistently enthusiastic response from pupils, staff, parents and governors and from the school's work and documentation, that Riverside is realising its vision and moving from strength to strength.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are confident, courteous and enthusiastic and are very positive about their school, particularly their teachers. Comments included, "Teachers are amazing", "Teachers are fabulous", "Teachers are cheerful", "Teachers are fun" and "Teachers are caring" and "We have the best teachers in the world." Pupils like the Listening Ear area and know that they can talk to someone there if they have any problems.

Relationships between pupils are very positive in classrooms, around the school and in the playground. They are sensitive to the needs of others and are very patient and thoughtful towards children with additional needs. In lessons, pupils are well focused.

and engaged with their learning. They show genuine respect for each other and a real enthusiasm for learning. For example, in Year 2, pupils completed star of the day certificates with much excitement, choosing children they thought were deserving and stating the reasons for their choice. In Year 5/6, pupils concentrated hard when completing magic squares and worked well in pairs in considering solutions. Pupils' relationships with staff are excellent, as evidenced by their interactions in lessons and around the school. There is a real sense of mutual respect and trust between them which is impressive.

Pupils make good progress overall. The school's rich and varied curriculum, together with good quality teaching and learning and effective support for all levels of need, contribute to the good progress that pupils make. Regular pupil progress meetings, accountability meetings and book scrutinies by the Headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team ensure that rates of progress are scrutinised and relevant action is taken to make sure that pupils are on the right track. Appropriate intervention programmes are informed by careful data analysis and their effectiveness is monitored carefully. Continuous assessment helps to ensure that pupils make good progress.

Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of all pupils. This, together with the attention to individual needs and talents, is rewarded by pupils who enjoy their learning and who love coming to school. This approach brings to life the school's vision, which includes: "We build strong partnerships with parents, carers and other professionals, delivering a fun, rich and varied curriculum. Through this we enable all pupils to succeed, engage in their learning, be independent and ready for the next step in their lives." It is this commitment and drive, led highly effectively by the Headteacher, that is helping pupils to make good progress. This collective effort, best summed up by a member of staff who said, "Everyone is singing from the same hymn sheet", is helping to raise standards very effectively.

Relationships between staff are excellent. Their comments included: "We support each other", "Everyone comes together as a community", "We feel like one big team", "The Headteacher is very much about working together", "Staff are so supportive", "Everybody helps", "There is no divide between teachers, teaching assistants and cleaners", "Someone will always step in to help", "You feel that you get on with everyone", "Everyone's listened to", "Everyone shares good practice in staff meetings", "SLT congratulate and thank people openly and this is shared", "A presence from the SLT makes us feel valued", "I can talk to the SLT about anything", "Support from the Inclusion Manager is amazing", "We are good at knowing our children and can make learning fun", "We are always here for the children", "We do know everyone so well", "All our ideas are valued, shared and listened to" and "It's the best I've ever felt working with the team." It is clear that teamwork is a real strength, as is the trust and respect staff have for each other, irrespective of their roles.

Parents are really positive about the school and feel very well supported by all staff. They find the school welcoming and friendly, appreciate its small size and are pleased with the progress that pupils make. Comments from parents included, "The staff are fantastic", "The school is like a community", "Staff see the children as family", "Staff go

above and beyond with all children", "Staff are approachable and understanding", "Children are treated as individuals", "The celebration of individual achievement is fantastic", "The school celebrates everyone's understanding", "My child has made fantastic progress", "Staff have helped me write letters", "Staff have been really helpful at meetings" and "Without coming here we don't know what we would have done."

The school benefits from a beautiful, spacious, well equipped and safe outside area. Play spaces are inviting and include a field, a trim trail, seats and benches, a garden area with raised beds, various playground markings for games, and two quiet areas (one covered). During lunchtime, pupils have access to a wide range of equipment, including skipping ropes, basketballs, footballs, tennis rackets, toy racing cars and giant dominoes. Pupils enjoy these facilities very much. The school is kept very clean and tidy, both inside and out, which makes an effective contribution to the good quality of the learning environment.

I am of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark. There are only minor areas requiring development and the school is aware of these. I recommend that the school be awarded the Mark and be reassessed in 3 years' time.

Assessor: Barry Gilhooly

**Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:**



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Joe McCann MBA NPQH

Director of Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd

## **Element 1 - The Inclusion Values and Practices of the School**

### **Strengths:-**

Riverside Primary is a warm and welcoming school that lives out its motto (Happy, Helpful, Hard-working) highly successfully through its vision, practice and sense of community. From talking to pupils, staff, parents and governors, the strength of the Riverside attitude of working together for the benefit of all children is tangible throughout the school and a joy to see. This drive for continuous improvement is led by the outstanding, purposeful and caring leadership of the Headteacher. She is ably supported by the Deputy Headteacher, Inclusion Manager, staff and governors and is successfully leading the school forward with a passion and enthusiasm that has the full support of the whole school community.

The feel of the school is very positive, as evidenced by the learning environment and from what pupils, parents, staff and governors had to say about Riverside. Staff and parents were particularly keen to point out how pleased they were with the progress that the school has made since the Headteacher's appointment.

The energy and enthusiasm from pupils for their learning, together with the very positive response from parents in relation to the direction in which the school is heading, have helped to make Riverside an inclusive, caring and ambitious school. Teamwork is a real strength, as is the trust and respect staff have for each other, irrespective of their roles.

The way ASD and VI provision is embraced within the school is to be commended. As the hall display proudly asserts, "We may be different fish but we swim in the same river." The school's vision statement includes the following: "Our vision is to enable the whole Riverside community to achieve, aspire and be the best they can." It is clear from the consistently enthusiastic response from pupils, staff, parents and governors and from the school's work and documentation, that Riverside is realising its vision and moving from strength to strength.

### **Areas for development:-**

- The school has already identified future plans in this self-evaluation report.
- The school may wish to consider further developing the way in which it shares its inclusive practice with other schools so that its expertise and good practice can be shared. even more effectively.

## Element 2 - The Learning Environment, Resources and ICT

### Strengths:-

The learning environment inside the school is of good quality. Space is used very well, with all areas and designated spaces used very effectively to support pupils' learning, particularly those with additional needs. Careful attention has been paid to promote learning opportunities for pupils through the school environment, particularly through displays. The corridors are painted in two contrasting colours, with a handrail running the full length and rumble pads to indicate the presence of staircases and exits for VI pupils.

The school is well resourced and provision for ICT is good - computers, laptops, learnpads, digital and interactive whiteboards are used effectively to support pupils' learning across the curriculum. The school building is adapted to be fully inclusive. All classes have individual workstations and other resources tailored to pupils' additional needs. There is an extensive range of resources to support VI learners including Braille machines and books, and tactile resources. laptops and learnpads are widely used and are also easily adjustable for accessibility. The well equipped Research Zone has a large-screen and enlarged keyboard for VI pupils. Classes with VI pupils have individual large screens as well as smaller handheld magnifiers. There is an attractive Rainbow Room which is the base for ASD learners. Pupils with ASD also have access to a wide range of sensory equipment such as ear defenders, tangle toys and therapy putty.

Attractive and colourful displays, for example, on Brilliant Britain, Riverside Rangers, The Red Beast, the Hungary Caterpillar (in German), China, Egypt, sunflowers, time, our rules, Riverside Attitude acrostic, wonderful weather and the nature garden promote learning and the school's ethos very effectively in classrooms and around the school. The displays clearly demonstrate how much pupils' learning is valued and also how their achievements are celebrated. They are complemented by good quality photographs of pupils illustrating the school's motto which are displayed around the school. Displays of certificates and trophies in the entrance lobby celebrate pupils' efforts and again reinforce the idea that all their achievements are valued by the school.

The school benefits from a beautiful, spacious, well equipped and safe outside area. Play spaces are inviting and include a field, a trim trail, seats and benches, a garden area with raised beds, various playground markings for games, and two quiet areas (one covered). During lunchtime, pupils have access to a wide range of equipment, including skipping ropes, basketballs, footballs, tennis rackets, toy racing cars and giant dominoes. Pupils enjoy these facilities very much. The school is kept very clean and tidy, both inside and out, which makes an effective contribution to the good quality of the learning environment.

### Areas for development:-

- The school has already identified future plans in this self-evaluation report.
- The school may wish to consider extending its use of photographs to include large, high quality photographs of pupils demonstrating the school's motto. (Currently, the photographs on display are small.)

## Element 3 - Learning Attitudes, Values and Personal Development

### Strengths:-

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are confident, courteous and enthusiastic and are very positive about their school, particularly their teachers. Comments included, "Teachers are amazing", "Teachers are fabulous", "Teachers are cheerful", "Teachers are fun" and "Teachers are caring" and "We have the best teachers in the world." Pupils like the Listening Ear area and know that they can talk to someone there if they have any problems.

Relationships between pupils are very positive in classrooms, around the school and in the playground. They are sensitive to the needs of others and are very patient and thoughtful towards children with additional needs. In lessons, pupils are well focused and engaged with their learning. They show genuine respect for each other and a real enthusiasm for learning. For example, in Year 2, pupils completed "star of the day" certificates with much excitement, choosing children they thought were deserving and stating the reasons for their choice. In Year 5/6, pupils concentrated hard when completing magic squares and worked well in pairs to considering solutions. Pupils' relationships with staff are excellent, as evidenced by their interactions in lessons and around the school. There is a real sense of mutual respect and trust between them which is impressive.

Pupils are given some useful opportunities to take responsibility, for example, as members of the School Council, as members of the Riverside Rangers, helping in assemblies, taking visitors around the school and helping in the hall during lunchtime. What is particularly impressive is the responsibility pupils take for each other, which is evident across the school. An impressive variety of school clubs, including music, cooking, athletics, fun/fit & healthy, trumpet, RM Easimaths, knitting, art, korfbal, BART, discussion group, kwik cricket, change for life, creepy claws, gardening and MEND promote pupils' learning very effectively.

### Areas for development:-

- The school has already identified future plans in this self-evaluation report and in the school development plan.
- The school may also wish to consider becoming a Rights Respecting School as this would complement its vision and values very well.

## Element 4 - Learner Progress and the Impact on Learning

### Strengths:-

Pupils make good progress overall. The school's rich and varied curriculum, together with good quality teaching and learning and effective support for all levels of need, contribute to the good progress that pupils make. Regular pupil progress meetings, accountability meetings and book scrutinies by the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team ensure that rates of progress are scrutinised and relevant action is taken to make sure that pupils are on the right track. Appropriate intervention programmes are informed by careful data analysis and their effectiveness is monitored carefully. Continuous assessment helps to ensure that pupils make good progress.

Teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils extremely well, as a result of which very good attention is paid to individual needs, whether this is through 1:1 or small group intervention. The focus on individual needs is impressive and the school goes the extra mile to ensure that all pupils make at least good progress with their learning from their starting points.

Staff have high expectations of all pupils. This, together with the attention to individual needs and talents, is rewarded by pupils who enjoy their learning and who love coming to school. This approach brings to life the school's vision, which includes: "We build strong partnerships with parents, carers and other professionals, delivering a fun, rich and varied curriculum. Through this we enable all pupils to succeed, engage in their learning, be independent and ready for the next step in their lives." It is this commitment and drive, led highly effectively by the headteacher, that is helping pupils to make good progress. This collective effort, best summed up by a member of staff who said, "Everyone is singing from the same hymn sheet", is helping to raise standards very effectively.

Pupils' achievements are celebrated in many ways, for example, through celebration and achievement assemblies, headteacher awards, individual points/stickers, collective house points, maths passports, work in newsletters, postcards home, the captain's table, raffle tickets and attendance awards. Displays of pupils' work in classrooms and around the school, and displays of certificates, trophies and other awards the school has received, also help celebrate achievement successfully. All these promote pupils' progress very effectively throughout the school.

### Areas for development:-

- The school has already identified future plans in this self-evaluation report and in the school development plan.
- The school may also wish to consider how further curriculum innovation could help to improve rates of pupil progress even more, for example, through the introduction of Philosophy for Children (P4C).



## Element 5 - Learning and Teaching (Monitoring)

### Strengths:-

Teaching is monitored regularly by the senior leadership team and middle leaders. In addition, governors, the LA and the headteacher from a NLE school are involved in the process. This monitoring, which includes data analysis, book scrutinies, learning walks and formal observations, indicates that the quality of teaching is good overall but with some which is outstanding. Ensuring the consistency of judgements on the quality of teaching is supported by peer observations and by moderation sessions with teachers from other schools in the consortium. There are also good opportunities for Riverside teachers to observe teachers in outstanding schools. As a result, the drive towards excellence is being successfully promoted.

Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of all pupils and are rightly very proud of how accepting they are of each other. Staff use consistent visual cues to remind children of these expectations. Pupils are well focused in lessons and their behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent. As a result, Riverside's values, ethos and vision are well promoted in lessons and by displays throughout the school. Pupils are extremely positive about the staff and say that they have "the best teachers in the world."

Relationships between staff are excellent. Their comments included: "We support each other", "Everyone comes together as a community", "We feel like one big team", "The headteacher is very much about working together", "Staff are so supportive", "Everybody helps", "There is no divide between teachers, teaching assistants and cleaners", "Someone will always step in to help", "You feel that you get on with everyone", "Everyone's listened to", "Everyone shares good practice in staff meetings", "SLT congratulate and thank people openly and this is shared", "A presence from the SLT makes us feel valued", "I can talk to the SLT about anything", "Support from the Inclusion Manager is amazing", "We are good at knowing our children and can make learning fun", "We are always here for the children", "We do know everyone so well", "All our ideas are valued, shared and listened to" and "It's the best I've ever felt working with the team." It is clear that teamwork is a real strength, as is the trust and respect staff have for each other, irrespective of their roles.

Pupils work successfully in a number of different ways, for example, in small groups, with talk partners and independently. Some pupils have their own tailored cues and other resources are used where necessary, for example, Signalong. Such flexibility helps pupils make good progress and gives them confidence with their learning. Specific programs are used to support pupils with additional needs, for example, RM Easimaths and Word/Numbershark. Learnpads with apps to support learning are used effectively and there are helpful keyboarding lessons to support children who find writing difficult.

Educational visits, for example, to Rochester Cathedral, St Margaret's Church, Chatham Synagogue, Riverside Country Park, Wingham Wildlife Park, Rochester Castle and Legoland, have helped to broaden and stimulate the curriculum. Visitors to the school, including a decathlete, Irish dancers, the didgeridoo man, local librarians, a disabled



speaker, a jobs fair, caring hands in the community, young eco engineers, creepy claws and a disability sports coach, have helped to enhance pupils' learning effectively.

### Areas for development:-

- The school has already identified future plans in this self-evaluation report and in the school development plan.
- The school may also wish to consider filming examples of the support it gives to pupils with ASD so that this expertise can be shared more widely.

## Element 6 - Parents, Carers and Guardians

### Strengths:-

Parents are really positive about the school and feel very well supported by all staff. They find the school welcoming and friendly, appreciate its small size and are pleased with the progress that pupils make. Comments from parents included, "The staff are fantastic", "The school is like a community", "Staff see the children as family", "Staff go above and beyond with all children", "Staff are approachable and understanding", "Children are treated as individuals", "The celebration of individual achievement is fantastic", "The school celebrates everyone's understanding", "My child has made fantastic progress", "Staff have helped me write letters", "Staff have been really helpful at meetings" and "Without coming here we don't know what we would have done."

Parents believe that the school's communication with them is excellent. The headteacher greets parents at the gate every day and staff are available to see parents in the morning or after school. Parents really appreciate the fact that the school will always look into it if their child has a problem and will take on board what they say. They receive informative newsletters (hard copies and via email) and also have home/school contact books. Telephone calls and emails also keep parents well informed, as do coffee mornings. There is also a very user-friendly website. Above all, parents value the staff's approachability and the community feel the school has due to its small size.

Parents feel involved with pupils' learning and with the life of the school. For example, they are invited to attend parents' evenings, achievement and class assemblies, exhibitions of pupils' work, coffee mornings, school plays and other events, SEN meetings, annual reviews, workshops (for example, on phonics, maths, the curriculum and helping children at home), and to help with reading. In addition, they are invited to comment on various issues through surveys. The Friends of Riverside Primary School (FoRPS), which has recently been formed, held a very successful Summer Fair.

### Areas for development:-

- The school has already identified future plans in this self-evaluation report and in the school development plan.

## **Element 7 - Governing Body and Management**

### **Strengths:-**

Governors are actively involved in the school and know it well. They are proud of many things about the school, for example: the reflective school culture; the journey the school and children have made; no child is disabled by the environment; every child is included; there is a consistent approach in the school; how they can really see how the children have changed and developed; how the school looks at every child and all their needs; how the school celebrates gifted and talented pupils; that inclusion is part an intrinsic interweave and not an add on; that communication is a strength; the good relationships and embracing ethos; the high expectations the school has of all the children; that the school uses the right style of teaching to meet the children's needs; and the fact that the school is not insular and learns from other schools. Governors are also very proud of the staff. Their comments included: "There is a genuine sense that staff care", "Staff are welcoming, warm and caring", "Staff care for the children" and "Staff use a consistent approach."

Governors are well informed about the school's work through learning walks, book looks, attendance at school events, meetings with key staff, governing body meetings and from regular reports they receive from the Headteacher and Inclusion Manager. As a result, governors have a good understanding of the school's work, outcomes, challenges and priorities. They hold the school to account for the progress pupils make by asking the right questions and are fully signed up to the school's motto, vision and ethos. For example, they said, "When children leave we don't stop caring about them", thus clearly showing how governors endorse and promote the school's sense of community highly successfully.

The school works in a very successful partnership with an outstanding NLE school. The headteacher from the NLE school supports Riverside through working with Riverside's headteacher on all aspects of the school's work. Her valuable termly visits, together with the opportunity for staff to visit the NLE school, are helping Riverside to move forward very effectively.

### **Areas for development:-**

- The school has already identified future plans in this self-evaluation report and in the school development plan.
- The governing body may wish to consider working towards achieving the Governors Quality Mark in order to further improve their effectiveness.

## **Element 8 - The School in the Community**

### **Strengths:-**

Riverside has useful links with local schools in its consortium and uses these to share good practice and for mutual support, for example, with assessment moderation. There is also a particularly valuable link with an outstanding NLE school. The Riverside Rangers have recently been formed, which will enable pupils to lead projects in the community.

The school's attached Children's Centre is a valuable community resource which supports local families from the ante-natal stage onwards. The school also provides useful work experience opportunities for local people and from local secondary school and colleges. The local community is also supported through Job Fairs that are held in the school.

The school makes good use of local places of interest, for example, places of worship, Riverside Country Park, Rochester Castle and Rochester Cathedral. The kitchen classroom is opened as a community cafe and is used (by KCC) to deliver cookery courses. The Friends of Riverside Primary School invite the local community into the school, for example, during the summer fair.

Through its considerable expertise with SEN, particularly ASD, Riverside has successfully supported other schools, for example, by the Inclusion Manager helping local SENCOs with paperwork and strategies for managing SEN in their settings. The school has successfully fundraised for a number of charities, including Jeans for Genes, Guide Dogs for the Blind, Children in Need and Comic Relief. This has helped pupils gain a better understanding of the challenges faced by the wider community.

### **Areas for development:-**

- The school has already identified future plans in this self-evaluation report.