

Inspection of a school judged Good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Riverside Primary School

St Edmunds Way, Rainham, Gillingham, Kent ME8 8ET

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 June 2025

Outcome

Riverside Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Helen Robson. This school is part of the Rainham Mark Education Trust (RMET), which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the interim chief executive officer (CEO), Dr Kerry Jordan-Daus, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Matty Peacock.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where pupils are understood, included and celebrated. Everyone is welcome. Pupils are delighted by each other's successes. They know that achievement and overcoming challenges comes in many different forms. They demonstrate care and compassion to each other in a wide range of ways, such as getting cutlery for each other at lunchtime or offering each other words of encouragement. This makes pupils feel happy.

Expectations of achievement are high, and pupils strive to meet these. Classrooms are settled and focused. Pupils enjoy sharing their ideas and working together. They achieve well, particularly in English and mathematics. Pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their education.

Pupils know that behaving well is important. They are polite and friendly. Pupils who struggle to manage their behaviour or emotions from time-to-time benefit from the support they are given from highly skilled staff. This contributes towards making the school a safe and settled place for pupils.

Pupils relish taking on roles of responsibility around the school, such as being part of pupil councils. Pupil play leaders work alongside staff at lunchtimes. They help ensure that the myriad of exciting activities offered outside are enjoyed by all.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has ensured that a broad and balanced curriculum is in place. This sets out the key knowledge that pupils need to learn from the early years to Year 6. Pupils who have special educational needs and or disabilities (SEND) have their needs carefully identified. Learning is adapted very well for pupils with SEND. When required, the school has well-matched individual learning plans in place. Pupils who are part of the specially resourced provisions for pupils with SEND benefit from well-considered approaches to address their individual learning needs. As a result, pupils with SEND progress well through the curriculum alongside their peers.

Teachers have a strong subject knowledge. This helps them to deliver the curriculum well. Teachers regularly check that pupils are learning the key knowledge that they need in English and mathematics. This helps them to build on what pupils know and remember. They quickly identify and address misconceptions. Staff also make regular checks on pupils' learning in the wider curriculum. However, at times, these checks do not identify whether pupils' earlier learning is fully secure. Pupils understanding and recall of their learning is more variable in these subjects.

The development of language and early reading skills is a priority. Key vocabulary is identified and taught from the Nursery Year onwards. Adults in the early years model and encourage children to use words and join them into phrases and sentences. Opportunities to explore letters and sounds are woven throughout children's learning experiences. For example, children in the Nursery Year practise the 'sound of the day' as they line up to go outside or are encouraged to write their name on a waiting list to use the bikes.

In 2024, the proportion of Year 1 pupils meeting the expected standard in phonics was significantly lower than the national average. However, the school identified the reasons for this, and effective changes have been made. Staff have been trained to deliver the phonics programme consistently well and with fidelity. Books have been well matched to the sounds pupils are learning. This helps pupils to be successful in applying their growing knowledge. Regular checks quickly identify any pupils who start to fall behind. The school ensures that any pupils who need to catch up are given the help they need. These pupils make strong progress from their starting points.

Pupils like school and attend regularly. The school develops strong partnerships with parents and carers to help understand and address any barriers to regular attendance.

Pupils mostly behave well. The school monitors behaviour carefully and responds quickly to any identified issues. Pupils know if they have any problems or worries they can tell staff or use the 'worry boxes'. They are confident that staff help them to resolve any concerns.

Pupils benefit from an exceptionally wide personal development programme. Pupils learn to stay safe online, in school and in their locality. They explore what it means to be healthy through growing food, cooking and creating menus. Pupils are encouraged to think about life beyond school during careers fairs and by exploring finance. The school's

wide offer reflects a focus on aspiration. Pupils visit theatres and the local cathedral. They are also involved in a wide range of performances. Strong community links enable pupils to help at the local supermarket and visit care homes as part of the school Riverside Rangers programme. They learn about collaboration and teamwork by building go-karts and bridges in clubs or as part of special days.

Staff enjoy working at the school, which they say is, 'like a family'. They feel listened to. They appreciate that their workload is considered when any changes are made. The school, academy committee and trust work in close and effective partnership for the good of the pupils. There is a commitment to ensuring that pupils achieve and thrive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Checks on what pupils know and remember are not fully developed in all subjects. This sometimes makes it more difficult for teachers to build securely on pupils' retained knowledge or adapt the curriculum to identify and address gaps in pupils' learning. The school should ensure that teachers can accurately establish and build on what pupils know in subjects beyond English and mathematics so that pupils can make strong progress across the whole curriculum.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness November 2019.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	144135
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10379910
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	453
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Matty Peacock
CEO of the trust	Dr Kerry Jordan-Daus
Headteacher	Helen Robson
Website	www.riverside.medway.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 November 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Rainham Mark Education Trust (RMET).
- The school has increased pupil numbers since the previous inspection. This is the first year in which there are two classes in each year group from the Reception Year to Year 6.
- There is a new headteacher in post since the previous inspection.
- The school currently uses one registered alternative provider.
- The school offers two specially resourced provisions for up to 15 pupils who are visually impaired and/or have autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). Currently, this is providing an education for 18 pupils.
- There is a nursery provision for three-year-old children at the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with a range of school staff and held regular update meetings with leaders. The inspector also met with representatives of the trust, including the CEO, and held a separate meeting with the academy committee.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector reviewed responses to Ofsted's parent, pupil and staff surveys.
- The inspector talked to staff to gather their views about the school, including their workload and well-being. The inspector met with a group of pupils, as well as speaking to pupils during lessons and at lunchtime.

Inspection team

Deborah Perkins, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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