

Riverside Primary Academy

Colliery Road, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE11 9DX

Inspection dates

13–14 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Children get an excellent start to their time in the school. A caring, supportive and inspirational team in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that they are well prepared for learning from the minute they set foot in the school.
- By the time pupils leave the school in Year 6 standards are well above average as the school is absolutely committed to ensuring pupils make accelerated progress across the school.
- Teaching is outstanding and never less than good. Teachers provide creative activities that enable pupils to learn at a fast pace. Teachers' high-quality questioning skills and the very good use of talk partners in lessons enable pupils to clearly understand what they are learning about.
- Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and progress. They are highly skilled and work flexibly with a range of pupils, including those who are disabled or have a special educational need, to ensure they achieve as well as everyone else.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is paramount to the school's calm, well-ordered, caring atmosphere and pervades the life of the school. Pupils behave exceptionally well both in and out of lessons. They are very knowledgeable about keeping safe and say that they love coming to the school to learn.
- The school's curriculum provides pupils with rich and memorable experiences that inspire them to learn and meets their needs exceptionally well.
- The headteacher's dynamic and motivational leadership, supported by a committed staff and a strong deputy headteacher, has been instrumental in driving up standards.
- Rigorous checking of pupils' progress and improvements in teaching, brought about by support and challenge to improve, have had a very positive effect on pupils' achievements.
- Governors are extremely ambitious for the school and its pupils. They know the school extremely well and provide conscientious support and challenge.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons or parts of lessons, of which four were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Inspectors observed groups of pupils working with teaching assistants and specifically listened to Year 1 and 2 pupils read, and other year groups in lessons.
- Inspectors talked to a range of pupils, including the school council, about their work and play in the school.
- Meetings were held with eight governors as well as teaching staff, including senior and subject leaders.
- Inspectors took account of 12 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) when planning the inspection and considered staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors observed the overall work of the school and looked at a number of documents including the school’s current data about pupils’ progress. They also looked at documents relating to safeguarding, governance, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors looked at a range of other evidence including displays, the website and work representing the school’s wider achievements beyond the classroom.

Inspection team

David Shearsmith, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jim Hall

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller in size than an average-sized primary school.
- A well-above-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium which is additional government funding for those pupils eligible for free school meals, children in the care of the local authority and children of service families.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are supported at school action. An average proportion of pupils are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school has achieved the National Healthy School, Inclusion Standard and Eco awards.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is taught in a separate Nursery and Reception class.
- The school has a breakfast club each morning managed by the governing body.
- Riverside Primary Academy converted to become an academy on 1 July 2012. When its predecessor school, Dunston Riverside Community Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good with outstanding features overall.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the standards of writing in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 by:
 - improving pupils' handwriting skills so they can write more fluently
 - ensuring that writing activities are more challenging and the marking of pupils' work is more effective, to enable them to reach higher levels in their writing
 - making sure that there are more opportunities for children to experience higher-level mark making and writing activities through play.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children enter the Nursery with skills that are well below what is typical for their age. Many have weaknesses in their literacy skills. Their knowledge and understanding of the world is often lacking, as are their personal skills. They settle into school extremely well as they are rapidly prepared for learning in a stimulating and caring Nursery. Consequently, they make outstanding progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage. Their skills in writing and mark making are not as high as their skills in other areas due to insufficient opportunities to explore these through play.
- Pupils continue to make outstanding progress across Key Stage 1 and reach standards that are broadly average by the time they leave Year 2. Standards in writing are relatively weaker as pupils' handwriting skills are not fluent enough and writing activities are not always sufficiently challenging to take them to higher levels.
- As pupils move through Key Stage 2 they make outstanding progress to reach standards that are well above average overall. Any deficiencies in their skills are quickly addressed, with no one falling behind.
- The school has been very successful in raising standards in reading through a systematic approach to teaching the sounds that letters make (phonics). In the Year 1 national phonics test pupils scored above the national average. Consequently, by the end of Year 2 standards are broadly average. Reading is exceptionally well promoted across the school. This ensures pupils continue to make outstanding progress. They reach standards that are well above the national average by the end of Year 6.
- Mathematics is a particular strength of the school and progress across the school in this area is outstanding. Pupils leave Year 2 with standards that are in line with what one would expect nationally. By the end of Year 6 pupils leave with standards that are significantly above average.
- Pupils entitled to free school meals and those entitled to the pupil premium also make outstanding progress. They reach standards that are above the national average overall. Standards are well above average compared with similar groups of pupils nationally. The school is very effective in this area.
- Teaching assistants and teachers who support those who are disabled or have special educational needs make a considerable difference to the pupils' skills. Outstanding progress is ensured through high-quality teaching in small groups both in and out of class.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teaching is mainly outstanding as teachers plan very well and make sure that they meet pupils' needs. Pupils are very productive in lessons because teachers use time effectively to drive faster progress. Consequently, pupils learn quickly. Teaching assistants are highly skilled and make a strong contribution to all lessons, including small-group teaching, across the school.
- Small-group teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is highly effective. Teachers promote children's speaking and listening skills exceptionally well. For example, at the beginning of one day in the Nursery a teaching assistant worked very successfully with some children in her role as a customer at the hairdressers. Her questioning and responses to children accelerated their progress and developed their understanding. As a result, they made outstanding progress.
- Teachers also provide memorable experiences for pupils. During an English lesson in Year 6 the teacher created one such experience related to the Second World War. She shared artefacts with pupils and used sound effects to create a wartime atmosphere. This thoroughly engaged pupils and inspired them to write. They wrote with enthusiasm and made outstanding progress due to the very-well-structured lesson that motivated them to do their best.
- The teaching of reading is outstanding. The school's thorough approach to the teaching of phonics has been instrumental in ensuring pupils are keen to read. They are given a wide range

of reading experiences across the school, including a well-stocked library.

- The teaching of mathematics is outstanding. Teachers have excellent knowledge of all the subjects they teach. They make sure, during lessons, that pupils know how to be successful. In a Year 1 lesson the teacher very skilfully enabled pupils to understand coordinates through well-structured activities. Everyone's needs were met. Pupils knew the key points of how to be successful using coordinates in order to place objects on a map. Consequently, they made outstanding progress.
- Teachers are very diligent when marking pupils' work. In Key Stage 2 they are particularly thorough at ensuring pupils are given helpful guidance in order to get to higher levels in their writing. In Key Stage 1 this is not always effective. As a result, pupils are not sufficiently challenged because points for improvement do not take them to the next level in their writing.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils really enjoy coming to school and behave extremely well both in and out of lessons. Teachers are highly effective at engaging pupils in lessons. Consequently, they get excited about their learning, listen carefully and learn extremely well. Pupils are well-mannered, courteous and are proud of their school
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences play a significant role in ensuring pupils relate well to each other. The experiences underpin each pupil's personal development, resulting in cooperation during work and play. In the assemblies during the inspection the headteacher reinforced the importance of respecting each other. The headteacher's thought-provoking approach and use of candles and music made these both memorable experiences, thus promoting pupils' spiritual development extremely well.
- Pupils have a thorough understanding of how to keep safe. They are particularly knowledgeable about e-safety due to the very effective work done by the school to ensure pupils are safe when using the internet.
- The school is very effective at ensuring pupils know about bullying and how to deal with bullying if it happens. Pupils were keen to tell the inspectors that they get on well with each other and that bullying is very rare in the school. If it did happen, they said they were confident that members of staff would help them sort it out.
- Attendance is average because the school is extremely diligent at making sure pupils are punctual and attend well. The early-morning breakfast club provides an excellent start to the day for a number of pupils.
- Pupils readily take on responsibility around the school. They enjoy being part of the school council and making decisions to improve the school. 'Playground Buddies' also support pupils at playtimes by helping their peers with friendships and playing games.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher's high expectations and skilful approach to improving the school are making a difference to pupils' achievement. A very supportive deputy headteacher and a highly skilful staff contribute to this drive for improvement exceptionally well.
- Very rigorous checking of pupils' progress and extensive observations of the quality of teaching ensure that teaching continues to improve. Carefully chosen training and support to improve the quality of teaching have taken this to a higher level. Increases in salary are clearly linked to the standard of teaching and pupils' progress. This has had a very positive effect on the school's overall improvement.
- The school's curriculum is outstanding and meets pupils' needs exceptionally well. It motivates and inspires them so that pupils make outstanding progress in all aspects of their learning. Pupils enjoy a range of high-quality experiences that enriches their understanding of the world around them and expands their horizons. Excellent links between different subjects help pupils to develop their mathematical and English skills and enable them to apply them to real-life

situations.

- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and plays an important role in the life of this school. Pupils' personal development is strong. They are encouraged to support each other in this warm and friendly family school.
- A wide range of opportunities and activities involve parents in the life of the school. A number of parents support the school by working in classrooms as volunteers and this further enriches pupils' experiences.
- Partnerships are outstanding as the school has close associations with other schools in the locality. Firm links with a range of agencies also support the needs of pupils.
- The school has a strong commitment to ensuring that all pupils have equality of opportunity. The inclusion leader checks that pupils who are disabled or have a special educational need are well supported. She also keeps a careful record of their progress to make sure they do as well as everyone else.
- Pupils' welfare and safety is at the heart of the school's work and safeguarding meets requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are exceptionally knowledgeable about the work of the school. They have a wide range of skills that they use effectively to support and challenge the school. Regular checks on teaching and the work in pupils' books have supported the school's relentless drive for improvement. Governors are well trained and have a very good knowledge of the school's data. They recognise the school's strengths and areas for development. The governing body manages its finances exceptionally well and has ensured that pupil premium funding has been used wisely to improve pupils' progress. Governors also reward staff appropriately, based on their overall performance and responsibilities.

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	138285
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	407075

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

Type of school	Primary Academy Converter
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	William Pickard
Headteacher	Julie Goodfellow
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0191 4601918
Fax number	0191 4610686
Email address	info@riversideprimaryacademy.org.uk

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