

Inspection of Riverside Bridge School

Renwick Road, Barking IG11 0FU

Inspection dates: 25–26 February 2020

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at Riverside Bridge School. They learn new skills and grow in confidence and independence. They learn about themselves and others. Pupils say that when they get up in the morning, they look forward to coming to school. They come to school regularly and on time. Pupils told us that they 'love it here'. They feel happy and safe.

This is a friendly, calm and welcoming place. Staff are kind, gentle and respectful. They help pupils if they are worried or upset. One pupil told us, 'If people say or do bad things, teachers stop it.' Pupils told inspectors that there is no bullying.

Staff encourage pupils to keep going and stretch themselves if they can. Staff also help pupils to be calm when they are having a difficult time. They make playtimes fun. Pupils thoroughly enjoy many activities, including riding bikes and scooters and blowing bubbles. Pupils enjoy school, behave well and work hard.

Pupils like learning outside the classroom in the local area and further afield. During the inspection, two classes enjoyed a visit to the London Eye. Older pupils benefit from work experiences such as administration in a local supermarket. All these opportunities support pupils to develop their skills and gain resilience and maturity.

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

Leaders have addressed the weaknesses found at the time of the last inspection. They rightly prioritised safeguarding and behaviour. They are completely focused on improving the quality of what pupils learn so that pupils know and understand more. They are ambitious for all pupils to learn, irrespective of their needs.

Teachers are enthused by a recently introduced approach to the curriculum. They plan the teaching of national curriculum subjects into four learning areas and link these to pupils' targets. Typically, teachers plan and teach lessons that pupils fully take part in and enjoy. One class thoroughly enjoyed working out which outdoor clothes to choose for warm or cold weather.

Teachers plan activities that help pupils to understand their daily lives. Pupils visit their local shops. They use cash to pay for purchases and are encouraged to think about what they need and how much it will be. Pupils appreciate the opportunities for work experience, which encourage their interest in future jobs, for example as car valets, DJs or in administration.

Teachers plan activities for individual pupils that encourage them to think about what they have learned previously. Teachers make careful observations and records of pupils' work towards their targets. However, leaders and teachers are not clear enough about what they expect pupils to know and be able to do at the end of each series of lessons.

Leaders and teachers help pupils to communicate well. Pupils learn to use objects, pictures and their voices to express themselves. Staff prioritise improving pupils' reading skills, including phonics when this is appropriate. Pupils enjoy stories because teachers read to them every day. Younger pupils thoroughly enjoyed hearing well-known stories such as 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. Teachers bring stories to life using puppets and other objects. Pupils happily read to us. They chose the books and turned the pages, pointing to characters, colours and symbols.

Subject leaders are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. Their leadership is helping to make a difference to pupils' education and well-being. Staff feel able to do their jobs because of the positive culture and regular training.

Leaders expect pupils to behave calmly. Staff are calm and skilled when managing situations where pupils' behaviour is challenging. However, they do not always record incidents as expected by leaders. This restricts the opportunities for staff to learn from incidents and adapt practice if necessary. The number of incidents has reduced over time. No pupil has been excluded.

Staff understand the difficulties many parents and carers and their children face. They work together with parents, sometimes involving other agencies. The view of one parent, 'We were lost until Riverside came into our lives', is typical of many.

Governors and trustees, in partnership with the local authority, keep a close eye on the school. They work together to support and challenge leaders to make the school more successful.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders take safeguarding very seriously. They provide regular training on safeguarding for all staff. This keeps staff skills and knowledge sharp and relevant. They work closely with outside agencies when they need to.

Staff are clear about their responsibilities. They understand the risks and difficulties which pupils sometimes face in their daily lives. They use opportunities in lessons and when out and about on visits to help pupils learn to keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders are not always clear about what they want pupils to know and understand by the end of each series of lessons and within each pathway. They have not given enough time to considering what works well and what needs to change in their new curriculum arrangements. Leaders must evaluate the new

arrangements thoroughly to support and strengthen future planning and assessment. They must also make sure that all staff are trained in the new arrangements. It is clear from the actions that leaders have already taken that they are in the process of taking these steps. For this reason, the transition arrangement has been applied in this case.

- Systems for managing behaviour are effective but they are not used consistently to record incidents. This means that some opportunities for learning from incidents are missed. Leaders must insist that all staff record incidents in a timely manner and to the standard they expect.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

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

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.

School details

Unique reference number	142134
Local authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	10121522
Type of school	All-through special
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	135
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sid Mubashar
Headteacher	Kim Cerri
Website	www.riversidecampus.com
Date of previous inspection	10 July 2018

Information about this school

- Riverside Bridge School is an academy special school and is part of the Partnership Learning Trust. The school provides education for pupils aged from four to 16. This academic year, there are no Reception-aged pupils because the local authority sought additional places in Year 7.
- Pupils attending this school have a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities, mostly linked to autism spectrum disorder.
- The school shares a building with Riverside Primary School and Riverside Secondary School. A small number of pupils attend classes at these mainstream schools as part of their planned provision. There are no pupils attending off-site or alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- We met with school leaders, the chair of the governing body and the trust's chief executive officer. We met with teachers, co-educators and administrative and welfare staff. We considered the findings from the staff survey. We met with pupils to find out what it is like to be at this school. We spoke to parents and considered their comments written on Ofsted's Parent View.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, and personal, social and health education. We used the school's curriculum framework to review these areas.

Inspection team

Jane Moon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Daniel-John Constable

Her Majesty's Inspector

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