

Riverbank Primary School

Unit 2 Ripponden Mill, Ripponden, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX6 4DH

Inspection dates

12–14 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The proprietor and head of education have ensured that the independent schools standards have been met.
- The new head of education has introduced systems which have ensured that teaching, learning and assessment have improved and are good. Teachers have high expectations and provide clear boundaries. As a result, pupils make good progress during their time at school.
- Outcomes are good. Leaders ensure that pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils thrive in this school. The ethos of 'everybody different, everybody equal' is reflected in the outstanding gains pupils make in their personal development.
- Pupils have access to a wide range of sporting and leisure activities and off-site visits, which contributes to their very strong personal development
- A consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour creates a calm and orderly environment, where pupils are keen to learn.
- Leaders have ensured the curriculum provides a wide range of experiences that are matched to the needs of each individual pupil. This approach contributes well to preparing pupils for their next stage of education.
- There are strong links with parents, who are very positive about the difference that the school has made to the lives of their children.
- Health and safety procedures are comprehensive and contribute to the effective safeguarding culture in the school.
- Although leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, their plans for improvement do not include accurate enough checks on pupils' outcomes.
- There are plans in place to improve the assessment system for subjects other than English and mathematics, so that pupils' progress can be tracked more accurately.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans include measurable targets to assess the desired effect on pupils' outcomes.
- Improve further the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - plans currently in place to introduce a more effective assessment system in subjects other than English and mathematics are implemented.

Inspection judgements

Leadership and management

Good

- The head of education and the proprietor have a clear vision for the school and high aspirations for pupils, which are shared by staff. The ethos of 'everybody different everybody valued' permeates the work of the school. As a result, this nurturing environment enables pupils to succeed socially, emotionally and academically.
- The recently appointed head of education leads a cohesive team, who understand the needs of each individual pupil and how to support them in improving their behaviour.
- Staff spoken to during the inspection are overwhelmingly positive about working in this school. They appreciate the opportunities for professional development that the new system has offered to them.
- The head of school monitors and reviews the work of the school. Visits to classrooms to observe learning and checks on the work in pupils' exercise books take place regularly. This informs the head of school about how well pupils are learning and where improvements can be made. Staff are reflective in their practice and they welcome discussion on what works well in their lessons and what could be better.
- The enrichment of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils develop their spiritual awareness through reflecting on their behaviour and participating in activities such as music, drama and drumming. Moral development is enhanced through learning about right and wrong, and raising money for others who are less fortunate, for example a cancer support charity. The pupils' social development is enhanced through work on friendships and emotions, and cultural experiences include visits to Skipton Castle and cooking food from different countries.
- Pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum which is personalised to meet each pupil's needs. Off-site visits and activities provide practical outdoor learning experiences, for example forest schools, swimming and visits to public places. Not only do pupils enjoy these experiences, but they are learning valuable life skills to become responsible citizens.
- The head of education has an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, the school's self-evaluation and plans to bring about further improvement do not yet include measurable targets to assess the desired effect on pupils' outcomes.

Governance

- As the school is led by a proprietor, there is no governing body.
- The proprietor is a visible presence in the day-to-day running of the school. He provides support and challenge to the newly appointed head of school.
- The proprietor and head of education share a vision to be leaders in children's social emotional and mental health. Ambitious plans are in place to open a new school.
- The proprietors and head of school have ensured that all of the independent school standards have been met.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has an up-to-date safeguarding policy on its website, which meets government requirements.
- The strong ethos of safeguarding is underpinned by the very positive relationships that staff have with the pupils. Staff give pupils high levels of support and guidance, and this contributes to keeping pupils safe.
- Pupils' safety is of paramount importance in this school. Leaders make thorough risk assessments of potential dangers to the pupils across all aspects of the school's work, both inside the school and within the wider community.
- Health and safety checks are carried out on fire equipment and alarms and there are regular fire evacuations to practise leaving the building in the event of an emergency.
- Staff are well trained. They have a good understanding of the potential risks and barriers to the pupils and how to respond to safeguarding concerns.
- Senior leaders have undertaken the safer recruitment training so that they are able to ensure that staff they intend to appoint are suitable to work with children.
- Pupils spoken with say that they feel safe and that the school teaches them about road safety and keeping safe when using computers.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is characterised in this school by the nurture and care that is a consistent feature of lessons. This gives pupils the confidence and motivation to try their best.
- The positive relationships that staff build with pupils are a strength of the school. All staff have a good understanding of the needs of the pupils and this informs their successful approaches to supporting pupils with their learning and behaviour.
- Teachers consistently apply the school's assessment policy. They continually assess pupils' understanding and shape their questions to make sure that pupils are learning. Feedback on how well pupils are doing is a feature of lessons. The successes that pupils experience build their self-esteem.
- Teachers' high aspirations and clear boundaries about behaviour remind pupils of what is expected of them, and this keeps their attention on their work. Regular and consistent classroom routines encourage pupils' independence as they anticipate what to do next.
- Pupils very much enjoy the interesting activities that are planned for them and they are delighted when they get things right.
- Good-quality support plans target each pupils' specific gaps in learning. This bespoke approach helps teachers to plan work for pupils to succeed and this results in their strong engagement in lessons.
- Assessment procedures are stronger in English and mathematics than in other areas of the curriculum. Leaders have plans to develop their assessment of pupils' progress across these other subjects. It is the leaders' intention that this will better inform them and

teachers about the progress that pupils are making in building their knowledge and skills in these subjects.

- Parents who made their views known say that they are well informed about the progress and welfare of their children. Parents speak with staff on a daily basis and they are provided with weekly emails and detailed, informative termly reports.
- Teachers regularly set homework which is linked to class work. Spellings, online mathematics activities and reading involve parents in their child's learning.
- Pupils spoken with say that they enjoy lessons, and one pupil said, 'When you learn you get a good job when you are older.'

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The head of education and proprietor are passionate about preparing pupils to return to mainstream education. Pupils join the school at different points in their school careers and at various times during the year. On average, pupils spend two years in the school. During this time, pupils make considerable progress in developing their confidence and self-esteem and regulating their own behaviour.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and this has a positive effect on the outstanding progress that they achieve in their personal development.
- In lessons, pupils are keen and eager to learn because of the guidance and support that they receive from teachers and support staff. They listen carefully and try their best, and they are very proud of the results of their efforts.
- Staff quickly establish high levels of trust with pupils. These strong relationships build pupils' confidence and self-esteem. This was observed in a mathematics lesson involving calculating percentages, where one pupil said, 'It doesn't matter if you get it wrong as long as you try.'
- Pupils are very motivated by the reward system, where they collect points at the end of every lesson for good work and behaviour, as this culminates in their choice of a Friday afternoon visit in the community.
- Staff take every opportunity to model and remind pupils about how to interact appropriately with others. As a result, pupils are polite and well-mannered, and they show respect to the staff and to each other.
- The pupils spoken with typically say they love coming to the school. They say that they feel safe and that there is no bullying in the school. Pupils say that they know how to keep safe crossing the road and when they are using the computer.
- The wide-ranging opportunities that pupils enjoy foster their physical development. Forest schools, swimming, football, table tennis, rugby and horse riding provide new and exciting experiences to inspire life-long interests.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Leaders are very proud of the outstanding behaviour of the pupils. When pupils join the school, they often have a history of difficulties with regulating their behaviour. It does not take long for them to respond positively to the high expectations and clear boundaries that are consistently promoted across the school.
- The consistency and continuity of behaviour management from all staff result in pupils' strong engagement in lessons, where there is very little disruption to learning.
- Parents who made their views known are overwhelmingly positive about the difference that the school has made to their child. One parent commented that her child had 'come on leaps and bounds with their behaviour and attitudes' since joining the school.
- This is a very nurturing environment where staff help pupils to reflect on their behaviour and the choices that they make. This equips them with valuable strategies and life skills so that they are able to self-regulate their own behaviour in the wider world.
- The pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their high levels of attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- All pupils at the school make good progress from their starting points across a range of subjects, because lessons are well-planned and interesting. However, pupils make more progress in English and mathematics as these subjects have been a focus for bridging gaps in the pupils' knowledge and skills.
- Although pupils arrive at the school with reading skills behind expectations for their chronological age, they make good progress. This is because they read daily, both to staff and independently. Teachers have fostered the pupils' love of reading and this is clear in the confidence that pupils show when reading out loud.
- Pupils spoken with say that mathematics is their favourite subject. This is because of the interesting practical activities that teachers plan. For example, older pupils were observed calculating various percentages of the price of items in a classroom shop. Younger pupils count objects to 10, add to 20 and begin to understand place value.
- Pupils' writing skills were highlighted as an area for improvement at the previous inspection. Pupils are now making good progress in developing a neat cursive style and writing more extensively in subject areas other than just English. Pupils enjoy their daily writing practice and they are keen to show their work to visitors.
- Work in pupils' books confirms the good progress that they make from their starting points.
- Pupils are well prepared for their transition to secondary education. The wealth of enrichment activities that pupils experience, their improved behaviour, the fundraising for good causes and their developing literacy and numeracy skills enhance their life skills and prepare them well for the future.

School details

Unique reference number	141608
DfE registration number	381/6015
Inspection number	10061283

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	9
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Janet Lumb
Chair	Not applicable
Headteacher	James Docherty
Annual fees (day pupils)	£34,000
Telephone number	07880357448
	www.timeouthomes.co.uk
Email address	james.docherty@timeouthomes.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 March 2016

Information about this school

- Riverbank Primary School is an independent special school which caters for the needs of up to 12 pupils, between the ages of six and 11. The Department for Education (DfE) has given temporary permission for the school to admit six-year-old pupils until July 2019.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been a number of staff changes, including the internal appointment of the head of education.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a change of proprietor. The school has notified the DfE of this change.

- Pupils who attend the school all have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The school has no religious denomination.
- The school is situated in the village of Ripponden, in the Calder Valley close to Halifax.
- Currently, there are nine children on roll at the school.
- Riverbank Primary School is part of the Time Out Homes group.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector carried out short visits to lessons with the head of education.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documentation provided by the school, including documents relating to health and safety, behaviour, curriculum and the progress that pupils make.
- During the inspection, meetings were held with the proprietor, the head of education, school staff, parents, the clinical lead and pupils.
- A scrutiny of work was carried out with the head of education.
- The inspector took into account views expressed by parents spoken with, as well as five parents and six staff who completed Ofsted's online questionnaires.

Inspection team

Suzette Garland-Grimes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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