

Rivington Park Independent School

Independent school inspection report

DCSF registration number	888/6031
Unique reference number	131149
URN for registered childcare and social care	EY288411
Inspection number	344460
Inspection dates	21 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Caroline Broomhead HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection of childcare was conducted under Section 49(2) of the Childcare Act 2006.

For use on light touch inspections from September 2009

Age group: 3-16

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005 the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.¹

The inspection of registered provision² was conducted under Section 49(2) of the Childcare Act 2006.³

This was a light touch inspection which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

Rivington Park Independent School makes provision for pupils aged three to 16 years and also has day care on site for babies and toddlers from birth to three years. There are currently 40 on roll. Thirteen children in the Early Years Foundation Stage receive nursery funding. The school opened in 2004 and is located in Horwich in Lancashire. Its aim is to provide a small school environment and a high degree of individual tailoring of teaching and learning so that pupils can fulfil their potential. The school was last inspected in June 2007. Day care was previously inspected in May 2006. In the summer of 2009 the school experienced serious financial difficulties and subsequently changed ownership. This led to significant changes to staffing and the pupil population.

Evaluation of the school

Rivington Park is a good school which provides a good standard of education and successfully meets its aims. As a result of the good teaching most pupils make at least good progress in their learning and for some it is outstanding. The pupils attend regularly, enjoy school and value the small classes and individual attention they receive. They are courteous to one another and, in this nurturing environment, grow in confidence. Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. On a day-to-day basis the school cares well for its pupils and current practice meets requirements, but some written policies have not yet been updated to reflect recent changes. This is due, in part, to the restructuring which took place in the summer of 2009. Throughout this difficult time, the headteacher has successfully maintained the good quality of education found at the last inspection. The school is strongly

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² Schools which provide childcare for children from birth until the term in which they reach their third birthday must register this provision separately with Ofsted.

³ www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2006/ukpga_20060021_en_4#pt3-ch2-pb4-l1g49

supported by parents who hold it in high regard. The school meets all the independent school regulations.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good from nursery through to secondary. It is broadly based on the National Curriculum with a strong emphasis on humanities, sport and modern foreign languages. French and Spanish are taught from primary onwards. Good use is made of specialist expertise to raise expectations for learning in both primary and secondary phases. Specialists are employed to enhance the curriculum in sport, for example, the school offers fencing as a sport and as an after-school club, and music. The school has good specialist facilities for information and communication technology (ICT) and science, although those for design and technology are more limited. Personal, social and health education is a further strength; in this small school staff know the pupils well and are skilled in helping them to apply what they have learned in specific lessons throughout the school day. The curriculum extends outdoors with opportunities for growing produce and caring for small animals in the school's grounds. At weekends there are additional language classes and annually the pupils take part in a residential activity week, for example, in the Lake District or some go ski-ing to Italy. The curriculum has a very positive impact on pupils' personal development, encouraging growth in confidence, self-esteem, independent thinking and readiness for the next stage in life. Although there are no pupils in years 10 and 11 at the moment, in the past the older pupils have taken part in work experience placements, sometimes linked to their courses of study. They followed a careers education programme to guide them in their choices for moving on at 16, usually to sixth forms for further education. This provision will be available to the current pupils in years 8 and 9 when they move up the school. There has been a good range of GCSE courses available in the past, although these are likely to be more limited in the near future due to the smaller numbers on roll and, therefore, the reduced staffing levels at present. The school rightly is intending to extend the accreditation available to match the wide ability range in the school.

Teaching and assessment are good. Teachers have high expectations of attitudes to learning and behaviour and the pupils rise to the challenge and make good, and sometimes outstanding progress in their learning. By the time they leave school they achieve very well in their GCSE examinations and some exceed expectations given their starting points. The small class sizes and excellent relationships create a calm environment in which pupils can concentrate, be creative in their ideas, reflect on what they have learned and ask questions to help them deepen their understanding. Teachers use their specialist knowledge and expertise well to challenge pupils to be independent, to develop enquiring minds and to be able to justify their answers. They set tasks in everyday contexts, encouraging a problem-solving approach to learning. The pupils are given good individual help in lessons but teachers' planning does not always identify in advance the expected learning outcomes for the different

ages and abilities in their groups. Where teaching is weaker, the pupils are not clear about the tasks they are being asked to undertake. Resources for teaching and learning are generally good, including access to ICT in all classrooms.

Assessment has improved since the last inspection, with a greater focus on tracking pupils' progress over time. Predictions for pupils' future achievements are based on results of cognitive ability tests and ongoing assessments against National Curriculum levels and specific reading and spelling tests. For pupils in juniors and secondary, three learning targets are now set termly in every subject. However, the pupils are not always involved in setting and reviewing these targets. The school provides termly and annual reports to parents, who are very positive about the school and the progress their children are making.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. From an early age the pupils are keen to learn, diligent and hard working. Their behaviour is outstanding as seen in the respect they have for themselves and others. They are polite, courteous and get on well together, showing a genuine care for one another. They understand the importance of listening as well as talking and as they grow in confidence in their own abilities, they show a mature attitude to discussion and debate. They learn to express their views objectively whilst respecting those of others, for example, in religious education. This, along with visits to places of interest such as churches and synagogues, contributes significantly to their understanding of their own and other beliefs and cultures. The school actively and successfully seeks to create an ethos where equality, diversity and respect for individual differences are accepted as the norm. The pupils take responsibility around the school and learn what it means to be responsible citizens, to have empathy for others and to make a positive contribution to the wider community. At lunch and break times the older pupils instinctively care for the younger ones, for example helping them in the dining room. The school council is recently elected and at an early stage in influencing decisions affecting the whole school. The pupils are aware of the sanctions for misbehaviour but say that they rarely need to be applied in this school. They earn house points and other rewards for their efforts and achievements. The pupils take part in different sports within and out of school and learn about healthy diets. They also learn to take responsibility for their own safety, for example they use protective clothing when working in the science laboratory or when taking part in a fencing lesson. All in all, the pupils are prepared well for moving on to the next stage in their lives.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. The school provides a calm, safe, caring and nurturing environment on a day-to-day basis. Small class sizes and good staffing levels mean that pupils are supervised well at all times and receive

good individual attention throughout the day. Staff recruitment procedures follow guidelines and all staff and volunteers have undergone enhanced checks with the Criminal Records Bureau to confirm their suitability to work with children. Appropriate attention is given to health and safety, for example, through routine fire evacuations and checks on equipment and first aid procedures for children who need it. Staff have received appropriate training in safeguarding in line with their responsibilities and external courses are imminent for new staff and any whose training is due for updating. The pupils are taught about health and safety in different settings and willingly accept instructions and guidance in this respect, recognising its importance for themselves and others.

The premises are generally clean and maintained well and the pupils benefit from attractive outdoor areas for sports, recreation, growing produce and care of small animals. The school has improved access to the building for wheelchair users, in line with its disability access plan.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The school meets well the needs of children of all ages in the Early Years Foundation Stage. From the babies to those in Reception, all children clearly feel very secure, build trusting relationships with known members of staff and make good progress. Children are tolerant of others and keen to try out new things. They behave very well and from an early age understand the need to, for instance, take care on the stairs. By the end of Reception, most children demonstrate skills that are above those expected for their age. Suitable resources for the age groups in each room cater for all areas of learning and encourage the children to experiment and explore as well as offering space for rest and relaxation. The outdoor provision is not of the same quality and children's access is very limited. Adults generally engage children well in conversation and are skilled at gaining their interest or diverting any upset. They pay good attention to hygiene and to ensuring that children are safe from harm. Most adults regularly record their observations of individuals' development, and use these purposefully when planning the next steps in their learning. A few have not had sufficiently recent training in current requirements, especially related to assessment and optimising opportunities for learning. The introduction of regular staff meetings is beginning to develop self-evaluation of the provision beyond the proprietor but restricted management time means that opportunities for communication between staff in the five rooms are restricted. Very good relationships with parents and outside agencies help to ensure that the provision caters well for children's individual needs.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- involve pupils more in setting their targets and reviewing their progress
- refine teachers' planning to make clear the expected learning outcomes for pupils of different ages and abilities in their classes
- ensure all policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated, and make sure all training is up to date
- improve the quality of provision in and use of the outdoor area in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- ensure that all staff working in the Early Years Foundation Stage are sufficiently well trained and knowledgeable about current requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection judgement recording form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		√		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		√		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		√		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		√		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	√			
The behaviour of pupils	√			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils			√	
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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How good are the outcomes for children in the EYFS?		√		
What is the quality of provision in the EYFS?		√		
How effectively is the EYFS led and managed?			√	
Overall effectiveness: how well does the school meet the needs of children in the EYFS?			√	

The quality of boarding provision *(leave blank if not applicable)*

Evaluation of boarding provision				
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School details

Name of school	Rivington Park Independent School		
DCSF number	888/6031		
Unique reference number	131149		
EY URN (for registered childcare only)	EY288411		
Type of school	Primary and secondary		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	July 2004		
Age range of pupils	3-16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 27	Girls: 13	Total: 40
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils aged 0-3 in registered childcare provision	Boys: 6	Girls: 10	Total: 16
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,415		
Annual fees (childcare)	£8,925		
Address of school	Knowle House Rivington Lane Rivington Bolton Lancashire BL6 7RX		
Telephone number	01204 669332		
Fax number	01204 696891		
Email address	info@rivingtonparkschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr Michael Ruaux		
Proprietor	RPIS Limited		
Reporting inspector	Caroline Broomhead HMI		
Dates of inspection	21 January 2010		