

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



16 May 2019

Mrs Angela Yilmaz  
Headteacher  
Riverside Primary School  
Minton Lane  
North Shields  
Tyne and Wear  
NE29 6DQ

Dear Mrs Yilmaz

### **Short inspection of Riverside Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 8 May 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in April 2015.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and the governing body have shown resilience in coping with a number of challenging issues. You have now created a strong staff team. The team shares your passion to improve outcomes for all pupils. Together, senior and middle leaders have successfully addressed improvements in the priority areas that were identified in the previous inspection.

Across school, there is a tangible sense of purpose and uncompromising ambition to see pupils flourish. Since the last inspection, you have done much to refine and improve the quality of teaching, as Ofsted asked you to do, so that all pupils make rapid and sustained progress. You have provided staff with high-quality training, which has contributed to strengthening teaching. Teaching and learning policies are firmly embedded and have a positive effect on pupils' progress. Teachers have a good understanding of national curriculum expectations and use the national framework of objectives to plan age-appropriate learning in each subject. Teachers' subject knowledge is of a high standard. Their questioning probes pupils' understanding and ensures that lessons are well matched to pupils' starting points.

The development of your team has been supported by effective systems to check pupils' progress. You and the deputy headteacher have helped all staff to develop a clear understanding of curriculum standards. Leaders check pupils' progress at regular intervals and work with teachers to address underachievement. Staff now have a very good awareness of individual pupils' outcomes and needs. They use this to identify additional support for pupils, which is tailored to strengthen their

progress. All staff are skilful in evaluating the support they provide to pupils. They carefully consider how they can further support the learning. This work has contributed to improved outcomes for pupils. However, you recognise that the most able pupils in key stage 2 would benefit further from greater challenge in their mathematics.

The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception has been below the national average over time. The new leader of the early years has high expectations and a clear commitment to raise standards. You both have clear plans for improvement, particularly around challenging and extending pupils in their play.

Throughout the school, pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are impeccable. They are proud of their school and enjoy learning. Pupils, who spoke to me, were keen to describe the wide range of opportunities they have. Pupils from key stage 2 were eager to tell me about their work on promoting good mental health. Younger pupils were keen to talk about their gardening project. They all said that they would recommend the school to a friend. Pupils treat each other, staff and visitors with respect and care.

Governors are supportive and well informed. They demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors use their skills and expertise to challenge you, and other leaders, so that the school continues to improve. They, like you, are highly committed to provide the very best education and care for the pupils.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Riverside Primary School is a safe, nurturing place for pupils. Safeguarding systems and policies are effective. The school site is secure and signing-in procedures are robust. The checks on adults working in school are accurate and meticulously maintained. Training for staff is appropriate and regular. Your team is highly vigilant. They quickly identify any pupils who may be experiencing problems or worries. This allows leaders to act rapidly and effectively so that pupils, and their families, get the specific care and help they need. Members of staff with a designated safeguarding role maintain detailed, precise records of their work. The safeguarding governor has a good understanding of the systems and policies in place.

You prioritise pupils' well-being and ensure that their emotional needs are catered for effectively. Pupils are knowledgeable about keeping safe online and how to stay safe outside of school. They are able to discuss issues such as road safety and 'stranger danger' confidently. Pupils, who spoke to me, told me that they felt safe in school and staff are always around to help them. They said that bullying does not happen and that behaviour is good. Pupils are confident that if they ever have a problem, a member of staff will quickly help them deal with it. Pupils have full trust in the staff who look after them.

Since the last inspection, you and your leadership team have been successful in reducing pupils' absence rates. There are clear systems in place to track pupils' attendance. You tackle absences rigorously and intervene as soon as pupils' attendance rates start to fall. You work closely with parents and carers to provide support when necessary. As a result, you have increased attendance to above the national average.

### **Inspection findings**

- At the previous inspection, you were asked to ensure that teaching is consistently of a high standard. This was to enable all pupils to make rapid and sustained progress, and reach even higher standards. You are astute in your evaluations of learning seen in lessons and in pupils' books. You ensure that assessments are accurate. Procedures to check the effectiveness of teachers' work are supported by rigorous monitoring systems. As a result, you have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning and take rapid action to address any concerns when necessary.
- You and your team have taken effective action to raise the level of challenge for pupils in mathematics. A calculation policy has been effectively implemented to ensure consistency in the teaching and learning of mathematics. All staff demonstrate good mathematical knowledge. Most pupils are given work that is appropriate for their age and ability. Teachers provide a framework for learning and a wide range of resources to help pupils grasp important mathematical concepts. Pupils learn key mathematical facts and methods efficiently. Work in pupils' books is well presented. It is set out in ways that help pupils to avoid making mistakes.
- The subject leader of mathematics has recently introduced new effective strategies to increase opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills. Pupils now have more chances to explain their reasoning and solve problems. However, you recognise that the most able pupils in key stage 2 could benefit from further challenge. These pupils do not always move on to complex activities as quickly as they could. Likewise, opportunities to apply mathematical skills to other subjects, such as history and science, are not fully utilised.
- I looked closely at the quality of teaching phonics and early reading and writing skills in the Reception class and key stage 1. This was because outcomes at the end of Reception and in the phonics screening check have been below the national average. Leaders have introduced a new approach to improve the teaching of phonics. During adult-led sessions, pupils have suitable opportunities to hear and practise the sounds they are learning, including through decoding words and sentences. In phonics lessons, pupils, including the most able, receive activities that challenge them sufficiently. For example, pupils explore different spellings of the same sound. Pupils demonstrate a good grasp of phonics because the teaching is of a high quality and meets their individual needs. As a result, pupils are now progressing through the phonics phases more rapidly. Early reading and writing skills have also developed successfully.
- You and your senior leaders have also focused on ensuring that pupils are

continuously challenged in reading. Teachers provide pupils with regular access to high-quality texts. Pupils read and investigate whole-class novels alongside regular opportunities to read individually. Pupils say that they have lots of opportunities to read with many adults in school. The pupils describe their favourite genre of book and can confidently explain why they have an interest in an author. Pupils read with passion, fluency and understanding. Staff have fostered a love of reading across the school. Pupils told me how much they enjoy reading. Teachers are developing good links with parents to support wider reading at home. The teaching of reading is strong and supports good pupil progress.

- Another area that I explored was to see what leaders were doing to ensure that children in the early years achieve a good level of development by the end of Reception. Children are very happy and confident in the early years. They mix well with their friends, care for one another and have good relationships with staff. The provision provides a rich and supportive environment where adult-led activities are matched well to meet children's needs and interests. You acknowledge that some adults working in early years do not consistently challenge and extend children, particularly when they are playing. At times, adults' questions are not precise and, as a result, they miss opportunities to extend children's play and develop new skills. Consequently, some children do not make as much progress as they could.
- You explained that, in the past, previous staffing issues impacted on standards in the Reception class. You and the recently appointed early years leader are determined that these children should get off to a flying start. The leader of early years has a strong understanding of how young children learn. She accurately assesses children's abilities and is planning rich experiences to fill gaps in knowledge and skills. Children are doing well, with many already working at the standard expected by the end of the early years. Children demonstrate a good grasp of phonics because the teaching is of a high quality and meets their individual needs. They also show a good grasp of numbers up to 20. The vast majority could count up and down and could also add on and take away accurately.
- Governors play a significant role in monitoring the school's effectiveness and setting strategic priorities. They have strongly supported you through the many difficulties you have faced, ensuring that the school continues to move forward. Governors make sure that safeguarding is effective. They also ensure that the additional funding, for example that used for disadvantaged pupils, is used to best effect. Consequently, they know the school well and have a clear understanding of what it needs to do next to further improve.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- key stage 2 teachers provide more opportunities to challenge the most able pupils in their mathematics so that a greater proportion reach the higher standards they are capable of
- planned improvements, within the early years, are implemented so that an increasing proportion of children make good progress from their starting points and achieve a good level of development.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North Tyneside. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Alison Stephenson  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During this one-day inspection, I met with you and other members of the leadership team. We observed learning together. I listened to a group of pupils read. I also looked at pupils' books and talked to them about their learning and progress. I held meetings with leaders and a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body. I analysed the school's website and evaluated additional documentation including attendance records and a range of safeguarding records. I reviewed assessment information about pupils' attainment and progress, as well as leaders' action plans and evaluations. I took into account the nine responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, the 11 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and the seven responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.