



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION REPORT

RIVERSTON SCHOOL

JANUARY 2018



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SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	Riverston School		
DfE number	203/6169		
Address	63-69 Eltham Road London SE12 8UF		
Telephone number	020 8318 4327		
Email address	office@riverstonschool.co.uk		
Headmistress	Mrs Sarah Salathiel		
Chair of governors	Professor Michael Lewis		
Age range	0 to 19		
Number of pupils on roll	187		
	Boys	124	Girls 63
	Day pupils	187	Boarders 0
	EYFS	66	Juniors 32
	Seniors	75	Sixth Form 14
Inspection dates	24 to 25 January 2018		

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 Riverston School is an independent school for boys and girls aged from 9 months to 19 years. Since 1956, it has remained in the ownership of the same family. The school is operated as a limited company, of which the proprietor takes the role of executive chairman, supported by a team of governors. The school is located in linked Victorian houses in Lee Green, south-east London, with access to numerous local sports facilities. Since the previous inspection there has been continued investment in new facilities, which include a sixth form centre and a design technology and construction facility.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school aims to provide a high quality personalised education, within a mainstream setting, for pupils with additional learning needs by delivering, within a safe, supportive and caring community, a modern and relevant curriculum tailor-made for the individual needs of each pupil. The school seeks to build pupils' confidence and self-esteem and equip them with a range of life skills for the next stage of their education and adult life.

About the pupils

- 1.3 Pupils come from diverse ethnic and social backgrounds, and a high proportion of placements are made by local authorities. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability profile of pupils is broadly average in the junior school and below average in the senior school. The school has identified 88 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include autism spectrum condition, social, emotional and behavioural, and specific learning difficulties. These pupils all receive specialist support within school. Seventy-three pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 13 pupils, whose needs are supported primarily by their classroom teachers. Data is used by the school to identify pupils with a particular skill in one area, and extra-curricular activities and bespoke curriculum subjects are provided to cater for their needs.

2. REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION

Preface

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 In the junior school, the school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 At GCSE in the years 2015 to 2017, performance has been below the national average for maintained schools.
- 2.4 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.6 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.7 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.8 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.9 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.10 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required.
- 2.11 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.12 Suitable toilet, changing and showering facilities for pupils and appropriate accommodation for their medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

2.13 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.14 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for those with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, and its results in public examinations, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

2.15 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.16 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

2.17 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.18 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

2.19 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision

2.20 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is good.

2.21 As a result of the learning and care provided, all children make good progress relative to their wide range of starting points and are well prepared for their next stage in education. The children's personal and emotional development is excellent. They feel safe, secure and happy. Members of staff have an excellent understanding of safeguarding and welfare requirements and fulfil their responsibility for protecting children in their care diligently.

There is clear evidence of a strong commitment to continuous improvement. Following the recommendation of the last inspection, a more formal system to monitor and evaluate the success of the EYFS has been implemented. This has helped the leadership and management team to be clear about what they want to achieve and to maintain consistent standards, in order that they can improve each child's life chances.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

2.22 The effectiveness of leadership and management is good.

2.23 The leadership and management demonstrate a clear vision, identifying what they want to do to continually improve the quality of care and provision for the children. As a result, staff have high expectations of what children under two can achieve.

Practitioners are well qualified and their performance is monitored with regular supervisions. These are effective and enable staff to discuss issues and find solutions as they arise. Staff are encouraged to attend professional development courses to ensure that they regularly update their practice.

A more robust system of self-evaluation has been introduced and this has led to a more focused approach to identifying areas for development, such as the introduction of a new online assessment system. All staff take part in evaluating the effectiveness of new initiatives. The views of parents are sought and taken into consideration. In discussions with inspectors, they were very positive about the setting and the care that their children receive. Parents commented on how much they value the sense of community that the school engenders. They feel that they are well informed about the setting, that their opinions and suggestions are taken into consideration and that their children are very well looked after.

The curriculum is well planned and meets the relevant statutory requirements of the EYFS as well as the needs and interests of the children. The education programmes provide many opportunities for children to increase their communication and language skills, their physical skills and to support their personal and social development. However, the rate of progress that children make is sometimes reduced as leaders do not consistently monitor staff's planning to ensure that it is sufficiently evaluated on a regular basis and that activities are closely targeted for each child.

Staff actively promote equality and diversity and British values. Children respond very well to what is expected of them in terms of behaviour and courtesy in the setting. Role modelling by staff is good.

Safeguarding is effective. Staff have received comprehensive training in child protection, and are aware of the requirement to prevent radicalisation and extremism. Leaders ensure all children are kept safe through rigorous implementation of health and safety policies.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

2.24 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good.

- 2.25 Staff have high expectations of what children under two can achieve and they respond well to each child's differing needs, including the most able and the disadvantaged. Staff have a good understanding of the way this age group learns. They plan appropriate activities, which reflect the children's interests and stage of development. For example, to encourage language development, toddlers took part in a tea party to learn the names of different foods. Positive feedback to children from staff, through the good use of praise and encouragement, helps children to acquire the skills and capacity to learn effectively.

Information about each child's daily routines and their likes and dislikes is gathered from parents on entry to the setting. This is used effectively as a starting point so that children settle quickly into the activities, enabling them to make good progress. Focused assessments inform staff about what each child can do and help to identify the next steps. However, these are not always recorded consistently and evaluations of the different activities are not always done on a regular basis. Leaders are aware that greater analysis of assessments will further inform the planning of the next steps.

The setting places a high priority on keeping parents fully informed and involved in their child's learning. Parents may receive daily verbal reports as well as a weekly written update, which includes photographs of different activities in which their child has taken part. Parents greatly appreciate this feedback.

Equality and diversity are promoted by the provision of suitable resources. All children are encouraged to celebrate their own culture through different events, such as Heritage Week.

Well established routines to encourage independence and confidence and sensitively handled transitions help children prepare for the next stage in their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

- 2.26 The personal development, behaviour and welfare of children are outstanding.
- 2.27 Very warm and nurturing relationships between children and staff foster a positive culture and a sense of belonging across the setting. All staff are very supportive and encouraging of each child's efforts.

Children are very happy, engage easily with adults and seek reassurance and support from them whenever it is needed. They are encouraged sensitively to investigate, to experiment and to persevere. For example, when trying to climb the net in the outdoor area, children were given time to try for themselves before being helped. This contributes to their understanding of how to be a successful learner. They are encouraged to try to do things independently, such as putting on their own shoes and selecting which toy they want to play with.

Transition to the next room and stage in their learning is carefully considered, ensuring that children feel emotionally secure and ready to move. Children spend time with staff, both in the new room and at lunchtimes, so that they know them before moving.

The setting fosters emotional security. Staff know the children well and are extremely sensitive and responsive to their needs. This was clearly seen when a very tired child was comforted before falling asleep. Parents commented on how well the staff know their children and that they feel very confident when leaving them in their care.

Prompt and regular attendance is encouraged. Staff ensure that children do not have access to social media and to the internet. Strict guidelines about the use of photography are in place. Children are taught how to keep themselves safe through gentle reminders, for example about how to sit properly on a chair.

Children demonstrate excellent behaviour and mutual respect, often helping one another to fetch things or joining in applause to celebrate each other's successes. Good manners are encouraged at all times and especially at mealtimes. Staff often use facial gestures to help younger children to understand how to manage their own feelings and make appropriate responses.

Children are encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle from an early age. They are provided with home cooked food, fresh drinking water and fruit for snacks. Children who can walk have access to a large, well equipped playground to support their physical development, but access to the outdoors is more limited for those still crawling, as the surfaces are not appropriate. Personal hygiene routines are well embedded and followed carefully by everyone.

Participation in charity days helps children to contribute to the wider world from an early age.

Outcomes for children

2.28 Outcomes for children are good.

2.29 All children make at least good progress relative to their starting points, abilities and needs, although staff do not always ensure that activities are sufficiently challenging. Babies, with support from adults, are able to shake instruments and move to music. They have started to join in with songs and imitate animal noises when listening to a story. They enjoyed playing with light box cubes and showed great interest in the patterns formed by a light wand. The toddlers can build towers with bricks and some have started to touch count. They are encouraged to repeat words and say short sentences about what they want to do. They show increasing levels of independence when moving around the room to select what they want to play with. Some children have started to manipulate a crayon to make marks, and enjoy drawing pictures. They are able to climb up a small ladder and move a rocking horse forwards and back.

The setting is successful in meeting its aims to provide a safe and caring community and to help build self-confidence and self-esteem in order that the children are ready for the next step in their education.

Compliance with statutory requirements

2.30 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

Recommendations for further improvement

The school is advised to make the following improvements to its provision for children in the early years.

- Provide more opportunities for the youngest children to use the outside area, to increase their physical development.
- Ensure that the next steps in a child's learning are consistently recorded so that all staff and parents are aware of them.

3. INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 3.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Sue Clarke

Reporting inspector

Mr Ian Williams

Compliance team inspector (Bursar, GSA school)

Mrs Ros Ford

Co-ordinating inspector for early years (Former deputy head, IAPS school)