

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: River Bank Primary School

Bath Road, Luton, Bedfordshire LU3 1ES

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 January 2025

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is David Sansom. The school is a single academy trust, Active Education Academy Trust. The trust is run by a chief executive officer (CEO), Toni Chivers, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ruhena Mahmood.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love to attend this vibrant and welcoming school. They are friendly, kind and considerate to visitors and new pupils. Many pupils start school at different times during the year. Thanks to the support and guidance they receive, these pupils settle in quickly.

Staff have unwaveringly high expectations. They frequently explain and model the expected behaviours. This helps pupils to understand how to act in different situations. In the classrooms, pupils are calm and focused. They work hard. This fosters an environment where pupils and staff can maximise learning time.

Pupils achieve highly. Many pupils are new to speaking, reading and writing in English. The school recognises this and provides effective and precise teaching for pupils who speak English as an additional language. It aims for pupils to be at least proficient, but often strong, in English. This helps them achieve well in all subjects.

Pupils quickly develop a strong sense of community spirit. They learn about what they have in common. Staff help pupils and their families to connect and form friendships. Additionally, pupils take great pride in each other's successes. They enjoy celebrating their peers' interests and achievements. This also fosters a sense of positivity and pride.

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

The curriculum is well considered and carefully structured. Ongoing checks on teaching and staff training ensure that teachers teach each subject well. Also, the school ensures staff know how to develop pupils' subject knowledge effectively. For instance, in history lessons, teachers use buildings and other sources to help pupils learn about life in the past. Additionally, teachers explain new knowledge very clearly to pupils. As a result, pupils gain deep understanding and are very well prepared for their next stage. Often, the school deploys ways to ensure learning is exciting and memorable. For example, the use of virtual reality headsets helps pupils understand what it is like in the Arctic.

Teachers check pupils' understanding regularly, both during lessons and through the work they complete. As a result, staff know the pupils' gaps in knowledge and change their teaching to address these. Staff also provide pupils with the practise they need to become proficient. Connections between subjects help greatly with this. In early years, staff ensure all tasks improve children's skills and knowledge. For example, retelling a favourite story with props builds key language and communication skills, or playing a game develops social skills. Staff know the children well and skilfully provide what they need to be ready for learning in Year 1.

The school places a high priority on pupils learning to read well. Pupils love to read and benefit from the variety of texts they read individually and as a whole class. This helps them to learn more about a topic and empathise with different characters. Staff provide effective, targeted support to pupils who need it. Teachers provide expert modelling and correct misconceptions quickly. This ensures that pupils learn to read fluently and confidently.

Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is strong. Teachers identify pupils' needs at the earliest opportunity. Pupils receive the correct support at the right time. Where appropriate, some pupils have individual targets and receive extra targeted support. For example, reading stories about difficult emotions can help pupils manage their feelings. Pupils with SEND achieve highly.

Pupils behave exceptionally well, including the youngest children in the school. They get along well and develop important social skills. They learn to build independence in their play. Pupils across the school enjoy their social time and the fun, healthy activities the school provides. Routines are calm and organised. Staff make learning interesting, so pupils are highly engaged in lessons.

The school has an extensive extra-curricular and enrichment programme. Pupils appreciate and enjoy this. Their experiences are memorable and help them secure their knowledge in other subjects. Pupils develop understanding of right and wrong. For example, they learn about, and have an interest in, people's rights. This includes learning about historical figures and how people have been treated differently in the past.

The school and trustees share the same values and vision. Where there are barriers to learning, they find ways to reduce them. For example, they use imaginative enrichment

ideas to give pupils new opportunities. Parents and carers are very happy with the school and the education their children receive. Staff appreciate opportunities for professional development and the consideration given to their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in October 2019.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and](#)

[protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	139782
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	10345374
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	769
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ruhena Mahmood
CEO of the trust	Toni Chivers
Headteacher	David Sansom
Website	www.riverbankprimary.org
Dates of previous inspection	1 and 2 October 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school is a single academy trust called Active Education Academy Trust.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, other leaders and staff. The lead inspector met with representatives from the board of trustees, including the chair. They also met with the CEO of the trust and spoke to a representative from the local authority.

- The inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.

Inspection team

Jessie Linsley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lynda Walker

Ofsted Inspector

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