

# Riversides School

**Address:** Thorneloe Road, Barbourne, Worcester, Worcestershire, WR1 3HZ

**Unique reference number (URN):** 140397

## Inspection report: 27 January 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	●
Expected standard	● ● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

### ✔ **Safeguarding standards met**

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

#### **How we evaluate safeguarding**

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

## Strong standard ●

### Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

The school's approach to personal development is highly effective. Leaders identify the knowledge, skills and behaviours pupils need for future learning and life. These are carefully woven into routines, teaching and wider experiences, so pupils practise them in meaningful ways. Pupils learn about relationships, health and safety, and about growing independence and developing tolerance and mutual respect. Lessons link to real-life situations and help pupils understand the importance of fundamental British values. Assemblies, visits and community projects extend pupils' awareness of diversity, rights and responsibilities. Pupils learn how to stay safe online and in the community, including how to recognise risks and make sensible choices.

The school's commitment to equal opportunities is reflected in the broad range of activities that broaden interests and develop talents. Pupils take part in clubs, outdoor learning, creative projects and community experiences. Leaders review participation in extra-curricular events and clubs so successes can be noticed and celebrated. They make adjustments to help pupils with additional needs to take part alongside their peers. Pupils reflect on their wider experiences as being some of their best moments in school.

Careers education starts in Year 7 and successfully builds on pupils' future aspirations. Pupils meet employers, explore career pathways and receive highly personalised guidance tailored to their needs and interests. Effective partnerships with local colleges support smooth transitions. Where needed, staff provide personalised support if pupils find transitions difficult. Leaders use follow-up checks to understand whether placements are sustained. They offer continued advice to parent and carers even when their children have left the school.

A key strength of the personal development programme is how well staff teach pupils how to express themselves, manage worries and build emotional resilience. Routines and calm spaces help pupils to manage their feelings and return to learning. Pupils, parents, carers and staff are positive about how wellbeing is prioritised. This approach helps pupils to develop confidence, a sense of belonging and independence.

---

## Expected standard ●

### Achievement

Expected standard ●

Pupils make meaningful progress from their starting points. At key stage 4, pupils follow personalised pathways that include GCSEs, functional skills and vocational qualifications. These are planned with parents and carers so they reflect pupils' needs, interests and future aspirations. Pupils gain qualifications that support their next steps in education or training.

In key stage 2, pupils make secure progress in reading, spoken language and their wider subject knowledge. Some pupils who are reluctant to share what they know verbally, demonstrate their understanding through their work and participation. When pupils fall

behind, they receive timely support to help them catch up. Pupils engage well with such support.

Many pupils move on to further education, training or specialist provision. Leaders track how well pupils sustain these placements to refine guidance for future cohorts. Achievement includes more than academic outcomes. For some pupils, developing social confidence or travelling independently represents significant progress.

## **Attendance and behaviour**

**Expected standard** ●

Many pupils who attend this school have not attended when at their previous settings. Leaders have clear systems for improving pupils' attendance. Staff track patterns closely and review plans for pupils who are absent too often. Leaders work effectively with external partners and parents and carers so that pupils attend school. For pupils who attend the 'RAP' provision, attending school is a significant step forward for them.

Across the school, routines are simple and consistent. Pupils move safely around the site. Adults use calm, predictable approaches that help pupils regulate and return to learning. Expectations are clear and consistently applied across classes, with adaptations made where necessary.

Behaviour is supported through consistently positive and respectful relationships. Staff are trained in how to calm difficult situations and use these skills confidently. Leaders keep a close eye on how well staff use the agreed strategies. This has reduced the need for more intensive support. Leaders review behaviour records to identify patterns and adjust support. Pupils speak positively about how staff help them manage difficult moments and return to learning.

Leaders ensure safeguarding is effective for pupils who are off site, including those attending alternative provision. They check welfare, attendance and engagement so pupils remain safe and supported.

## **Curriculum and teaching**

**Expected standard** ●

Leaders have constructed an ambitious curriculum that sets out the essential knowledge pupils should learn over time. Subject leaders have made clear the knowledge they want pupils to know and remember.

A professional learning programme helps staff strengthen their expertise to teach across subjects. Teachers introduce new ideas clearly and teach vocabulary explicitly. In the most effective lessons, staff build on what pupils already know and can do. Teachers adapt tasks and provide appropriate support so pupils can practise and secure essential knowledge before moving on. However, this is not consistent in all lessons. Sometimes, learning moves on without pupils securing important basic skills. This is particularly the case in writing, where some pupils need further support with handwriting and sentence construction. Leaders understand the need to help all pupils write fluently and with increasing independence. Leaders are in the process of improving how well all staff check pupils' understanding so gaps can be identified and addressed sooner. Typically, staff use assessment information well to plan next steps and address gaps in understanding.

Pupils at the early stages of learning to read are supported well and enjoy books matched to their interests. They practise reading to build confidence and fluency.

## **Inclusion**

**Expected standard** 

Leaders identify and understand pupils' needs as soon as pupils join the school. They gather information from parents, carers and professionals to ensure learning plans are personalised to reflect pupils' specific needs. Staff use this information well and make adaptations that help pupils settle, participate and learn successfully. Leaders check how consistently these approaches are used so that pupils receive appropriate support. Leaders have strengthened staff expertise in areas such as speech, language and communication to support pupils' academic and social development. Staff understand that pupils need to be emotionally ready for learning and use welcoming, calm language to help pupils feel settled.

The inclusion team works closely with families, keeping them informed and helping them access the right help at the right time. Leaders identify the needs of pupils who receive additional funding and plan support that helps these pupils to take part in learning successfully. Where pupils attend alternative provision, leaders check safeguarding, attendance and engagement regularly so pupils remain safe and supported. For pupils with the most complex social and emotional needs, while leaders are seeking ways to increase access to specialist services for these pupils, they recognise that more therapeutic support is needed to reduce barriers to learning and wellbeing.

## **Leadership and governance**

**Expected standard** 

Leaders set a clear direction for the school and focus on actions that improve pupils' experiences and outcomes. They make decisions in the best interests of pupils, showing honesty and integrity when evaluating their work.

Leaders use evidence from the school's work to develop improvement plans. Leaders identify strengths and address variability. They have strengthened the curriculum, assessment processes and staff development so that expectations are consistent across the school. Curriculum leaders are developing their subject oversight to improve the consistency of effective teaching. The trust provides support networks that offer support and challenge to leaders. This drives improvement. Improvement planning links clearly to the school's priorities and is reviewed regularly. Leaders sustain improvement through steady, evidence-led work.

Governors and trustees receive detailed information and provide appropriate support and challenge to leaders. Leaders understand the limitations of the current buildings and work constructively to provide suitable spaces that enable the curriculum to be taught as intended. Safeguarding is prioritised. Systems for checking practice, recording concerns and learning from incidents are established and effective.

Leaders welcome external scrutiny and act on advice. They work closely with the local authority, the virtual school and other partners to support the most vulnerable pupils.

Leaders consider staff workload and wellbeing and encourage staff's professional growth.

Communication with parents and carers is positive. The school recognises the importance of helping families to improve the life chances of their children. Leaders monitor welfare, attendance and engagement for pupils who are off site so pupils remain safe and supported.

## **What it's like to be a pupil at this school**

Pupils begin the day feeling welcomed and noticed. Staff greet them warmly in a considered way. They take time to check how pupils are and assess their readiness for the day ahead. This steady, predictable start helps pupils feel calm, secure and ready to learn. The school's caring ethos is reflected in these warm relationships. This contributes to pupils feeling valued and understood.

Many pupils join Riversides having had a negative experience of education. Some have struggled to manage their emotions. Staff work effectively to rebuild trust and mutual respect, which helps pupils develop a sense of belonging. Over time, pupils grow in confidence and begin to engage with learning again.

The personal development of pupils is a strength. Staff help pupils to discover what they enjoy and nurture their talents. Pupils enjoy the range of activities on offer, including outdoor learning, creative projects, clubs and going out into the community. Such opportunities motivate many pupils to attend school.

Over time, pupils learn how to manage their feelings, talk about worries and make sensible choices. They are taught how to stay safe online and in the community. Key safety messages are repeated to help pupils remember them. Pupils feel confident that staff will listen and help them when things feel difficult. Bullying is uncommon, but when concerns arise, staff deal with them promptly, so pupils feel protected.

Pupils behave respectfully and move safely around school. They understand that such routines help everyone to feel safe. Routines are simple and consistent, to help pupils know what is coming next. This is a school where staff maintain high expectations for pupils' learning and conduct. Many pupils achieve well. Leaders ensure that pupils leave with accreditations or qualifications that will support them in the next stages of their education.

---

## **Next steps**

- Leaders should improve how well staff check and identify gaps in pupils' understanding, especially in the development of pupils' writing, to ensure all pupils make rapid progress in their learning.
  - Leaders should ensure learning is consistently adapted, supported and modelled so pupils can access tasks successfully and apply their learning with increasing independence.
  - Leaders should strengthen the therapeutic support offer for vulnerable pupils to reduce barriers to their academic and social development.
-

## About this inspection

Riversides school is part of Central Learning Partnership Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is led by the chief executive officer, Georgetta Holloway OBE, and overseen by a board of trustees chaired by Robert Turton.

This is the second inspection since the school joined the Central Learning Partnership Trust in November 2022.

The same leadership team is in place since the last inspection.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with all senior leaders, two trustees, including the chair of trustees. Inspectors spoke to the director of education, early years, inclusion & pupil place planning and the head of service for inclusion for Worcestershire. Inspectors also spoke with the virtual school headteacher for Worcestershire. Inspectors spoke with pupils, parents and staff about their experiences and looked at work when visiting classrooms and wider provision.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

Riversides School is a special school that provides education for pupils aged 7 to 16 years. The school caters for pupils with social and emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. The school uses two unregistered alternative provision providers.

Executive Headteacher: Ian Enwright

---

### Lead inspector:

Antony Bradshaw, His Majesty's Inspector

### Team inspectors:

Janet Lewis, Ofsted Inspector

Nazya Ghalib, Ofsted Inspector

## Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 27 January 2026

## School and pupil context

### Total pupils

**69**

Well below average

### What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

### School capacity

**68**

Well below average

### What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,152

### Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

**78.26%**

Well above average

### What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

## **Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan**

**100.00%**

Well above average

### **What does this mean?**

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.1%

## **Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support**

**0.00%**

Well below average

### **What does this mean?**

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13%

## **Location deprivation**

**Below average**

### **What does this mean?**

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

## **Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)**

**No resourced provision**

### **What does this mean?**

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

## **Destinations after 16**

### **Destinations after 16**

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>2023 leavers (provisional)</b>	S	91%	S
<b>2022 leavers (revised)</b>	S	93%	S
<b>2021 leavers (revised)</b>	91%	94%	Not available

## **Absence**

### **Overall absence**

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>2024/25 (2 term)</b>	20.2%	8.1%	Above
<b>2023/24 (3 term)</b>	21.4%	8.9%	Above
<b>2022/23 (3 term)</b>	19.1%	9.0%	Above

### **Persistent absence**

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>2024/25 (2 term)</b>	51.4%	21.9%	Above
<b>2023/24 (3 term)</b>	55.7%	25.6%	Above
<b>2022/23 (3 term)</b>	57.9%	26.5%	Above

## **Our grades explained**

## Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

## Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

## Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

## Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

## Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

---

**The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)** inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2026



© Crown copyright