

Rosebank School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111513
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	378312
Inspection dates	8–9 February 2012
Lead inspector	Hilary Ward

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	41
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann White
Headteacher	Judith McGuinness
Date of previous school inspection	26 February 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Hilary Ward

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed nine lessons taught by seven teachers and a higher level teaching assistant. Meetings were held with a member of the governing body, the family support worker, a speech and language therapist, members of staff and pupils. The inspector also had telephone conversations with the school's improvement partner and with a parent. The inspector took account of the 30 parent and carer questionnaires returned along with those from staff and pupils. The inspector looked at the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) but insufficient responses were available to show results for this school. The inspector observed various aspects of the school's work and scrutinised a variety of documents including pupils' work, pupil progress data, the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, curriculum evidence, communications with parents and carers, attendance and safeguarding information.

Information about the school

Rosebank is a small primary special school for pupils with autism spectrum conditions and social, communication and language difficulties. Children entering the Early Years Foundation Stage may have a period of assessment before a final placement is decided. Pupils are admitted at other than the usual times and often at Key Stage 2. Pupils are drawn from across both Cheshire West and Cheshire East. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is about average. There are currently no pupils who speak English as an additional language or who come from minority ethnic backgrounds. In common with most schools for pupils with autism spectrum conditions, the proportion of boys is much higher than girls. All pupils have a statement of special educational need.

The school has Autism Accreditation through the National Autistic Society. It holds a number of other awards including Food for Life Bronze award, Artsmark, Activemark, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Bronze and Silver awards and National Healthy Schools status. The school has an outreach role providing schools with advice about pupils with autism spectrum conditions.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
 Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key Findings

- Rosebank gives its pupils an outstanding quality of education.
- Achievement is outstanding because teaching is outstanding. Teachers and teaching assistants understand the particular needs of pupils with autism spectrum conditions exceptionally well. They are able to ensure that the learning environment reduces anxiety so that pupils can make outstanding progress in their learning and personal development usually from low starting points. The curriculum is exceptionally well designed to cater for the needs of pupils.
- The excellent attention paid to the development of pupils’ communication and independence skills is at the heart of all aspects of the school’s work and provides the foundation pupils need to make exceptional steps in their learning.
- Responses to the inspection questionnaires show that parents and carers and pupils have a very high level of trust in the school. Parents and carers are confident their children are safe.
- Behaviour overall is outstanding. Although some pupils may display challenging behaviour associated with their learning difficulties and disabilities, incidents are extremely well understood and managed so that they rarely disrupt lessons.
- Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and attendance levels are high. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. The school has continued to build on its previous outstanding inspection report to raise standards of education for its pupils. In particular, it is now using data about pupil progress highly effectively to set challenging targets and to examine reasons for under-performance so as to put effective interventions in place. However, in a few

lessons, assessments are not used well enough to define learning outcomes for pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue the improvements made in the assessment of pupil progress even further, by consistently defining more precise learning outcomes for individual pupils in whole-class lesson plans.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

The school's data, which it shares and moderates with other special schools, demonstrate that the vast majority of pupils make outstanding progress during their time in the school. This was confirmed by observations made during the inspection. The excellent provision made in the Early Years Foundation Stage fosters an enjoyment of learning and children make an excellent start to developing their communication and social skills in this setting.

The knowledge and skills of the staff about the communication and behavioural needs of their pupils enable them to plan lessons which will motivate and engage them. Lessons are often very visual and practical. For example, in a science lesson, older pupils were able to make predictions about materials which might dissolve by putting them into water and pouring them through different containers. Parents and carers are exceptionally appreciative of the great strides their children make, sometimes after placements in other settings have been unsuccessful. Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school because of the trust which is built up between them and the adults in the school. They develop their independence and self-management skills exceptionally well. By the use of structured programmes pupils learn to tolerate and interact with each other and to understand right and wrong.

Pupils make an excellent start to reading through very visual and sensory lessons which teach them letters and the sounds they make and by sharing books and acting out stories. They show rapid improvements in their reading skills and many pupils are good functional readers by the time they leave school although they are unlikely to reach national expectations. Data show that pupils make equally outstanding progress in all of the core subjects and in their personal and social development. The data, together with the intimate knowledge which staff have of their pupils, ensures that the school recognises those few who are not making expected progress at an early stage so that appropriate interventions can be put in place to get them back on track.

Quality of teaching

As a result of detailed assessments of pupils' cognitive, behavioural and communication needs, teachers are able to plan lessons which provide realistic but challenging tasks and activities for individual pupils. Progression is carefully planned in manageable steps and pupils are given opportunities to practise and consolidate skills they have learned in one context into other areas. Staff work exceptionally well in class teams and with parents and carers and other professionals to set ambitious targets which are shared with pupils so that they know what they are aiming for and how to improve their work. In a few lessons, learning outcomes for individual pupils are not clearly stated in the teachers' planning.

Teaching assistants are highly skilled in offering appropriate support to pupils and encouraging them to remain on task. They ensure that pupils do not develop a dependency on any one member of staff and help them to develop trusting relationships with a number of adults. As a result, pupils make exceptional progress in developing the independence skills they will need for the future. Lessons are well planned with exciting and interesting resources and proceed at a fast pace. Teachers are skilled at knowing when pupils need a break from an activity but quickly engage them back into the lesson. Many social skills have to be deliberately taught and snack and lunchtimes are structured learning times which provide excellent opportunities to develop pupils' social and communication skills.

Learning usually takes place through a curriculum that is rooted in practical and sensory experiences. These are devised, both on- and off-site, and the latter helps pupils build up their tolerance of different settings. Pupils make frequent trips to local places of interest such as shops, the church and Delamere Forest, and they go trampolining, swimming and for walks. Such activities give them excellent opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. In the school grounds pupils use the cycle track and exercise in the well-equipped play and garden areas.

The Early Years Foundation Stage setting provides children with outstanding opportunities to develop in all aspects of their learning through an excellent mix of child-led and adult-led activities. Although children can often be solitary when they join the setting, they are encouraged to enjoy group sessions of singing, dancing, story and snack and begin to understand concepts such as turn-taking and sharing. Often staff will sit back and let children take the lead, gently introducing verbal communication and visual symbols to develop children's learning and understanding. As a result, they are exceptionally well prepared for the next stages in their learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is outstanding. It is clear that pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance rates are high. All parents and carers who returned questionnaires said that they believe the school keeps their children safe and pupils overwhelmingly said that they feel safe in school. Staff help pupils develop respect for each other and one pupil said sympathetically, 'Oh dear, I expect she's sad again,' of a pupil who was having a particularly difficult day. During lessons and in the playground, pupils are encouraged to support each other. Themed assemblies and personal and social

education lessons help pupils to understand social rules and cover subjects such as bullying. Structured programmes develop pupils' understanding of emotions and empathy. Pupils say there is no bullying in the school and levels of supervision mean bullying is highly unlikely to occur. Priority is given to helping pupils understand risks to themselves and others in a variety of settings and to giving them opportunities to reflect on the likely consequences of their actions.

Parents and carers know that anxieties may create tensions which lead to outbursts or incidents and some of the questionnaire responses indicated that they fully expect their own child may experience such incidents. However, it was also evident that they believe the school staff are particularly skilled at managing these. As one parent said, 'Behaviour is dealt with promptly, calmly and is quickly resolved using visual and audio instructions that the staff know to work effectively.' During the inspection the school was a calm and ordered place and behaviour was never allowed to interrupt the learning of other pupils.

The school ensures the highest standards of behaviour and safety through excellent risk assessments, through partnerships with other services and by creating excellent behaviour plans for individual pupils. These have led to a decrease in incidents of challenging behaviour. The analysis of triggers and strategies to manage behaviour helps pupils to develop the skills they need to understand and so manage their own behaviour over time.

Leadership and management

Leaders and managers have not been complacent since the previous inspection but have sought ways to continually raise standards and to develop provision so that it even better meets the increasingly complex needs of its pupils. The headteacher and her senior team have worked with the governing body to diversify its membership, to involve members in the life of the school and to utilise their skills and expertise. The governing body now makes an exceptional contribution to the outcomes for pupils. Middle managers monitor their subjects and aspects rigorously and work with staff to ensure continuous improvement in their areas of responsibility. The school is more rigorously monitored using its assessment data to ensure that academic progress is deemed by all staff to be at least as important as the personal development of the pupils. As a result, there are shared expectations for the highest achievement for every pupil and outstanding capacity for the school to continue to improve.

The skills and expertise of staff at Rosebank are recognised across the local authority and the teacher in the Early Years Foundation Stage provides extremely well-received advice in mainstream schools and nurseries. The school has plans to develop this provision further.

The curriculum is outstanding. There is a particular emphasis on developing pupils' literacy, numeracy, science, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills through all subjects of the curriculum. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Very structured programmes are put in place to support pupils' learning in these areas and are often the topic for whole-school assemblies and follow up work. Plenty of opportunities are built into the school day for pupils to take physical exercise since this is recognised as an important coping strategy and a

skill for the future. A few pupils may sometimes be taught through a personalised programme when they are unable to join in classroom activities. An after-school club and a residential visit provide further opportunities for pupils to enjoy supported experiences they might not otherwise be able to access.

The promotion of equal opportunities is very good. Although boys significantly outnumber girls, the individualised approach enables all pupils to achieve exceptionally well. The school's arrangements for safeguarding are excellent. Staff and members of the governing body are highly trained in all aspects relating to pupils' safety and well-being.

Partnerships with other professionals, especially health and social care services, with mainstream schools and with other providers, enhance the curriculum and meet the particular needs of pupils with autism spectrum conditions exceptionally well. Speech and language therapists play an especially important role. They work in class with the staff teams to develop individual pupils' communication skills through a shared understanding of the approach which best suits each pupil.

Through the work of the family support worker and by frequent phone calls, texts, newsletters and the home-school diaries, parents and carers feel very well informed about what their child is doing. They know that they can approach the school if they need support for themselves or advice to help out with a difficulty at home. Several commented in their questionnaire returns about the helpful and friendly staff. As one put it, 'The excellent home-school communication through phone calls and book is such a refreshing change from our experience in his previous school.'

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



10 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rosebank School, Northwich, CW8 4QP

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I should especially like to thank the two boys who showed me round the school and explained things to me.

I found out that:

- Rosebank is an outstanding school. It expects you all to do exceptionally well and teachers set you hard targets for your work
- you feel very safe in school and trust the adults who help you
- staff give you excellent support to make choices and explain what you want in a way that keeps you calm
- the school offers you an exciting curriculum with lots of opportunities to exercise and to go and visit places of interest
- it works particularly well with your families so that everyone is sharing the same routines
- the school is led and managed exceptionally well so that we fully expect it will continue to improve.

We have asked the teachers to be even more precise about what they expect each of you to learn every lesson, so that they can be sure you are achieving your targets. You can help by continuing to do the best you can.

Thank you again for showing me your work and for welcoming me into your school.

Yours sincerely

Hilary Ward
Lead inspector

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