

Rocklands School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124517
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	359685
Inspection dates	25–26 May 2011
Reporting inspector	David Muir HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	96
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gwyneth Hodge
Headteacher	Anthony Dooley
Date of previous school inspection	20 February 2008
School address	Purcell Avenue Lichfield WS13 7PH
Telephone number	01543 510760
Fax number	01543 510762
Email address	office@rocklands.staffs.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Inspectors observed six hours of teaching and saw all teachers teaching at least once. This was done through the observation of whole and part lessons and with follow-up conversations with pupils about their learning in some cases. Inspectors also undertook themed learning walks, during which several lessons were visited for a short time. They held meetings with senior leaders and other staff, groups of pupils, three members of the governing body, the headteacher of a local primary school, speech and language therapists, the school nurse and a parent governor. They observed the school's work, and looked at School Improvement Partner reports, the school improvement plan, the headteacher's reports to the governing body, the school's assessment data and a range of other documents. Inspectors also analysed 70 parental questionnaires.

Information about the school

Rocklands School relocated to its current site, co-located with a primary school and a children's centre, in November 2009. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is located in an adjacent building and is managed by the governing body of the school. Most children from the Early Years Foundation Stage move into the school, when they finish there, although a minority transfer to their local mainstream primary schools.

This is a school for pupils with a wide range of needs, including profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD); autistic spectrum disorders (ASD); mental health issues and a range of complex needs, including various syndromes. Pupils come exclusively from the Lichfield area of Staffordshire. The majority of pupils are transported in to the school by local authority transport. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds and from homes where English is their first language.

The school currently holds several awards including: the Eco Schools bronze award, National Healthy Schools status and the International School Award at foundation level.

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	2
Achievement	2
Teaching	2
Leadership and management	2
Behaviour and safety	1
Does the school adequately promote the pupils' well-being?	Yes
Does the school adequately promote community cohesion?	Yes
Does the school provide value for money?	Yes

Key findings

Rocklands School is a good school which has improved significantly since the previous inspection. It is outstanding in the area of behaviour and safety, due to the exemplary way in which excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning are promoted throughout the school. Pupils enjoy their time in the school and attendance is above average. Due to their special educational needs and/or disabilities, the attainment of pupils on entry to the school and when they leave is low. During their time in the school, achievement is good as they make at least good progress and some do exceptionally well. Good learning by pupils in lessons, including those seen during the inspection, is the result of the good teaching and outstanding personal development. The school's data supports the judgement that pupils make good progress over time. Improvements in teaching are notable. However, the progress made by pupils, and the quality of teaching has been slightly limited as the school does not have effective systems in place to share the best practice evident in the school among all staff.

Leaders provide drive, passion and vision which permeate all areas of the school community. The performance of the school is monitored in fine detail and the information is used to plan improvements well. The school uses commercial assessment schemes and comparative data to make judgments about the progress of individuals but it is not yet sufficiently evaluating data for groups of pupils. Relationships with parents and carers are outstanding. The high number of overwhelmingly positive responses, by parents and carers to the inspection questionnaire, show that they profoundly value the work of the school in providing good quality education and care for their children. There is ample evidence of parents' views being acted on, to improve the school. The governing body plays its part well in devising, monitoring and evaluating the school improvement plan. All aspects of safeguarding, which were inspected, reflect the school's focus on pupil

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welfare and safety.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress for all individuals and groups of pupils across the school by:
 - ensuring that the systems for monitoring and tracking progress are effective and comprehensive by monitoring all cohorts and groups of pupils over time to identify trends or patterns in progress with regard to their special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - raising the overall quality of teaching from good to outstanding by identifying and sharing the best practice available in the school.

Main report

In all lessons observed during the inspection, in all key stages, learning was at least good and some was outstanding. The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make excellent progress in developing their personal skills and enjoyment of learning. These attitudes are transferred into the main school, where progress continues to be at least good over time. In the best lessons, pupils are engaged well and motivated by activities which build on their interests and enjoyment. This results in generally good learning taking place. Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. Staff know the pupils and their needs in minute detail and, as a result, plan well to meet their needs. Although the data collected by the school shows that pupils generally make good progress, there is evidence that some pupils make outstanding progress over time. This is due to improvements they make in their readiness to learn and the effective support by other adults in the class. Individual data suggests that there is no difference in how well different pupils achieve, although the school is not yet sufficiently analysing data for groups of pupils to be certain of this. Pupils show good improvements in their reading skills as appropriate to their abilities and special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Behaviour seen, in all areas, during the inspection was outstanding. This reflects school records and the responses by parents and carers, pupils and staff to the Ofsted questionnaire. There were no responses which suggested negative behaviour, or concerns about safety. At all times, pupils are trusted by staff and encouraged to develop their independence. During lessons and around the school, excellent relationships between all members of the school community are evident. This is also supported by pupils' attitudes in lessons, where their behaviour makes a significant contribution to their learning. They are engaged, excited and interested in what they are learning. Around the school, they are polite and welcoming to visitors, showing a curiosity and interest that reflects their keenness to learn about the world around them. The very effective behaviour management by staff is proportionate and focused on developing pupils' awareness of their behaviour. A consistent, tireless and impressively good-humoured approach, from all staff, to behaviour management helps pupils develop an understanding of the rights or wrongs of their behavioural choices. Pupils feel safe and say that there is no bullying in the school. The school's

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records and questionnaires from parents and carers support pupils' view on bullying. The positive attitude which pupils have to learning is initiated in the Early Years Foundation Stage and continued and developed in the school.

The school has developed a strong health promotion programme, which includes input on a range of issues such as diet, dental hygiene, drug awareness, road safety and yoga among others. All pupils who need them have well-thought-out care plans which are contributed to, and reviewed, by a range of specialists including a paediatrician, speech and language therapists and the child and adolescent mental health service as required. Parents receive much valued support in how they can manage aspects of their children's special educational needs and/or disabilities and are fully involved in all aspects of planning for the care of their children. Transition in to the school from the Early Years Foundation Stage is extremely well planned, so that parents and carers and their children are fully supported at this time of significant change. Transition is also well planned out of the school, to ensure a smooth move to the next stage of pupils' lives.

As a result of teachers' detailed knowledge of pupils, lessons are planned well to meet the needs of all pupils. Activities engage and motivate pupils to learn. Teachers provide a variety of activities and resources in lessons, which are suitable for all pupils' needs. Although planning shows that pupils are divided into three groups within lessons for teaching, the work is more finely tuned to match individual needs and no pupil has work which is inappropriate to them. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils and are effective in challenging them. All adults in the class question pupils effectively, to ascertain how well they are learning, and use this information to modify and adapt teaching to ensure that progress is at least good. Pupils assess their own work at a level appropriate to their abilities and this also provides opportunities for them to think about their learning. There is a whole-school focus on developing pupils' social interaction and basic skills, including communication, so that they are well placed to successfully access the curriculum. The skilful interventions of teaching assistants are well balanced so that they develop pupils' learning and independence in parallel. The result of the good teaching and support is that all pupils make better than expected progress across the curriculum and in their personal development.

The school has a strong ethos of placing pupils at the centre of its work and this is a vision which is shared by all members of the school community. The ambition and drive demonstrated by all staff is a key factor in the improvements evident since the previous inspection. Members of staff have worked relentlessly on developing systems which promote higher expectations of learning. An impressive example of this is the work done on devising a curriculum framework for the development of literacy and numeracy with pupils who are working at P-levels. This has been implemented and already there is evidence of the impact it is having in terms of how these areas are taught. Another example of high quality work is the development of community cohesion in the school. The school has worked closely with a wide range of external organisations, including the local theatre and dance companies, several schools and the local annual arts festival. All of these facets, and others, have been

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well planned to provide an impressive array of experiences and activities to promote quality inclusion opportunities. This is evaluated for the impact that it has had on the work of the school. School leaders have also reviewed and developed the curriculum. A creative curriculum approach has been implemented and has contributed significantly to a flexibility of approach which has allowed teachers to take risks to successfully engage pupils using an imaginative range of teaching methods.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have implemented systems to collect data related to the performance of the school and pupils. Leaders can now track the progress that all pupils make in all subjects. They are also developing assessment systems for areas of personal development such as social interaction and mobility. The new systems have allowed progress for all pupils to be celebrated. The school is now starting to develop this further so that it can more effectively monitor groups of pupils, and any trends identified at the earliest possible opportunity, to enable leaders to develop provision in response to the data. The school is strong in promoting equality of opportunities through its monitoring procedures. Leaders are quickly made aware if any pupils are at risk of underperforming. There is no evidence in the school of discrimination and the promotion of this area is taken seriously at all levels. The school has outstanding strategies in place to promote pupils' moral, spiritual and social development. This is reflected in their understanding of right and wrong, the chances they have to reflect and how they develop positive relationships and an understanding of the consequences of their actions. Pupils' cultural development is good and the school is working to develop partnerships which promote areas of this aspect which are not readily accessible within the school. The school has developed partnerships which provide a diverse range of inclusion opportunities for pupils, including increasingly strong relationships with the school on the same site.

The governing body provides effective questioning to the school's leadership and its members are keenly aware of the strengths of the school and how it needs to further improve. The developments since the last inspection and the plans that the school has in place to build on these, shows that it has a good capacity to improve further.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rocklands School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 70 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 96 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Q1 My child is happy at school	59	84	11	16	0	0	0	0
Q2 My child feels safe at school	58	83	12	17	0	0	0	0
Q3 The school helps my child to achieve as well as they can	53	76	16	23	0	0	0	0
Q4 The school meets my child’s particular needs	51	73	18	26	0	0	0	0
Q5 The school ensures my child is well looked after	61	87	8	11	1	1	0	0
Q6 Teaching at this school is good	58	83	11	16	0	0	0	0
Q7 There is a good standard of behaviour at this school	50	71	17	24	0	0	0	0
Q8 Lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour	38	55	24	35	0	0	0	0
Q9 The school deals with any cases of bullying well	46	67	15	22	0	0	0	0
Q10 The school helps me to support my child’s learning	50	71	17	24	1	1	0	0
Q11 The school responds to my concerns and keeps me well informed	52	74	17	24	1	1	0	0
Q12 The school is well led and managed	59	84	10	14	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The achievement of all pupils. ■ Behaviour and safety. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The effectiveness of leadership and management. <p>and taking into consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ how well the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
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.

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.



27 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rocklands School, Lichfield WS13 7PH

On behalf of the inspectors who visited your school recently, I would like to thank you very much for making our visit very interesting and enjoyable.

We found that Rocklands School is a good school. The headteacher, leadership team and staff all work very hard to make your time in school successful. Your behaviour and attitudes to learning are strengths of the school, in particular the way you learn to manage your own behaviour and learn the difference between right and wrong. We judged that behaviour and safety are outstanding. In meetings and in the questionnaire, you told us that you like school and this shows in your attendance. You also make good progress in the work that you do in lessons. The teaching and the support you receive in the school are also good. Adults know when to support you and know when to leave you to work independently. You should all be proud of the contribution you make to the school.

I have asked the school to improve the following areas so it can be better than now.

- Make your progress better by:
 - making sure that teachers track your progress more effectively by looking at how well groups of pupils progress over time
 - improving teaching from good to outstanding by sharing the best practice in the school and building on what is already good.

You can all help with this, by using the school council to tell the teachers what you like best and what makes you even more interested in learning than you are already.

Once again, thank you very much for the time you spent with us during the visit and we would like to wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Muir
Her Majesty's Inspector

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