

Regency High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131532
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	381357
Inspection dates	12–13 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Martyn Groucutt

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	154
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	46
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jonathan Pearsall
Headteacher	Frank Steel
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2009
School address	Carnforth Drive Warndon Worcester WR4 9JL
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Age group	11–19
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. A total of 20 lessons, taught by 20 different teachers, were observed. Inspectors held meetings with representatives of the governing body, members of the school's leadership team and students. They observed the school's work, and looked at students' work, teachers' planning and data on student progress, together with procedures for safeguarding and protecting students. A total of 60 parent and carer questionnaires were scrutinised, together with 46 from staff and 102 from students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What has been the impact and effectiveness of gaining specialist college status for the school, other local schools and the community?
- Has increased use of data analysis supported enhanced achievement for individual students?
- What has been the impact of broadening the curriculum and increasing opportunities for external accreditation?
- How effectively does the school work with other professionals and with parents and carers to maximise the support it gives to every student?

Information about the school

Regency High School is a special school providing education for students with a range of learning difficulties and disabilities, including moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD) and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). Students often have additional needs, including behavioural, emotional and social disabilities, and all are in receipt of a statement of special educational needs. Nearly two thirds are boys and the large majority are of White British heritage. Very few speak English as an additional language. Numbers known to be eligible for free schools meals are well above the national average. The school is a specialist college for sport and citizenship, and is in receipt of the Green Flag Eco-award.

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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Regency High is a good and rapidly improving school where all students, irrespective of their individual learning difficulties, are able to make good progress and maximise their potential. Parents and teachers show strong support for the school, and students told the inspectors how much they enjoy attending. This is because, as one member of staff put it: 'Students are at the core of all decisions and activities. Their needs are continually being reviewed and assessed, and met at a higher level than I have experienced in any other school.' The school's success is reflected in outstanding student attendance, which is far higher than that usually seen in special schools and, indeed, in mainstream secondary schools. Behaviour is typically outstanding and, for those students who display very challenging behaviour, the behaviour support team's effective interventions enable them and their classmates to maintain a clear focus on learning. Dynamic leadership, effective self-evaluation, the rigour with which action was taken to address issues raised at the last inspection, a sharp focus on improvement and the total commitment of staff to ensuring the success of the school provide an outstanding capacity to sustain the clear improvement made since the last inspection.

Clear leadership has been an important factor in increasing the school's effectiveness and students' achievement. This is reinforced by the excellent facilities now available and the positive ways in which the school's specialist college status has been used in this school, other local schools and the community. It is reflected in the outstanding promotion of healthy lifestyles, which includes opportunities to use the excellent opportunities for fitness as well as understanding of the importance of diet. Sixth form provision meets students' needs effectively, while also providing very good support for the transition to the next phase in adult life. The curriculum is well supported by a range of outstanding partnerships, as are the learning, physical and medical needs of students. There are effective opportunities for learning that meet the needs of different groups, including those with complex needs. In Key Stage 4 and beyond, the options programme that has been introduced has helped ensure that students are fully engaged in learning that is relevant to their specific needs. The wider informal curriculum is supported by a range of activities, trips and clubs that enhance learning.

The excellent knowledge that the school has of its students is at the heart of the outstanding care, guidance and support it provides. Links with parents and carers are outstanding and particular care is taken to meet individual needs. The close collaboration between teachers and health professionals helps to minimise barriers to

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learning. The school is a safe and nurturing environment where students are able to develop skills that will support them as they develop towards adulthood. As a result of their success, self-esteem grows and this is supported and enhanced by the outstanding care, guidance and support that they receive. Students' future economic well-being is promoted by outstanding provision that includes opportunities for mini-enterprise, work experience, excellent careers advice and guidance from Year 9 supported by extremely positive links with the Connexions service, and a range of commercial partnerships. Outstanding partnerships support the school's work in citizenship and include the excellent work of the family support worker.

Central to the improvement since the last inspection has been the enhanced use of data and the school's ability to track the progress of individual students. Teaching and learning are now much more focused on meeting individual needs, and students demonstrate good progress and achievement. However, the school has not yet fully developed measures to measure progress against the national progression data for learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The large majority of teaching is good or better, supported by outstanding team work between teachers and teaching assistants which enables students to make good progress from their varied starting points. However, on occasion there is a lack of focus in lesson objectives so that opportunities to evaluate gains in knowledge, skills and understanding are sometimes missed. Work is assessed regularly and evidence gathered from a range of sources. Within the limits of their understanding, students are aware of their targets and the progress made towards achieving them. Opportunities for students to assess their own work and that of their peers are used very effectively.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop its work in comparing the achievement of its own students with that of similar schools by linking its own data with the national progression data for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Ensure that all lessons have clear and focused objectives that enable teachers to evaluate students' gains in knowledge, skills and understanding.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

The overall standards reached by students are well below the national average, but this is a reflection of the complexity of their needs and learning disabilities. Students' achievement from their starting points is good. Teachers are now using a greater range of data and assessment in order to measure individual achievement. They are in a far better position to track progress over time and have a clear picture of the levels at which every individual is performing, enabling them to differentiate their teaching so that students' potential is fulfilled. Effective use of data, utilising a range of software, is enabling teachers to set targets and monitor students' progress

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towards them. However, national progression data for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is not yet being fully utilised in order that the school can fully compare how well its students are doing in relation to similar schools. Maximising student outcomes is at the forefront of classroom practice. From the start of Key Stage 4, options further refine the opportunity for students to follow programmes that meet identified needs and this links through to the enhanced range of accreditation that is now available. Learning is therefore matched to need and students show their enjoyment in learning as they demonstrate success. Sometimes evidence is gathered in imaginative and effective ways, such as that seen in a Year 7 English lesson. Here students were recorded by camcorder during their preparation for their first independent reading lesson. This was then played back using the interactive whiteboard as a tool for engaging students in assessment.

The school’s specialist status has impacted across the whole school, reflected in the improved approach to data collection across all subjects. Effective programmes, including sensory work, enable students with profound and multiple learning difficulties to make good progress. Attainment and overall progress have continued to improve in English, mathematics and science. When the data suggested that progress was less rapid in science, a detailed review was undertaken to ascertain why and this has allowed action to be taken so that progress is now even across all the core subjects.

Students take pride in their achievements and display outstanding behaviour in lessons and around the school, including supporting each other. Those who display challenging behaviour are supported effectively by a specialist team so that the impact on their own learning and that of others is minimised. The specialist sports college status is reflected in the outstanding support given in promoting students’ excellent adoption of healthy lifestyles. The exceptional range of partnerships the school has developed are fully utilised to promote students’ outstanding development of workplace and other skills that support their future economic well-being. The promotion of citizenship is enabling students to develop life skills and a wide range of links within the local community enables students to develop positive engagement. Students say they feel safe and care is taken to ensure that they remain so. The school listens carefully to the student voice and this helps to promote the strong commitment shown by students. Displays around the school, including some striking pieces of art from the students themselves confirm the effectiveness of students’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is effectively supporting students' good progress because it is typically well planned and, in the best lessons, it is carefully structured to meet the needs of the whole range of ability. The large majority of teaching is based on a clear understanding of students' prior attainment which leads to appropriate tasks and groupings, including setting in the key subjects at Key Stage 4. The best lessons have clear, shared objectives, although this was not universally the case. Teachers and their teaching assistants make outstanding teams and enable individualised learning to become a reality. Lessons engage students' interests well and this promotes their outstanding behaviour and attitudes to learning. Teaching and learning are often enhanced by the effective and exciting use of technology, including very good support for students with profound and multiple learning difficulties who have communication or other difficulties. The use of switches, for example, extends their opportunities to control their environment and make their feelings clear. The fact that teachers now have such good knowledge of individual student's prior attainment means that they can better plan effective lessons. Enquiry methods are used successfully to promote learning and opportunities for self- and peer-assessment are used effectively to reinforce this.

The Key Stage 3 curriculum is based on the National Curriculum, while at Key Stage 4 a personalised curriculum is leading to a wide range of accreditation. These include Entry Level, Functional Skills, and Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) courses, which include work on personal and social skills and employability. There are strong partnerships which support both the formal and the more informal curriculum, including trips and a range of clubs and activities. The school's specialisms make a powerful contribution across the curriculum. Effective involvement in the local community, such as working with the local library and community centre, reinforces citizenship. The sports college status has provided some outstanding facilities for sport and recreation. Hydrotherapy is a strong feature, allowing students with profound and multiple learning difficulties to achieve flexibility and confidence, and enhancing their self-esteem. Therapy is integral to the learning activities of many students and close collaboration between education and health

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professionals is illustrative of the outstanding care, guidance and support the school provides for all its students. This was very well illustrated in a lesson in the hydrotherapy pool where the teacher and physiotherapist were successfully working together, alongside support assistants. Students say that they feel safe and that there are always adults to whom they can talk if there is a problem. Child protection and safeguarding, including detailed risk assessments, are prominent features of school life. Students are taught about personal safety, including internet safety and cyber-bullying, with parents being involved in reinforcing these messages. Transition arrangements are detailed and effective, and for those leaving the school, demonstrate exemplary practice in terms of joint working with the local authority and the Connexions service. Very well-targeted support for all students enables them to make the best of their opportunities throughout school and when they leave their destinations are tracked carefully.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides clear and effective leadership, combined with a well-defined vision for the school's development which is firmly based on maximising the potential of its students. Leadership at all levels is effective and within the wider leadership team people know their roles and responsibilities, working as an integrated team while at the same time being accountable for individual areas. As a result, management is becoming increasingly effective over time, supporting staff and enhancing the quality of education. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities and is keen to support the school, but is not yet fully maximising its role in scrutinising policy and practice. Engagement with parents is highly effective and sometimes innovative. For example, as part of the reporting procedures for students with profound and multiple learning difficulties staff have started to send home video clips of the children taken at different points in the year to supplement the traditional school report, so that parents can see the progress being made. Links with a range of agencies are strong. Very close professional liaison supports effective safeguarding procedures as well as the provision of therapies, ensuring that excellent provision is made for these potentially vulnerable young people. There are strong links with the local and wider community supporting good community cohesion, often enhanced by the sports college specialism, such as sharing the facilities of the excellent hydrotherapy pool with other schools and with a local group for profoundly disabled young adults. The expertise within the school supports a very effective outreach team who visited 100 mainstream schools over the last academic year.

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Students learn about other faiths and traditions, and their understanding of the lives of others is enhanced through links with a school in East Africa. Policies to promote equalities are in place and their promotion is a prominent feature of school life, providing a clear focus on supporting everyone being able to fulfil their potential. This, together with the improving outcomes and clear focus on excellence which is enabling the school to demonstrate such effective progress, demonstrates the good value for money provided by the school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

Provision in the sixth form is primarily for students with complex and severe needs, and also includes students identified as being vulnerable young adults. The provision is often innovative and engages students effectively so that they enjoy their learning, which also incorporates opportunities to develop functional skills. Outcomes are good and strong links with the local authority and the Connexions services enable students to leave as young adults with effective places in continuing education or work placements. Students become increasingly independent and respond positively to opportunities to accept responsibilities within school and work experience on a regular basis in the community. The curriculum is effectively individualised, with clear learning goals in place for all students. Effective assessment supports clear target setting and identifies next steps in learning. The increased opportunities for external accreditation are reflected in students’ outcomes and the growing range of awards reflects the success they achieve. Leadership and management are good and the head of sixth form is an effective member of the school’s wider leadership team, supporting smooth transition into post-16 education.

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These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

The very positive views of the large majority of parents are reflected in many comments made in the questionnaires, the response to which was far higher than the average for a special school. Quite a number left gaps in their responses to individual questions, because their children were new to the school, the inspection being held in the second week of the new school year. One typical comment was: 'I am very happy with Regency and I am pleased I was given the opportunity to send my son there.' The outstanding quality of the care, guidance and support the school provides is well reflected in the comment, 'Regency is a haven of love and care for special children.' Where a few more negative comments were made they were looked into, but overall the inspectors share the views of the large majority that this is a good and effective school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Regency High 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 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 60 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 154 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	70	15	25	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	47	79	11	18	2	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	33	55	19	32	4	7	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	47	24	40	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	42	70	15	25	1	2	1	2
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	28	47	25	42	4	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	60	23	38	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	29	48	21	35	2	3	1	2
The school meets my child’s particular needs	37	62	19	32	1	2	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	65	17	28	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	53	22	37	4	7	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	38	63	19	32	1	2	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	42	70	14	23	1	2	1	2

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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 school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



14 September 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Regency High School, Worcester, WR4 9JL

I am writing to thank you for the warm welcome you gave to the inspectors who visited your school recently. You go to a good school that helps you to do your very best and make good progress.

You obviously enjoy school a lot, your attendance and behaviour are excellent and you get on very well with your teachers and with each other. Your school is a specialist sports college and you make excellent use of the resources this brings, especially the pool and the fitness room. Your teachers are also able to help young people in other schools and groups in your community. Teachers and teaching assistants work together very effectively in your lessons. As a result, the work you do in class is just right for helping you do your very best.

Although school helps you to learn and make good progress, we have asked them to do two things that will make it an even better place.

- We want the school to compare the progress you make with that made by students in other similar schools, so you know just how well you are doing compared to students across the country.
- We have asked your teachers to make sure that you are always aware of what your lessons are about so they can always see how much you have learned and understood, and what new skills you have developed.

You can help the school improve further by continuing to work so hard and being involved in school life. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Martyn Groucutt
Lead inspector

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