

Rodillian School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108080
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	377698
Inspection dates	22–23 May 2012
Lead inspector	Philip Jarrett HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,267
Of which number on roll in the sixth form	117
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Sheldrake
Headteacher	Andy Goulty
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 42 lessons, each taught by a different teacher. Meetings were held with groups of students, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including the school and subject improvement plans, monitoring records, analyses of students' performance, and samples of students' work. Questionnaires from students were scrutinised as well as 147 questionnaires completed by parents and carers.

Information about the school

Rodillian School is larger than average. It has an above-average proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals. Most students are of White British heritage. There are a high proportion of children in social care. The proportion of disabled students and students with special educational needs is above average, including those assessed as school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. The school is currently in a partnership with a local special school some of whose students attend lessons at Rodillian. It has received a number of awards including the Arts Award, Excellence in Specialism and the Top 10 Most Improved Schools (Specialist Schools and Academies Trust) award. The school meets the current floor standards, the minimum standards expected by the government.

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 of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key Findings

- Rodillian School is a good school that has improved considerably over recent years. Strong and highly effective leadership and management have contributed to outstanding behaviour and a substantial rise in achievement. The school is not yet outstanding primarily because, although teaching is good overall, there is some variability that currently limits students' progress. The sixth form has also improved and is now good.
- Attainment is currently at least in line with the national average. This represents a considerable improvement from a point, several years ago, when standards were well below average. Progress is currently good for all groups of students, including in the sixth form.
- A considerable amount of work has gone into improving behaviour. The school is now highly orderly and students feel very safe. Consistently positive behaviour contributes to good progress in lessons. Students are polite, courteous and treat other people with respect.
- Teaching is good, including in the sixth form, supported by students' positive attitudes to work and strong desire to do well. There is some very effective practice in teaching, assessment and marking across the school, as a result of the well-planned whole-school strategy to raise standards, including the management of staff's performance. Where lessons observed were less effective, this was sometimes the result of teachers providing too few opportunities for students to work independently. Lessons were not always planned explicitly to provide activities that challenged the learning of different groups of students and marking did not always identify the next steps for students.
- The headteacher, very well supported by senior leaders and managers and the governing body, has been highly successful in delivering substantial improvement in behaviour, achievement and teaching. There are clear and effective plans for further improvement, based on detailed and effective monitoring and evaluation.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on existing good practice to increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by improving:
 - the effectiveness of teachers' lesson plans in promoting the progress of different groups of students
 - opportunities for students to work independently and develop initiative in all lessons
 - the use of marking to identify clear, next steps in learning for students.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Attainment, that was previously very low, has improved year-on-year and is currently at least in line with the national average. Weaknesses in mathematics have been addressed and standards in English, including reading, have improved. As a result, the proportion of students who have already achieved grades A* to C in both English and mathematics at GCSE is substantially higher than before. Progress from below average starting points on entry to the school is now good for all groups of students, including disabled students and those with special educational needs. Although the standards reached by students in the sixth form are below the national average, there is an upward trend in standards and progress in the sixth form is now good.

Students learn well. They enjoy lessons and persevere well even where teaching is less engaging. In the most effective lessons, they are encouraged to work collaboratively and develop initiative. This brings the best out of students. For example, in one Year 7 creative curriculum lesson, a group of students had been sufficiently engaged by the task of designing their own museum to do extra work at home and produce some good quality animation work. Students support each other and speak confidently and well, when given the opportunity. Lessons are very rarely disrupted by any poor behaviour and this makes a significant contribution to learning. In a minority of lessons, where teachers control lessons too tightly, students listen well but are obliged to remain rather passive. Parents and carers feel that their children are progressing well and this inspection confirms that.

Quality of teaching

Older students confirm that teaching has improved greatly, partly as a result of much better behaviour. Students respect teachers and consider them to be friendly and supportive. A very large majority of students, parents and carers expressed positive views about teaching and the inspection broadly confirms their view. Teaching meets the needs of disabled students and those with special educational needs well and this, supported by specialist support, enables them to make good progress. There is an increasing consistency of approach in lesson planning and delivery across the school that reflects whole-school training and guidance. Relationships are invariably strong and this helps to promote students' personal development.

In the best lessons, teaching is frequently creative and stimulates students through well-chosen group work and tasks that make them think. In these lessons teachers use a range of effective resources to engage students and make learning objectives clear. They also use questions well both to check understanding and to encourage students to develop and explain their ideas. Good subject knowledge characterises many of the better lessons and aids learning, supported by enthusiastic delivery. Whole-school training on literacy informs some very good lessons, for example leading to extended writing across the curriculum or a close attention to aspects of spelling and subject vocabulary.

In less effective lessons, teachers are more likely to stick to a predetermined plan and not to vary the structure of the lesson to meet students' needs. Teaching is not always flexible enough to challenge students at different levels of ability so, for example, more-able students are limited to working on a fairly easy task. Although there are some very good examples of helpful and detailed marking in a number of subjects, practice is inconsistent in departments as well as across the school and some teachers do not give clear enough guidance on how students might improve work in their subjects.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students, teachers and governors all confirm the substantial improvement in behaviour in recent years. The school presents a highly orderly environment which supports learning very well. Almost all students say that they feel safe in school and this is confirmed by what their parents and carers say and by the inspection evidence. Students have a well-developed understanding of what constitutes bullying and can talk clearly about, for example homophobia. They confirm that bullying rarely occurs in school. The school has worked hard and effectively to improve attendance. As a result, attendance is at least average for most current year groups, and there has been a considerable reduction in the number of persistent absentees.

Senior leaders have developed a highly systematic policy on behaviour which is well understood by all students. It contains a good balance of rewards with sanctions. One parent wrote to praise the impact of this policy and in particular 'the positive way that this encourages children' to behave and learn. Expectations of behaviour are high and the school takes a 'zero tolerance' approach to misbehaviour. For example, fixed-term exclusions are used as a deliberate strategy to emphasise the importance placed on high standards of behaviour for all students. The school monitors behaviour data well and the rapid reduction in the number of fixed-term exclusions confirms the positive impact of its policies. There has been only one permanent exclusion in recent years and this is much better than the national picture. A very large majority of students, parents and carers expressed the view that behaviour is of a high standard in the school. Inspection evidence supports this view.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are outstanding because of the significant improvement in all aspects of the school in a relatively short period. This is a result of clear and well-focused leadership by the headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body, working closely together. The school has developed an effective, strategic approach to improvement. This strategy first addressed issues with behaviour, supported by the move to a new school building with excellent resources which encouraged a mature response from students. Once behaviour had improved, senior leaders focused on improving teaching and departmental

management. Teachers confirm the impact of an imaginative teaching and learning programme that includes pair coaching, the identification and sharing of good practice, training on whole-school issues such as literacy and learning skills, and a rigorous approach to weaknesses in teaching, including clear targets set through performance management.

At the same time, the school has developed an innovative curriculum to meet the needs of its students. The response to low standards on entry to the school has been to introduce a cross-curricular programme that seeks to develop students' generic learning skills, supported by departmental initiatives on literacy and extra support for reading. Students have responded positively to these developments. The curriculum is broad and balanced but with appropriate emphasis on securing the basic skills that students need. The success of the programme is seen in rising standards in both English and mathematics. The curriculum promotes social and moral development effectively.

The school also promotes equality and tackles discrimination well. For example, staff have worked hard and successfully to reduce the proportion of students who do not achieve academic qualifications. In addition, students from a nearby special school are well integrated and many take advantage of the courses at Rodillian to achieve highly. Approaches to safeguarding are thorough and inventive. The capacity for further improvement is very good as a result of the consistent trend of rapid improvement over recent years and well-considered plans to address existing areas of weakness.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
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.



24 May 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Rodillian School, Wakefield WF3 3PS

My colleagues and I enjoyed meeting you during the recent inspection. We thought that your behaviour was excellent and we enjoyed our discussions with many polite and respectful students. You told us that you enjoy school, get on well with the teachers and feel safe. We agree with those views. You also said that lessons were rarely disrupted by poor behaviour and that bullying was only rarely an issue in the school. That was confirmed by our own evidence.

We think that your school is a good one, with considerable strengths in behaviour and safety. The school is very well led. In a few years, behaviour has improved significantly and standards have risen. Standards are now in line with the average and improving. You make good progress. You told us that teachers are friendly and helpful. We think that teaching is good overall. We have suggested some ways in which it could be even better. We have suggested that all teachers should try even harder to:

- use marking to tell you more clearly how to improve your work
- plan lessons that enable all groups of students to do equally well
- give you more opportunities to work independently and use your initiative.

We believe that the school has the capacity to get even better. The headteacher and his colleagues have improved the school a lot in recent years and they have put in place some effective plans to raise standards even more. With your help, I am confident that they can be successful.

Yours sincerely

Philip Jarrett
Her Majesty's Inspector

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