

Rachel Madocks School

Eagle Avenue, Waterloo, PO8 9XP

Inspection dates 18–19 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The quality of teaching varies across the school. There is good practice in most classes but not all teachers ensure that pupils' work is carefully matched to the different abilities in their class and that there is a good pace to learning.
- Pupils' progress is good in Years 7 to 9 but this is not the case for all year groups, because teaching is not always good.
- Students in post-16 are benefiting from a new curriculum but this is not yet ensuring their progress is good.
- Information about pupils' progress is not analysed well enough to ensure senior leaders, staff and governors have a clear understanding of the progress of the different groups in the school.
- Systems for checking the work of the school are not used effectively to ensure that governors and staff have a sufficiently clear picture of what is working well and what needs to be improved.

The school has the following strengths

- Leadership has taken effective action in addressing inadequate teaching and as a result teaching is improving. New teachers have brought a range of expertise and are committed to improving the school.
- The school provides a very safe, caring environment for pupils. Pupils are happy and well behaved. They enjoy their lessons and are very keen learners.
- Leaders and managers have radically improved the school's systems for checking each pupil's progress and ensuring that teachers have a good understanding of the levels pupils are working at.
- Training for staff is effective, for example the use of sign and communication strategies across the school is good.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 17 lessons or parts of lessons by 10 teaching staff. They held meetings with staff and met pupils to talk about their work and school. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work, including samples of work from the previous academic year and data regarding the progress of pupils. A range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, plans for development and minutes of meetings of the governing body, was also seen.
- They took account of 16 responses to the on-line Parent View survey, a letter from a parent or carer and also met one parent or carer during the inspection.

Inspection team

Sarah Mascall, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Jo Curd

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Rachel Madocks caters for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and severe learning difficulties. Several pupils have very complex medical needs. A few pupils are on the autistic spectrum disorder.
- All pupils have statements of special educational needs. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds is very small. At the time of the inspection there were a very small number of pupils in the care of the local authority.
- There have been a number of staff changes in recent years including in subject leadership. At the time of the inspection six of the 10 teachers had been appointed in the last two years.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to ensure that pupils make at least good progress by:
 - making sure that the work set for pupils is matched more carefully to their individual abilities
 - improving the pace of learning so that less time is spent on whole-class teaching and better use is made of teaching assistants to support small groups in learning activities
 - sharing the very good practice that exists in the school in order to model best teaching
- Improve the use of data regarding pupils' progress so that senior leaders, staff and governors have a clearer understanding of the progress of the different groups in the school and are better placed to provide challenge and raise standards
- Improve leadership and management by strengthening systems for monitoring the work of the school so that staff and governors have a clearer understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of provision.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The very caring and positive relationships with staff ensure that pupils gain in confidence and develop into keen learners. This is very evident in the Early Years Foundation Stage where children settle quickly and respond well to a wide range of learning opportunities. Resources are used well to stimulate learning and encourage pupils to become independent.
- As they move up through the school pupils develop their skills in literacy and numeracy. However, their rates of progress vary and are not consistently good for all pupils.
- For those in Years 7 to 9 progress tends to pick up and pupils talk positively about their work and what they have learnt. One pupil was very keen to show off her work and very proud of her ability to count in twos.
- Different communication methods are used well across the school and pupils make good use of symbols, sign and communication aids to express their ideas and make choices.
- Students in the sixth form are benefiting from a revised curriculum and a wider range of accreditation. This is newly established and not yet ensuring that they make good progress in their learning.
- Those pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties benefit from a range of sensory activities that stimulate and encourage them to respond. A pupil indicated through head movements which statue of Buddha he preferred and whether he enjoyed the feel of the lotus flower.
- For those pupils at an early stage of reading, the use of phonics (sounds that letters make) is developing. Pupils clearly enjoy listening to stories and identifying the different characters. Pupils were keen to tell the story of The Troll and showed good recall of the characters and events that occurred. One pupil was very amused by the fact that the troll had had to walk the plank!
- Most pupils feel they have made good progress in their work and nearly all parents and carers who responded to the Parent View survey were positive about the progress their children were making.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- There are examples of good teaching across the school and this is evident in most lessons. There are consistent strengths, particularly in the wide range of resources and ensuring there are different activities. For example, resources were used to help pupils visualise the characters and their actions in the story of The Troll. The model of the pirate ship and bridge as well as the troll, mouse and spider helped pupils understand, for example, when the troll was hiding under the bridge.
- Where teaching is most stimulating for pupils the activities are practical and fun. For example, in a mathematics lesson pupils had to move around the class choosing items of different shapes and taking them to their desk. They had to identify on the interactive whiteboard different shapes from only a very small section of the picture. The enjoyment of the pupils and the good progress they all made in the lesson were very evident.
- In several lessons, and in pupils' folders, there is evidence that pupils are set different tasks matched to their ability, but this is not consistent. In some classes all pupils do the same task regardless of their ability. This was typified in a lesson on healthy foods where each pupil had to select different foods even though some were unclear of the different foods involved. The task for all pupils was to cut out pictures of a healthy meal even though it was evident that not all were aware of what they had to choose.
- The pace of learning in this lesson and in others is sometimes slow because teachers ask each pupil to carry out a task while the rest wait. There is, on these occasions, limited use of staff to work with small groups of pupils to complete tasks and be involved in learning.
- All staff are effective in supporting pupils in their behaviour. The small number of pupils

with challenging behaviour are encouraged to participate in lessons and staff and pupils make good use of symbols to communicate what they should be doing.

- There are good examples of teachers recording the help and support pupils are given with their work and annotating pupils' work. Detailed records are kept of pupils' work and experiences, and teachers' skills in assessing the progress of pupils have improved considerably over the last two years. However, not all teachers are using this information to ensure work is matched well to the different abilities in their class.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils clearly enjoy school and this is very evident in their happy faces around school. They say they feel safe and that behaviour around school is good. They value all the different activities including the trips they go on.
- A very small number of parents and carers raised concerns about behaviour. There are a few pupils with challenging behaviour, and strategies are generally successful in managing these pupils. There is clear evidence that pupils improve their behaviour and are able over time to become active learners in class. The school keeps detailed records of any incidents and the actions it has taken to support the young people, but evaluation of the effectiveness of these strategies is limited.
- The school has been effective in working with a range of pupils, for example a few pupils have moved from other schools where they have been non-attendees. Evidence shows that these pupils now attend school regularly.
- There is a good focus within the curriculum on improving pupils' social skills and their personal development. Pupils have a good awareness of keeping safe. As a result spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils develop into confident young people who have a good understanding of life outside school.
- Attendance, although low, is good for many pupils. One parent or carer commented that her child hated the holidays because she enjoyed school so much. Where attendance is below average this is invariably because of the impact of pupils' health/medical needs.

The leadership and management require improvement

- The determined actions of the headteacher and governors have resulted in a team of teachers that is clearly committed to move the school forward. The large turnover of staff in the last two years, though, has meant that developments have not been as fast as the headteacher wanted. However, there is a clear sense of a fresh start and an expectation among senior leaders and staff that improvements will be rapid and concerted. This positive approach reflects the school's capacity to improve.
- The monitoring of teaching has been effective in identifying inadequate teaching, and support strategies have helped most teachers to improve. Last year the opportunity for peer observations was valued by staff. The outcomes of monitoring though have not always been analysed in sufficient depth to provide a sufficiently accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching.
- The new subject leaders are enthusiastic and keen to develop their areas of responsibility. Good work has already been done in improving the curriculum at Key Stage 4 and for post-16. New monitoring procedures are being established as the school has recognised that systems in the past have not been effective in ensuring that staff and governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- A cause for concern by the school has been the poor accuracy of teachers' assessments. This has been addressed well and teachers have a clear understanding of the levels pupils are working at. There is good tracking of pupils' progress on an individual basis and this has ensured that all pupils have equality of opportunity and there is no discrimination. The school is aware that it needs to make better use of its good quality data to check that the different groups within the school are all making the progress they should.

- Performance management has been used to support teaching and new more rigorous systems are being adopted this term. A wide range of training opportunities has enabled staff to develop their skills. This is very evident in the consistent quality of communication strategies used by staff.
 - Until recently the local authority had provided only limited support to the school unless help was requested. The new improvement partner had already recognised the impact of staff changes on developments within the school, and increased visits to support the school have been established.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have supported the headteacher in her determined approach to appoint effective teachers. They are aware, though, that they have had insufficient information to be fully effective in challenging the school, particularly in terms of pupils' progress.
 - Governors have ensured that procedures for safeguarding are effective. They visit the school regularly, attend parents' and carers' evenings and have looked at pupils' work. As a result they have some understanding of the strengths and areas for development within the school. They have been very effective in managing the budget and have ensured the pupil premium is being used to support those pupils in difficult circumstances.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	116611
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	401604
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	76
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	14
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Brooker
Headteacher	Jackie Sumner
Date of previous school inspection	4–5 November 2009
Telephone number	02392241818
Fax number	023092269521
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