

Rumworth School

Armada Road, Ladybridge, Bolton, Lancashire, BL3 4TP

Inspection dates 8–9 April 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The new headteacher and his leadership team have established a very clear vision for the school which is shared by all of the school community.
- Because teaching and the support provided by teaching assistants is so effective, pupils thrive at the school. They have a real thirst for learning and make good or outstanding progress in all areas of their development, including personal and social skills, communication, literacy and numeracy.
- Different groups of pupils, including those who are eligible for the pupil premium or who have autistic spectrum disorders, learn extremely well, matching and sometimes exceeding the progress made by their peers.
- The sixth form is outstanding because students have opportunities to improve and make use of their literacy and numeracy skills alongside attending college or work-related courses and activities. They develop greater independence and self-confidence as a result.
- The wide range of subjects taught and courses offered to pupils of all abilities means that everyone has equal opportunity to do well. All leavers advance to further education, employment or training.
- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding as is their attendance. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of the highest order. They are very sensitive to the needs of their peers, especially if they have emotional upsets.
- Partnerships with other professionals and with parents are exceptional and contribute much to pupils' well-being and progress.
- The headteacher and governing body have ensured that the middle leadership team and all staff colleagues have had the opportunity to contribute to the school's policy for teaching and learning. As a result, teaching and learning are never less than good and are often outstanding. However, leaders have yet to ensure that the school's marking and feedback policy is consistently followed.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 full or part-lessons taken by 13 teachers, one teaching assistant and the school speech therapist. The headteacher and a deputy headteacher joined inspectors in two of the observations.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and three governors. A telephone conversation was held with the local authority representative.
- Discussions were held informally with individual pupils and with members of the school council.
- Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work and the school's records of pupils' progress.
- School documents, such as the school improvement plan, the school's self-evaluation report, school policies on safeguarding, child protection, curriculum, behaviour and attendance were examined.
- The 20 responses from Parent View, the on-line questionnaire, were taken into account, as well as discussions held with three parents in school and a telephone conversation with one parent.

Inspection team

John Ashley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Doreen Davenport

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school provides for pupils from 11 to 19 who have a range of disabilities and special educational needs. The largest group are those with moderate learning difficulties. There are also sizeable groups who have severe learning difficulties or with autistic spectrum disorders. A minority has sensory difficulties, physical or health-related difficulties, speech, language and communication difficulties or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. All pupils have statements of special educational needs.
- The school has specialist provision for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, but these pupils often attend main school lessons wherever possible. The provision is included as part of the whole school.
- The school has a sixth form which provides for students up to the age of 19.
- The majority of pupils are boys.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil-premium funding is higher than the average. This is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, for pupils who are looked after by the local authority and for the children of service families.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- There is a minority of pupils looked after by the local authority.
- The headteacher and assistant headteacher have been recently appointed within the last year.
- The school has strong partnerships with other local special schools and secondary high schools. The school makes use of sport facilities at Ladybridge High School.
- Students attend courses at Bolton College.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the progress of pupils in all lessons even further by:
 - ensuring that all teachers consistently follow the school’s policy for marking pupils’ work, especially when providing feedback about how well pupils have done and what they need to do to improve
 - ensuring that leaders check that the best practice in school is shared with all staff and that it is observed when conducting lesson observations.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- All pupils are working at standards well below those expected nationally for their age. However, the great majority make good or outstanding progress from their starting points in school in reading, writing, mathematics, communication and social skills.
- When students leave at the end of Key Stage 4 or Key Stage 5, they all go on to further education, employment or training with a wide range of accreditation. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or with autistic spectrum disorders achieve up to four GCSEs, including English and mathematics. This shows that the school promotes equal opportunities for all its pupils, regardless of their individual needs.
- Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders make outstanding progress in their social and communication skills because of excellent guidance and support from skilled teaching assistants who are deployed by the speech therapist or teacher. For example, a mixed Key Stages 3 and 4 group learned how to take turns and to express, verbally or by signing, their wishes or responses when doing a sequencing activity involving picture clues. They then selected words and phrases to explain these requests.
- Pupils in Key Stage 3 practised their letters and sounds well with the most able using these skills to read with expression or read out unfamiliar words. Less-able pupils responded very well to support when making a contribution to sharing news with the class.
- Pupils made outstanding progress when provided with opportunities to use and apply their mathematics skills, for example when exploring number patterns.
- Younger Key Stage 3 pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was enhanced when they became totally absorbed in listening to a story about Van Gogh and then acted it out with various props and visual aids. Another group excitedly practised their greetings and counting skills in French.
- Older pupils in Key Stage 3 made outstanding progress when drawing on previous knowledge about rivers, using words like, 'meander' and 'source' during a geography lesson.
- At Key Stage 4, all pupils, including those with the most severe learning difficulties, demonstrated excellent enthusiasm for learning when creating a CV or when drafting out and then typing out their personal details, interests and hobbies on the computer. Students with autistic spectrum disorders talked with confidence about characters in a video and answered questions asked by their peers.
- Students in the sixth form demonstrated independence and self-confidence when they talked knowledgeably about their strengths and weaknesses in working with numbers up to a 100 or 1,000. Those attending college talk with pride about learning painting and decorating skills.
- Pupils who are eligible for pupil-premium funding, including those looked after by the local authority, make exceptional progress, either in line with their peers or exceeding them with their GCSE outcomes.
- Occasionally, progress is hampered because pupils are not encouraged to act swiftly upon staff guidance and advice about their work.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Inspectors agree with the school's analysis that teaching is consistently good and often outstanding, leading to the great majority of pupils making good or outstanding progress.
- The new headteacher and other leaders have worked together with teachers to agree a clear policy for developing outstanding teaching and learning. However, there is still work to be done to ensure that the school's marking and feedback policy is consistently used so that pupils make quicker progress in their work.
- Pupils learn particularly well when provided with resources and activities that capture their

interests and imagination, for example, when asked to talk about and act out a character from a 'Shrek' movie.

- When teachers provide clear feedback to pupils about their work, for example, when they achieve a writing target on five separate occasions, that is seen as a 'secure' achievement and the next step is then agreed. It is clear that this approach motivates pupils to do even better.
- A mixed ability class of Year 11 students made outstanding progress when the most able were asked to match different numbers so that they totalled 100. Throughout, they were encouraged to talk about their work and to talk about their strengths and what they needed to improve upon. Skilled teaching assistants expertly guided less-able students to make informed decisions about which numbers to select.
- Pupils with a range of educational, social, emotional or communication needs work particularly well and make progress when teachers take careful note of pupils' levels of ability and set ambitious targets. Resources and teaching support staff are then deployed sensitively to meet those needs. For example, the most-able pupils receive instructions to produce an independent piece of writing on the computer, while pupils with severe learning difficulties benefit from close guidance from a skilled teaching assistant so that they, too, make progress.
- Extremely sensitive and structured teaching and support, using picture sequences alongside words and phrases, enabled pupils with autistic spectrum disorders to practise, build upon and improve their social, communication and reading skills within a calm and stress-free classroom.
- Year 11 and sixth-form students became enthusiastic when provided with opportunities to engage in discussions about issues such as news headlines in the 1920s compared to present day news, or the impact of man-made disasters upon the environment. Teachers' use of visual resources and story-telling skills then led to students writing down their views and opinions.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils have developed wonderful work habits and are always keen to do well in their lessons. Very occasionally, those with complex behavioural, emotional and social needs may become upset, but staff and other pupils still focus upon the importance of learning and following the school's behaviour policy.
- There is excellent provision to meet the needs of vulnerable pupils, including those with additional medical needs, which is managed by one of the deputy headteachers. This enables one-to-one or small-group support to better meet the needs of these pupils. There are outstanding links with parents and other professionals to support this work and, occasionally, the school has to consider a range of interventions before headway can be made.
- Pupils say they love coming to school and that staff help them when they struggle with work. The attendance of pupils is outstanding; they do not like staying away from school.
- The school council receives an annual budget to which all classes have access. Games, resources and trips out have resulted from decisions made by the school council.
- A whole-school assembly which involved an outside speaker from a local hospice led to pupils taking full responsibility for fund-raising on behalf of this cause. This was an outstanding example of how well pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is developed.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils have a very good understanding of different types of bullying and do not tolerate racism or homophobia. They are fully confident that staff will step in to resolve any conflicts that might arise.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about Internet safety and have user names and passwords to access their computers in school.
- Because of the complex needs of some pupils, fixed-term exclusions are used in extreme cases, but these occasions are reducing and staff work exceptionally well to manage any issues in school.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, one saying, 'The only disappointing thing about the school is that my child will have to leave one day.'

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The new headteacher has calmly but rapidly set a clear direction for the school with outstanding support from the assistant headteacher, the two deputy headteachers and the governing body. Middle leaders and other staff members are highly motivated, having had a full involvement in redrafting the school's policy for teaching and learning and this is already having a very positive impact.
- All leaders are involved in ensuring that the assessment of pupils' abilities is shared and is based upon accurate information to help teachers plan lessons. Teaching and learning are consistently good and much is outstanding. There is a commitment towards making all teaching and learning outstanding. Leaders know this is yet to be achieved and will most likely come through consistently high quality marking and feedback that, in turn, will lead to pupils making even better progress.
- The school's review of its work and improvement plan are clear and accurate. This information is shared and agreed with the local authority and school's improvement partner who validate the judgements leaders make about the quality of its work. Only light-touch support is provided by the local authority.
- Arrangements to check the performance of staff are rigorously applied. Teachers appreciate the chance to further develop their expertise and skills in order to improve their classroom practice and pupils' learning outcomes. For example, they are providing opportunities for some pupils to follow a GCSE history course.
- The curriculum is wide ranging and is further enhanced by specialist teachers and accommodation. Students have access to many courses that lead to accreditation, college placements and work experience. Leaders fully promote the school's policy on equal opportunities.
- Partnerships with other professionals and parents are outstanding. Parents cannot speak too highly of how 'the school ensures that every child matters'.
- There are very effective wider partnerships, too; for example, the sharing of sports facilities in a local secondary school and sharing of best practices with other special schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have regular meetings and are well informed about the school's work. Minutes of meetings are informative and clear. Governors oversee the performance of the headteacher and make decisions regarding whether or not teachers move up the pay scale based upon their performance in the classroom. Their knowledge and understanding about pupils' achievements and the quality of teaching and learning are furthered through the work of three sub-committees and visits and reports by governors. They know that pupils who benefit from pupil-premium funding have made good or better progress, some achieving English and mathematics GCSE grades. Governors have regular training, for example, in safer recruitment. Effective arrangements for safeguarding are in place and there is a named governor for this area and for child protection.

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	105277
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	439534

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	149
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	46
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Hill
Headteacher	Gary Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	24 June 2009
Telephone number	01204 333600
Fax number	01204 333602
Email address	head@rumworth.bolton.sch.uk

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