

Inspection of a good school: St Rose's Special School

Stratford Lawn, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL5 4AP

Inspection dates:

14 and 15 November 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils who attend St Rose's school have complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Their health and care needs are well met. Therapy and education staff work together to understand pupils' needs and plan how best to support them. For example, each pupil has an individual communication plan. Pupils learn how to recognise their feelings and start to communicate their needs. Pupils are safe and happy.

However, the school does not have a sequenced and ambitious curriculum for all. The small steps pupils need to learn are not identified in much of the school's curriculum. As a result, pupils do not secure new knowledge and skills well.

Each year, the school organises a wide range of personal development opportunities for pupils to experience. Many activities take place at a time when all pupils can join in. Pupils like to perform in the school's orchestra. They cook vegetables grown in the school's garden to make healthy meals to share.

Through these enrichment activities, pupils develop their independence and respect for others. Pupils take part in charity events. For example, sixth-form students take food collections to the local food bank. Pupils' achievements are celebrated at an annual awards ceremony.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Most children who attend the school's nursery provision and all pupils, in Reception Year to Year 14, have SEND. These pupils have education health and care (EHC) plans that detail pupils' additional needs and outcome targets. Pupils' progression is measured against these broad EHC plan targets. Pupils' EHC plan targets direct teachers' planning and pupils' learning. However, the breadth and depth of education identified in the plans

is limited. Consequently, the academic needs of children in nursery without an EHC plan and some pupils with less complex needs are not met.

Gaps in the school's curriculum content, including in the early years, lead to gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. The small, achievable steps pupils must secure in their learning are not identified in the school's curriculum. Pupils often gain experiences through therapy before they learn about it. For example, pupils take part in story massage sessions. However, the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum does not introduce pupils to the concept of positive touch until Year 7. The lack of a coherent and sequenced curriculum does not support teachers to deliver effective learning activities.

The school is beginning to help subject leaders refine the curriculum and to support teachers to plan suitable learning activities based on accurate assessment information. However, this work is new and has not started in all subjects.

Leaders rightly prioritise pupils' learning to communicate well. Pupils are introduced to and practise new words using signs, symbols and speech appropriately. Teaching staff and therapists explore and help each pupil use the best form of communication. Effective communication by pupils helps staff to better understand and meet their social and emotional needs. Regular reviews help staff to quickly spot pupils who need additional help.

Pupils enjoy listening to stories and exploring a wide range of books. Phonics is taught and books match pupils' phonic knowledge. Some pupils learn to segment and blend phonemes successfully. Reading for pleasure is encouraged through visits to the library and reading with the school's therapy dog.

Pupils look forward to attending school. They enjoy activities, such as business enterprise projects and whole school assemblies. The school works well with parents to help pupils attend school regularly. Together they identify and remove the barriers that prevent a family from sending their child to school. This work is successful.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not identified the essential knowledge it wants pupils to know and remember in some subject curriculums, including in the early years and PSHE. This means pupils do not remember important content. They are unable to build on prior learning and make connections between concepts taught. The school needs to identify the essential knowledge pupils must know and remember from these subject curriculums.

- The role of the subject leader is not sufficiently well developed to raise the standards of education across all subjects. The school needs to improve subject leadership so curriculum expertise is developed. The school should ensure subject leaders support staff to follow the curriculum, using learning activities that help pupils to learn better across all subject areas.
- The school's expectations for some pupils' education outcomes are low. The poorly designed curriculum and EHC plan targets do not enable pupils to learn effectively. The school needs to ensure the curriculum meets the academic needs of all pupils including children in the nursery without EHC plans and those pupils with less complex needs.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in April 2014.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	115813
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10256802
Type of school	Special
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	63
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	6
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Kyffin
Principal	Sheila Talwar
Website	www.stroses.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Rose's Special School is a non-maintained special school.
- The primary needs of pupils attending the school are profound and multiple learning difficulties and severe learning difficulties.
- St Rose's has seven classes including a nursery and sixth form.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the principal, assistant principal, senior leaders, staff, pupils and governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a known adult.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: communication and early reading, mathematics, physical development and physical education (PE) and personal social and health education (PSHE). For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors also discussed the school's curriculum and provision with leaders including the early years, music and therapies. Inspectors visited the sixth-form provision and considered the information provided by the school.
- The inspectors observed pupils during break time and spoke with pupils and leaders about opportunities for pupils' personal development.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. She also took into consideration the responses to the surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

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