

# INSPECTION REPORT

**REYNALDS CROSS SCHOOL**

Solihull

LEA area: Solihull

Unique reference number: 104131

Headteacher: Mr K Evans

Reporting inspector: Mr L W Lewis  
4989

Dates of inspection: 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> March 2000

Inspection number: 189496

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Maintained
Age range of pupils:	2 – 19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Kineton Green Road Olton Solihull
Postcode:	B92 7ER
Telephone number:	0121 707 3012
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M McLaverty
Date of previous inspection:	30 <sup>th</sup> September – 4 <sup>th</sup> October 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Reynalds Cross School caters for pupils aged 2 to 19 with a range of severe learning disorders including autism and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). The Early Learning and Assessment Unit has both full and part-time pupils who attend for the purposes of statutory assessment and early intervention. There are currently 71 pupils on roll, 46 boys and 25 girls, a significant increase on the number at the time of the previous inspection. Eleven children attend the Early Learning and Assessment Unit on a part-time basis. Sixty-five pupils have statements of special educational need. An average number of pupils (18 per cent) are entitled to free school meals. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. The pupil/teacher ratio is 6.4:1 and the number of pupils for each full-time adult is 2.4.

Numbers have risen sharply since the previous inspection. The agreed accommodation with the Department for Education and Employment (DFEE) is for 60 boys and girls, as day pupils with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties and those attending for the purpose of statutory assessment and placement aged 2-19. This agreement was made in 1989 and has not been updated.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a good school. It is designated a 'beacon school' for autism and the Early Learning and Assessment Unit. Teaching is of high quality, enabling pupils to make good progress and achieve high standards in relation to their individual needs. The quality of leadership and management is good and the school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Provides very good assessment and learning opportunities for the under fives in the Early Learning and Assessment Unit with some excellent features.
- Promotes very well pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The ethos of the school is very good.
- Provides high quality accommodation, maintained to an excellent standard, with attractive and stimulating display which positively enhances the learning environment.
- Promotes partnership between teachers and various therapists which is of the highest quality.
- Relationships throughout the school are very good; all adults make a very positive contribution to pupils' care and development.

#### **What could be improved**

- Statutory requirements for the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) are not being met.
- Individual Education Plans (IEPs) need to be refined to give clear and measurable learning objectives.
- The extensive assessment procedures need simplifying to enable the information to be used more effectively in promoting future learning.
- Increasing the range of systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching and the curriculum.
- Provision of accreditation to extend and challenge the more able pupils.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.*

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in September/October 1996. Since then it has addressed all the key issues outlined in that report. The special educational needs policy is in draft form, consequently the governors are not able to report annually to parents on its effectiveness. Religious education is now taught throughout the school. Further work is required to ensure that curriculum planning and assessment are more closely linked to the levels of the National Curriculum framework. Further improvement is required on systems for monitoring, review and evaluation of the school's work. Improvement in the quality of provision for PMLD pupils has been very good. Since the last inspection the school has successfully implemented both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies across the full age range.

## STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

Progress in:	by age 5	by age 11	by age 16	by age 19	Key
Speaking and listening	A	B	B	B	very good A
Reading	B	C	C	C	good B
Writing	A	C	C	C	satisfactory C
Mathematics	A	B	B	B	unsatisfactory D
Personal, social and health education	A	A	A	A	poor E
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	C	C	C	

\* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.

The school sets challenging individual targets for most of its pupils and there is a whole range of assessment procedures used to evaluate the outcomes. However, assessment needs to be more focused on promoting progression, especially in the skills of reading and writing. The recent introduction of the National Literacy Strategy across the school is beginning to assist the development of these skills. Achievement in both literacy and mathematics is limited by the lack of access to the discrete teaching of ICT.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils respond well, enjoy lessons and like coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good at all times despite some pupils having challenging behaviour as a result of their severe learning difficulties.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Personal and social skills are being very well developed. There were instances of pupils celebrating achievements and respecting the feelings of others.
Attendance	Good despite the complex medical conditions of some pupils.

Pupils' responses in lessons are very good and they concentrate well for extended periods. Behaviour is particularly good in all areas of the school, with impressive management by staff of some challenging youngsters. Pupils form very good relationships with their peers, and there were instances of them celebrating achievements and respecting the feelings of others. Attendance levels are good, with pupils showing keenness to come to school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5	aged 5-11	aged 11-16	aged over 16
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Good	Good	Good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

The quality of teaching is good overall and very good in the Early Learning and Assessment Unit. A high proportion of very good teaching was seen and on one occasion it was excellent. There are times when the teaching and learning for 5 to 7 year olds is variable in quality. Teachers are well qualified and have a very good knowledge and understanding of the special needs of the pupils in their care. Relationships in the classrooms are most impressive, and all adults have high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour. Lesson planning is thorough, with appropriate tasks and strategies used to ensure that all pupils can access the learning. Occasionally, especially in the delivery of literacy and numeracy, there is a lack of flexibility, which results in boring work being sustained for too long.

The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies across the full age range. Quality is variable, with some teachers lacking confidence and being too rigid in their interpretation of the literacy hour.

In almost all lessons teaching and learning are at least satisfactory and often better. Of these, just under one in three is good and it is very good or excellent in one in three. There was only one lesson in which teaching was unsatisfactory.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. For under fives it is very good. Curriculum for Key Stages 1 to 4 is good. All National Curriculum subjects are taught, apart from ICT, for which statutory requirements are not met. At Post 16 it is satisfactory, but there is a lack of accredited courses.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision, this area is very much improved since the last inspection when there was a lack of spiritual development through the lack of religious education.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides well for its pupils. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are good. However, systems for assessing attainment and progress need to be refined and focused on informing future planning.

The school provides an appropriate curriculum that effectively meets the wide range of pupils' special educational needs. The provision in the Early Learning and Assessment Unit is a particular strength, with pupils being assessed for statementing and placement purposes. The recent introduction of both the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies gives an appropriate emphasis to the development of communication and number work. The teaching of ICT skills and the use of ICT across the school are areas for improvement.



The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils are of high quality. Since the previous inspection the teaching of religious education has become established across the school and plays a significant role in the provision for pupils' personal development.

There is a very high standard of care, with impressive, collaborative working between teaching staff and therapists.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	This is good. The headteacher's leadership gives a firm steer to the development of strong teaching teams in each class. Senior managers hold weekly meetings with all adults in the junior (2-11yrs) and senior departments (12-19) which concentrate on maintaining and raising standards across the school.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body has a clear view of where it is going. Committee structure is beginning to work well and is making use of the school improvement plan.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The monitoring of quality and standards is plentiful, but it lacks a sharp focus to maximise improvement.
The strategic use of resources	School works very well to attract additional funding, for example autism and early years, which benefits all areas through extensive in-service training for teaching staff. The lengthy lunchtime raises questions about the efficient and effective use of time. There are no systems in place for evaluating cost effectiveness.

The headteacher, supported by a strong teaching staff, provides good leadership. Not all meetings involving management of the school are minuted. Consequently it becomes difficult to trace reference points at a later date. Planning for school improvement is thorough, but the improvement plan includes too many items which deflect attention away from the major focus for the year. The governing body is effectively involved in the strategic management of the school and has a high commitment to continuing improvement.

In the light of pupils' good progress in relation to their individual targets, and the high quality teaching, the school provides good value for money.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The progress their children make, especially in social and independent living skills.</li> <li>They are happy to approach the school if they have concerns.</li> <li>The quality and range of information available at Annual Reviews.</li> <li>Their children enjoy coming to school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic rigour and opportunities for older, more able pupils.</li> <li>The limited choice of appropriate college courses to meet individual needs.</li> <li>Inconsistency of homework provided by the school, and the variability of use of the home/school book.</li> <li>More interesting activities being offered outside of lessons.</li> </ul>

Inspectors' findings confirm parents' views that pupils enjoy school. They behave very well and agree that they make good progress in their social and independent living skills. Inspectors also confirm parents' views of where they would like the school to improve.

### PART B: COMMENTARY

## **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

### **Provides very good assessment and learning opportunities for the under fives in the Early Learning and Assessment Unit with some excellent features.**

1. The quality of education provided in the Early Learning and Assessment Unit (ELAU) is very good. The teacher and the learning support assistants (LSAs) working in the unit have high expectations of work and behaviour. They have an enthusiastic and positive approach which encourages the children to interact well and to always try their best. The quality of the activities, and the resources to support them, ensure that the environment is stimulating and well matched to the children's needs. The quality of the communication and interaction provided by all of the adults working in the Unit is outstanding.
2. Children achieve well in relation to their capabilities. Some are able to count orally to 6 or 7. They are developing pencil control and can make marks for meaning. The most able are beginning to over-write their names accurately. Children are beginning to understand about colouring in a given picture, even though some of them lack the fine motor control skills to achieve this with accuracy. They enjoy books and most can turn pages and follow pictures. They can predict and respond from pictures and retain story lines.
3. The children are confident and friendly. They respond enthusiastically to the teacher and are keen to participate. They are beginning to take turns and to share. The class teacher's effective planning of tasks and activities results in children sitting for a significant length of time to listen to a story or engage in a task. They are generally very well behaved given the nature of some of their learning needs.

### **Promotes very well pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The ethos of the school is very good.**

4. The provision for pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
5. Both the lower and upper school assemblies were of a very good standard. The lower school assembly was led by the deputy headteacher (DHT) with the theme being "Happy" / "What makes you happy?" Each class produced items which made them happy and this was followed by an action song which the pupils joined in with enthusiasm. The DHT was enthusiastic and lively, motivating the pupils who responded with appropriate noisiness. There followed a candle time for reflection and the holding of hands. The assembly ended with a prayer of thanks. The upper school assembly referred to the Chinese New Year. There was also a time for reflection with pupils sitting quietly. The teacher referred to things to give thanks for in a quiet prayer.
6. There were many examples of correct behaviour and acceptable treatment of others during the period of the inspection. Staff provide very good role models in promoting a caring attitude to others. All adults involved in the teaching give clear expectations of how pupils should interact and behave. Pupils are asked to apologise for poor behaviour and are given reasons why it is unacceptable.
7. In many of the lessons observed there was a strong emphasis placed upon care and consideration for others. There are good opportunities for integration both between classes in the school, such as Class 1 and the ELAU, between Hazel Oak School on a weekly basis and the neighbouring mainstream junior school. Post 16 students enjoy their link courses with South Birmingham College of Further Education. Pupils are encouraged to be self sufficient, with time and support given to enable them to carry out tasks independently. There are limited opportunities for pupils to experience extra-curricular activities, on a planned basis, during the long lunch period.

8. Cultural development is enhanced by quality displays throughout the school. High quality art work is evident in classrooms and shared areas. Music is used well in many lessons. Other cultures are represented in displays such as the Chinese New Year. An artist worked in school and there are examples of the work displayed. There is also some reference given to other artists within the displays. Residential experiences are often focused on our cultural heritage. These include visits to historic Gloucester docks, Bath and staying at a Jacobean Manor House in the Peak District, said to have provided accommodation for Bonnie Prince Charlie.

**Provides high quality accommodation, maintained to an excellent standard, with attractive and stimulating display which positively enhances the learning environment.**

9. This is a school with plenty of space which was originally designed for pupils with physical disabilities and, consequently, has wide corridors and large classroom facilities. Since the present school came to the site eleven years ago, the governing body, headteacher and staff have been involved in extensive remodelling of the facility to provide a more suitable environment for the current population. Work has only recently been completed on new toilet facilities which give appropriate privacy and dignity to each class group.
10. The site manager and his cleaning staff maintain the school to an excellent standard. The daily polishing of the corridors and dining hall maintains their immaculate condition and welcomes the pupils at the start of each school day. They take a great pride in ensuring that each day children are welcomed by a clean and wholesome environment.
11. The standard of display in classrooms and public areas is high and contributes very positively to the quality of the learning environment. The extensively used specialist accommodation, comprising sensory room, hydrotherapy pool and physiotherapy facility, is large and of very good quality. It is clustered conveniently near to the teaching classrooms and provides good access for the two PMLD classes.

**Promotes partnership between teachers and various therapists which is of the highest quality.**

12. Teachers and therapists work very closely together to plan and deliver high quality learning opportunities for the pupils. Each week the speech and language therapist works with a different class teacher to discuss and support the speech and language needs of the pupils in that class. The deputy headteacher covers the teaching of the class whilst the teacher is with the therapist. The speech and language therapist feels that her time at the school is very well used, during these weekly sessions, to raise teachers' knowledge and understanding of the language development needs of their pupils. During the school year, each class teacher will have had at least three, high quality, one-to-one sessions with the therapist.
13. There is very good partnership between teachers and the physiotherapist. The physiotherapist participates actively in some class lessons and in activities with individual pupils. Good use is made of the swimming facility at the school. There is very good liaison and collaboration between teacher and physiotherapist.
14. In one lesson, taped music was used to support the developmental learning environment. Individual physiotherapy programmes are linked to communication and interaction. There are very good relationships between the physiotherapist and adults working with individual pupils. Plenty of encouragement is given to pupils to make choices and express preferences, to continue the present activity, change to relaxation or to receive massage treatment. Very good use is made of the sensory room, through language and tactile experiences, to support learning and development. A very good contribution is made by the physiotherapist with one pupil, by reinforcing the names of pupils in the class and the basic actions they are performing. Some excellent teamwork was evident.

15. The school maximises its use of multi-professional expertise, which includes the school nurse and the specialists from the special needs advisory team, to work with teaching staff to raise further the quality of provision offered by the school.

**Relationships throughout the school are very good; all adults make a very positive contribution to pupils care and development.**

16. At the weekly meeting of the upper school teaching teams the quality of input from both teachers and learning support assistants (LSAs) was high. The close working relationships of the class teams build confidence in both teachers and LSAs to make valuable contributions to debate. In discussion with the LSAs they were all of the opinion that if they were experiencing difficulty in their work they could discuss the matter frankly with their teacher colleagues, and be confident of receiving support and helpful suggestions. Visitors to the school experience that very special ambience of being in a learning environment where teamwork and caring enhance the quality of the learning experiences of all pupils.

**WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**Statutory requirements for the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) are not being met.**

17. Information and communication technology (ICT) is insufficiently used across the curriculum to support learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Teachers' planning does not specify opportunities for using ICT in other subject areas. The discrete skills of ICT capability are not being taught systematically and progressively across the age range. Pupils are not, therefore, receiving their entitlement to the relevant Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum.
18. The school has received funding from the National Grid for Learning (NGfL) and has purchased computer hardware to facilitate its use. Difficulties in accessing entry to appropriate software and networking opportunities mean it is not being used as effectively as it should be. This problem must be resolved in the near future to enable pupils to benefit from the many advantages this tool for learning can bring.
19. There are staff training issues for the school to address. The variation in confidence of some staff to teach the discrete skills of ICT, and to exploit its potential for learning throughout the curriculum, is a weakness.

**Individual Education Plans (IEPs) need to be refined to give clear and measurable learning objectives.**

20. The school has identified the need to review its writing of individual education plans and the setting of shorter-term targets for individual pupils, which are focused on progressing learning and have clear criteria for their evaluation.
21. There are plans to address the inadequacy of the IEPs by having them modified on a termly basis. This has started in the lower school and will be extended to the upper school. In Class 2, new IEPs for this term are more clearly focused than the previous models used. All teachers in the lower school are using this new model, but the quality is variable across the classes. There is a lack of focused monitoring of the initiative to ensure its consistency across the classes.

**The extensive assessment procedures need simplifying to enable the information to be used more effectively in promoting future learning.**

22. There is a wide range of assessment procedures used at the school to cover most aspects of pupils' development and progress. The senior management team has identified the need to prioritise these and to link them more directly to the review of IEPs and the setting of shorter term targets for individual pupils, which are focused and have clear criteria for their evaluation.

### **Increase the range of systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching and the curriculum.**

23. There are several ways in which the senior management team (SMT) and subject co-ordinators monitor the quality of teaching and the curriculum at the school. The deputy headteacher, for example, covers the teaching staff on a rotational basis, which allows them to work with the speech and language therapist. This provides an opportunity to monitor classroom organisation, display, teachers' planning and record keeping. There are the heads of lower and upper schools weekly meetings with teachers in these phases, allowing opportunities for monitoring aspects of the curriculum. However, despite the fact that there are planned opportunities for individual co-ordinators and the SMT to make systematic observations in classrooms, very little systematic monitoring of class teaching takes place.
24. The deputy headteacher has set aside time to observe teaching, but has found that this arrangement has not been successful because of other demands upon her time. The head of sixth form, who was appointed in September and has responsibility for managing the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy across the school, has observed some teaching of literacy.
25. The governing body is interested in being involved, and the chair of governors has visited classrooms and observed teaching, but without a clear focus. She indicated a clear interest among the governing body for monitoring standards and quality throughout the school. The chair of the curriculum committee expressed a clear view that governors wanted to have a wider role in monitoring the quality of the provision.

### **Provide opportunities for accreditation to extend and challenge the more able pupils.**

26. Pupils take great pride in their records of achievement which are full of photographic evidence of activities undertaken during their time at the school. These records lack a short commentary to illustrate to interested adults what learning experiences the individual pupil has undertaken. However, the current records fulfil the requirements for accreditation.
27. The head of upper school recognises the lack of accreditation available. Since September she has introduced the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) which will satisfy the needs of most pupils. However, the ASDAN approach will require careful monitoring to ensure that it extends and challenges the more able.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

28. The governing body and senior management should:

- (1) agree and implement a strategy for the teaching of ICT which meets statutory requirements;
- (2) refine Individual Education Plans to give clear and measurable learning objectives;
- (3) simplify assessment procedures to enable information to be used more effectively in promoting learning;
- (4) increase the range of systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching and the curriculum, and
- (5) provide opportunities for accreditation to meet the needs of the more able pupils/students.

29. An additional point for consideration:

- the planning in the nursery is linked to Key Stage 1 Programmes of Study rather than to the Areas of Learning. Also, there is too much assessment documentation for the teacher in charge to manage effectively.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed	27
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	32	28	32	4	-	-

*The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	71
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	13

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

### *Attendance*

<b>Authorised absence</b>		<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	
	%		%
School data	7.7	School data	0

*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	71
Any other minority ethnic group	1

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YN – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.4
Average class size	7.9

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff: YN – Y13**

Total number of education support staff	21
Total aggregate hours worked per week	633.75

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	717,377
Total expenditure	716,656
Expenditure per pupil	10,539
Balance brought forward from previous year	79,845
Balance carried forward to next year	80,566

Balance carried forward was for remodelling of areas of the school, including toilets for each classroom. Work on toilets completed just prior to inspection. Some further work still to be undertaken next year. Predicted carry forward to the next financial year (2000/2001) is 6%.



**Results of the survey of parents and carers**

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	71
Number of questionnaires returned	45

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	27	0	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	47	47	2	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	38	4	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	29	13	0	36
The teaching is good.	71	27	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	60	33	4	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	82	16	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	40	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	64	31	4	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	76	20	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	31	2	0	13
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	20	20	7	20