



Reynalds Cross School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104131
LEA Solihull
Inspection number 277079
Inspection dates 23 May 2006 to 24 May 2006
Reporting inspector Terry Elston AI

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Kineton Green Road
School category	Community special		Olton
Age range of pupils	2 to 19		Solihull, West Midlands B92 7ER
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 7073012
Number on roll	97	Fax number	0121 7076976
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr David Gray
Date of previous inspection	6 March 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Jane Davenport

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Reynalds Cross School provides education for pupils with a wide range of severe learning difficulties and challenging behaviour. Some pupils have autism or profound and multiple learning difficulties. There are 98 pupils on the school's roll, which is significantly more than at the time of the last inspection. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic groups and there are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. A temporary leadership team has been running the school for the last 18 months. The acting headteacher will take over on a permanent basis shortly after the inspection.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The effectiveness of Reynolds Cross is satisfactory. This judgement is consistent with the school's own judgement. The acting leadership and management team provides sound direction to the school and has been effective in maintaining standards of teaching and learning during the long absence of the previous headteacher. The acting headteacher has a good understanding of what needs to be done to raise standards further and has high expectations of pupils and staff. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress. However, pupils do much better in some lessons than others. This is because not all teachers plan carefully enough to ensure that every pupil has work carefully matched to their needs and capabilities. The school recognises that senior staff need to give some teachers clearer guidance on how to improve their teaching. The good care, support and guidance the school provides help to account for parents' high regard for the school. Attendance is good. Pupils love coming to school, feel safe and behave well. They enjoy an interesting well-planned curriculum, with plenty to do at lunchtime and after school to help make learning fun. The school has done much to improve the assessment of pupils' progress recently, but does not yet use this information to show where they could do better. Governance is good. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, provides sound value for money and is well placed to improve further.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The sixth form provision is satisfactory. This is also the school's view. The satisfactory quality of leadership, management and teaching leads to satisfactory progress. Teachers ensure that students enjoy their work and relationships are very good. The care, support and guidance are satisfactory and help students make the right choices in their lives. The curriculum is planned satisfactorily to take account of students' individual needs, and their achievements in courses preparing them for college and life after school are satisfactory. However, the range of accredited courses offered to students is not as broad as is found in most schools. The school is justified as seeing this as a priority for further development and has made a good start by employing experts in this area to improve the provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use information gained from assessment more effectively to show how pupils can make faster progress.
- Give teachers clearer direction on how to improve their teaching.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievements are satisfactory and they make adequate progress towards their individual targets. Throughout the school, pupils' language progresses well because

teachers place so much emphasis on them speaking clearly and using the right words. This is particularly the case with pupils with autism, who make good progress in their ability to listen carefully and respond appropriately to questions. Where progress is slower for a few pupils, the work is not matched well enough to their abilities and they miss the point of lessons. The school has improved the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) significantly since the last inspection and pupils' achievements are now satisfactory. In the sixth form, students make satisfactory progress. They work hard at courses to prepare them for life after school, and the number of external awards gained by them is increasing year by year. However, students still have only a limited range of opportunities to achieve external certificates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development of pupils is good. They mostly enjoy lessons, concentrate hard and listen carefully to the teacher. However, when the work is not set at the right level for them, pupils become distracted and lose track of the lesson. Pupils with autism and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties make good improvements in the way they communicate with others in the class, develop their independence and learn to work as a member of a group. Attendance is good, and parents are quick to say how keen their children are to come to school. Pupils behave well, both in class and when moving around the school. They are confident that they will not be bullied and feel safe because of this. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to live and eat healthily, and one group was adamant that their favourite food was wholemeal bread and salad. They enjoy exercise and take part in physical education lessons with great enthusiasm. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils reflect deeply about difficult topics such as 'sadness' and develop a very good sense of right and wrong. They are keen to take responsibility, and members of the school council take their duties very seriously. Students in the sixth form show good levels of maturity, and are sensible when choosing courses to follow.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning, including that in the sixth form, is satisfactory but, as the school's own observations show, it varies significantly from class to class. The main reason lies in the quality of teachers' planning of work that will meet the different abilities of pupils. In most classes, for example, the teachers are very careful to include all pupils in the lessons and this ensures that tasks and questions are matched very well to pupils' capabilities. In a minority of other classes, however, this is not the case and a few pupils are held back as a result. A strength of the teaching lies in the very good relationships between staff and pupils. This is why pupils have such confidence to attempt hard work without the fear of failure. For example, in an outstanding lesson for Year 11 pupils, the teacher's highly skilled coaxing and

encouragement enabled pupils with poor language skills to stand at the front and talk about their 'opinions' on a topic. They found it very challenging but persevered and made excellent progress. Skilled teaching assistants support pupils well by providing extra help when needed. This is particularly effective with vulnerable pupils and those with autism who flourish with so much individual support. Assessment has improved since the last inspection but the school recognises that it still does not use its data well enough to identify precisely what pupils need to do to improve further. This means that not all pupils make the best possible progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The quality of the curriculum is good. It provides an interesting range of activities that are relevant to the needs of all groups of pupils. For example, the school rightly focuses on enhancing pupils' future economic well-being with good provision for teaching basic speaking, reading, number and ICT skills and sound opportunities for sixth form students to prepare for college and the world of work. The well-planned personal, social, health and citizenship programme plays an important part in helping pupils understand their own feelings and keep safe. For pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties in particular, this programme also provides a good structure for the teaching of important social skills such as eating, dressing and washing. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of activities at lunchtime and after school, including dance, golf and tennis, which many pupils enjoy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The quality of care, guidance and support is good, because staff know the pupils so well. Pupils generally have clear targets in their individual plans. However, in some classes, these targets are too general to ensure that pupils make rapid progress. For example, the target for one pupil with profound and multiple difficulties to 'learn to use a spoon' does not say precisely how this will be achieved. There are good examples of pupils helping to set their own targets that make them meaningful. Staff have been very well trained in ways to handle pupils and provide specific support for those with challenging behaviour. This has given staff the skills and confidence to manage pupils effectively. Child protection procedures are rigorous and all staff have pupils' welfare very much at heart. Health and safety procedures and risk assessments are good and ensure that pupils are safe. The school's very good partnership with parents and the very good systems for teachers to exchange information with them about their child's well-being do much to enhance the quality of care, support and guidance. This is one reason why parents' views of the school are so positive. One parent's view was, 'If I had a million pounds I wouldn't send my child anywhere else'. The school has very good relationships with other schools which support pupils' learning well. In particular, some pupils gain much from spending part of the week working with pupils in other

schools. They learn a lot from these experiences and say how much they enjoy them. A sound range of work experience opportunities and college visits and courses provides satisfactory support and guidance for older pupils and sixth form students, although the school recognises the need to improve the range of accredited courses offered to them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management are satisfactory. The members of the acting leadership team have done well to keep the school running smoothly over the last 18 months and provide clear direction. They have been successful in developing a strong sense of teamwork and maintaining good staff morale. The acting headteacher has a good understanding of what needs to be improved, particularly in terms of the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness. She has taken good account of the views of parents and pupils. However, the school recognises that the use of assessment information is not good enough to identify accurately what pupils need to do to improve their work. The school's improvement plan lacks a clear focus on pupils' attainment and progress. Senior staff have made a good start at evaluating the quality of teaching and learning, with regular observations of lessons. However, the quality of teaching still varies significantly from class to class, and staff do not always receive adequate guidance on how to improve their teaching. Governance is good. Governors have a good knowledge of the school, support staff well and provide sound direction. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and, with the new leadership team working well together, is well placed to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	3
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

29 May 2006 Dear Pupils, Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to visit your school. I really enjoyed seeing you work so hard in lessons and play so energetically in the playground. Those who were kind enough to speak to me told me a lot about your school. What I liked most about your school:

- you are very friendly and helpful to visitors
- you work very hard in lessons and behave well
- all staff at your school take good care of you and keep you safe
- your teachers work closely with your parents to help you do well
- teachers plan some interesting work for you to do.

What we would like the school to do now

- I have asked your teachers to make better use of all the information they collect about your work to show how you could do even better
- you learn faster in some classes than others and I have asked your headteacher to make sure that all lessons are as good as the best ones

Yours sincerely Terry Elston (Lead inspector)