



Rumworth School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105277
LEA Bolton
Inspection number 277330
Inspection dates 7 March 2006 to 8 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Rosemary Eaton CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Armadale Road
School category	Community special		Ladybridge
Age range of pupils	11 to 19		Bolton, Lancashire BL3 4TP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01204 333600
Number on roll	143	Fax number	01204 333602
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr John Hill
Date of previous inspection	7 February 2000	Headteacher	Mr Bill Bradbury

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 19	7 March 2006 - 8 March 2006	277330

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

Rumworth is a school for pupils with complex needs and moderate learning difficulties. At the time of the previous inspection, it was located on a different site and known as Woodside Senior School and most of its pupils had moderate learning difficulties. The current population includes 39 pupils with severe learning difficulties. Seventeen others have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and 11 have autistic spectrum disorders. Three out of four pupils have two or more learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils' homes are throughout Bolton. Around one third receive free school meals, which is a high proportion. Currently, 21 pupils are from minority ethnic groups, most of these being Asian British. All are in the early stages of learning English. Very small numbers are refugees, asylum seekers, or travellers. Nine are 'looked after' children. There are 38 sixth form students. Rumworth is a Leading Edge School.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Rumworth is an outstanding school. In this, the inspector's judgement matches the school's own view of its effectiveness. Pupils' achievement is outstanding although, owing to their learning difficulties and/or disabilities, they work at levels that are significantly lower than those found in mainstream schools. They make such exceptional progress because the quality of teaching is outstanding and the excellent curriculum is adapted extremely effectively in order to accommodate the needs, ages and interests of particular groups or individual pupils. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They grow in confidence and are eager to learn and take on challenges such as work experience placements. The arrangements for care, guidance and support are outstanding. Partnerships with parents and a wide variety of agencies enhance what the school provides and help to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to learn and develop. Ultimately, the school's remarkable success is down to its outstanding leadership and management. Staff and governors share the headteacher's conviction that only the best is good enough. The school is self-critical and constantly seeks ways to improve what it offers - by aiming to be a Specialist School, for instance - in order to help every pupil achieve their potential. Rumworth has moved on very significantly since the previous inspection, has outstanding potential for further development, and provides extremely good value for money. Although achievement is so high on its agenda, this is a school where pupils also have enormous fun. Small wonder that parents and pupils regard it so highly.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The school judges its sixth form to be outstanding, with excellent leadership and management, and the inspection confirms this. Students achieve extremely well. They gain a wide range of accreditation, recognising their exceptional personal development as well as their academic progress. Through the flexible curriculum and the expectation that they respond as young adults, students become as independent as possible, prepared in every way for the next stage in their lives.

What the school should do to improve further

- Pursue its goal to gain Specialist School status, specialising in communication.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Owing to their learning difficulties and/or disabilities, pupils' standards are exceptionally low when compared to those in mainstream schools. However, pupils make exceptionally good progress as they move up through the school and their achievement is outstanding. This is confirmed by a range of systems, demonstrating small but hugely significant steps in learning, year on year. The school keeps a close

eye on how well different groups of pupils are getting on - for example, those with English as an additional language - ensuring that all achieve equally impressively. Challenging targets are set for individuals and year groups. These are usually met and are often surpassed. Parents say that they are delighted with how their children have 'come on in leaps and bounds'. Achievement is often particularly good in literacy. Pupils are helped by the staff's consistent focus on encouraging communication and the many opportunities for them to practise reading and writing during lessons throughout the day.

Whenever possible, pupils' achievements are recognised through accreditation. For instance, depending on their learning difficulties and/or disabilities, Year 11 pupils gain Unit Awards, Entry Level certificates, and general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) passes in art and science. Sixth form students build on these successes through a broader range of accredited courses, including Preparation for Working Life and Towards Independence.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Assemblies encourage pupils to care for the environment, for instance, and lunchtimes provide excellent opportunities to practise social skills. Regular visits, including residential experiences, and visitors such as musicians, help pupils to develop into well-rounded young people. Behaviour is excellent, especially considering that a number of pupils have previously been excluded permanently from other schools. Those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties often make remarkable progress, developing self-control, improving their attendance, and taking part successfully in work experience. Aided by the efforts of the school council, pupils are actively encouraged to choose balanced meals. They enjoy school hugely, throwing themselves enthusiastically into lessons and clubs or, for older pupils, relaxing together over a game of pool. Opportunities to contribute to the school or wider community are seized - for example, taking care of the verges beyond the gates. Pupils develop skills and qualities, such as handling money and being independent, that will stand them in very good stead when they leave school. Those from different ethnic backgrounds work and play together harmoniously and all are very understanding of each other's learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Sixth form students are mature young adults and parents report that they are amazed at how confident their children become.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding and a key factor in pupils' exceptional achievement. Amongst many strengths is the very effective way in which pupils' behaviour is managed. Teachers make it crystal clear how pupils are to conduct

themselves - insisting that they listen carefully, for instance - and step in smartly when reminders are needed. One parent described how her child comes home with 'lovely stories about her day' and pupils consider lessons to be enjoyable and interesting. Contributing to this success is teachers' choice of exciting and relevant activities and resources that make pupils want to learn. For instance, during a French lesson, lower attaining Year 10 pupils made excellent progress through exceptionally good use of the interactive whiteboard that led them from repeating vocabulary to reading the words. Teaching assistants make significant contributions to lessons by supporting individuals or acting as role models, for example. Year 7 pupils with severe learning difficulties were helped to comment on work by Picasso, because a teaching assistant set the ball rolling with 'That's an interesting picture!' Assessment systems, including discussions between staff, provide highly accurate information about each pupil. This is used extremely effectively in order to meet pupils' needs and enable them to learn and achieve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The outstanding curriculum is constantly being reviewed and modified in order to cater for the school's changing population. Flexible arrangements are made for individuals or groups, such as those with severe autistic spectrum disorders. The work pupils do is highly relevant to their present and future lives, with a very pronounced focus on work/life-related learning from Year 10 onwards. The lower attaining sixth form students, for example, contribute to radio broadcasts in Bolton market place, enhancing their personal development and communication skills. Literacy and numeracy are given very high priority and all required subjects are taught. Innovative elements include school-based work experience, during which lower attaining pupils carry out tasks such as packing hinges and screws for a local company, on a simulated assembly line. Personal, social and health education lessons are reinforced frequently during everyday routines and work in other subjects. Lunchtime and after-school clubs are extensive and extremely popular, supporting pupils' achievement and personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This aspect is outstanding, because every pupil is treated as an individual. For instance, form tutors and teaching assistants work together to establish consistent approaches to meeting each pupil's needs. The school goes to great lengths to make the conditions for learning exactly right. Lower attaining Year 7 pupils have fewer changes of staff to contend with, helping them to make a smooth transition from primary school. Child protection and health and safety arrangements are very comprehensive. Pupils are taught to take responsibility for their own safety, encouraged to voice their opinions, and know who to talk to if they have concerns. Extremely close links with families support their progress - 'Together we have worked as a team', wrote one parent. Partnerships with an extensive range of agencies help pupils make the most of their

time in school. For instance, the Connexions service contributes strongly to preparing leavers for the next stage in their education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher's determination to provide only the very best for every pupil is evident in every aspect of the school. His extremely high aspirations are shared by staff and reflected in the first-rate effectiveness of the senior team. The senior staff take the lead in the carefully constructed and rigorous programme of activities to check on each element of the school's performance - scrutinising pupils' work, for example. Thorough analysis of the information gathered results in highly accurate judgements about the school's effectiveness. Where, occasionally, weaknesses are identified, firm and comprehensive action is taken, improving the provision and ensuring that no groups of pupils are disadvantaged. Self-evaluation feeds directly into the school's improvement plan, thereby contributing to the outstanding improvement since the previous inspection, during a period of significant change. The school is extremely outward looking - for example, seeking external validation of its effectiveness and sharing its expertise with others. Parents' and pupils' views are canvassed regularly and contribute to decisions such as the increase in the number of interactive whiteboards. Governors provide very active support and question the school and the local authority as they strive to do the best they can for each pupil. All of this results in a school that constantly challenges itself to do even better, providing outstanding value for money. It is extremely well placed to build on its current exceptional success, for instance, by achieving its aim to become a Specialist School in the area of communication.

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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?	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
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?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

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?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
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

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when I visited your school. I know that some of you find reading difficult, so your teachers will tell you what is in this letter.

What I liked best about Rumworth School:

- you all learn a lot and the oldest pupils pass all sorts of exams
- everyone works hard, helps other people, and tries to be as independent as possible
- there are plenty of clubs and visits, and lessons are really interesting
- all the adults in school do their best to make sure you are all safe and happy
- Mr Bradbury is an excellent headteacher
- your parents and carers think that Rumworth is a brilliant school, and I agree with them.

What I have asked your school to do now:

- keep finding new ways to make Rumworth even better.