



# The Royal Liberty School

## Inspection Report

---

**Unique Reference Number** 102343  
**Local Authority** Havering  
**Inspection number** 286347  
**Inspection dates** 11–12 October 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Heather Yaxley HMI

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive	<b>School address</b>	Upper Brentwood Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Romford
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16		RM2 6HJ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys	<b>Telephone number</b>	01708 730141
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	560	<b>Fax number</b>	01708 723950
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Gary Woodman
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Julia Deery
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 April 2002		

---

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
11–16	11–12 October 2006	286347

---

---

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## **Introduction**

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

The Royal Liberty is a small comprehensive school for boys and occupies a listed building that dates back to 1769. The school has very recently gained Specialist School Status for science. The students represent the full range of ability and cultural diversity. A higher than average proportion has learning difficulties. Up to 20% of students either leave or join the school before they reach the age of 16, which is higher than usual.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The Royal Liberty School provides a satisfactory education for its students and is getting better all the time. The school has continued to improve since the last inspection and much has been achieved over recent years because of the hard work of staff, students and governors. This, together with changes that are beginning to make a difference to the consistency of students' achievement, provides a sound base from which the school can improve further. Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher is very determined to make changes that she believes will stand the test of time and raise standards. She has successfully created a senior leadership team which, although relatively new, is taking increasing responsibility for creating and delivering the necessary changes.

Improvement can be seen in some aspects of the school's work more than in others. This is not only because senior managers rightly prioritise areas that will make the most difference to the students, but also because some actions are taking longer to make a difference. For example, the focus on providing good care for the boys' well-being has resulted in a correspondingly positive effect on their behaviour and general attitudes to school. Students are very much on-board with what the school wants to achieve. The school is a calm, safe and happy place where students are respectful of one another and the environment. Attendance is well below average but the actions taken by the school are beginning to improve the situation and attendance is satisfactory overall.

Similar priority has been given to developing a good curriculum. Even as a small school, staff are able to offer a range of exam options for older students and flexible timetable arrangements to meet the needs and interests of most boys.

These improvements have led to more consistency in students' standards of work. They make satisfactory progress and attain average standards, with strengths in English but weaknesses in science. There is still more work to be done in order to improve basic literacy skills in all subjects. The very recent designation as a specialist school for science has not had time to impact on the quality of provision.

Suitable systems are in place to evaluate the quality of the curriculum and teaching. However, the way in which managers check how agreed changes are taking effect is not always sharp enough. As a result, leaders and managers know their school well and accurately identify things that need to be done but inconsistencies in teaching and between departments are not always picked up.

Another area that requires more attention is assessment of work by teachers. Senior staff have already identified that arrangements are not as good as they should be. Although satisfactory overall, teaching and learning does not involve students enough in knowing how well they are doing in lessons or how to do better. This affects the speed at which they can make progress.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching and learning by ensuring that teachers make better use of assessment.
- Improve opportunities across subjects for developing literacy skills.
- Improve the consistency with which senior staff check the quality of provision.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Although standards of work are below average, students make satisfactory progress across the school. Many students enter Year 7 with standards that are below average with skills in literacy being particularly poor. The 2005 GCSE results were below average but the percentage of students gaining five or more passes at grade C or above increased. Results in 2006 show continued improvement. For students in Year 9, standards are average overall and again show a consistent pattern of improvement over the past two years.

There are fluctuations in departmental results. In Year 9, English is above average, mathematics close to national averages, whilst science remains below expectations. The school recognises this and has put in place staffing changes to support improvements planned through the Specialist School Status. A significant minority of students have poor attendance records and this depresses overall achievement. Those students who do attend regularly achieve at least satisfactorily. There are no groups of students who underachieve and some with learning difficulties make good progress.

The school has successfully developed detailed and robust systems to collect and analyse information on students' progress. Current information clearly shows that students in Years 9 and 11 are on track to achieve examination results that should be an improvement on those in 2006. The new assessment and monitoring systems have enabled the school to identify and effectively support groups of students who need extra help to gain examination grades that more adequately reflect their ability.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

The students' personal development and well-being are good. This is because relationships are good and students take advantage of opportunities offered to extend their horizons and become active within the school community. Most students get on well with each other and their teachers. They enjoy school life, and feel well cared for and safe. One Year 11 student commented, 'I enjoy this school because students have a lot of respect for other people'. Students are well aware of reasons for adopting a healthy life style but need to take more responsibility for doing so. Many attend a wide range of extra curricular activities including good opportunities for sporting activities during and after school. Aware of those less fortunate than themselves, students take part in fund raising activities for local charities, for example the local

hospice. The school's links with local businesses ensures the delivery of a good work experience programme, which helps them prepare for the world of work.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. Students have good social skills and are keen to talk about their work. Most treat the code of behaviour with respect and consequently behaviour is generally good. On the few occasions where unsatisfactory behaviour disrupts others it is usually when students are not fully engaged in their learning. There are many opportunities for students to take responsibility in school such as school councillors, as sports captains and form captains. It is very pleasing to see how students are enthusiastic about these roles and wear their badges with pride.

Though figures remain well below average, attendance is improving, particularly in the older year groups. This is because of several strong and creative initiatives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and the school's evaluation matches that seen on inspection. Students display good behaviour and positive attitudes in most lessons because teachers have developed effective classroom management routines. Most teaching has appropriate pace and variety, capturing students' interest. In the best lessons, good questioning by teachers helps students to share their ideas, stimulates discussion and promotes further development of their thoughts. Assessment of students work is not consistent in all lessons. This means that the planning of work does not meet the needs of all students and opportunities are missed to develop basic literacy skills. Similarly, marking is not consistent enough to inform students about what they need to do to improve their work. In the best examples, they understand what levels they are working at and have opportunities to evaluate their own learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school provides good opportunities for all students, including those with learning difficulties, enabling them to make satisfactory progress. The curriculum is well matched to their needs through a variety of vocational and academic courses. In Key Stage 3 the learning-to-learn programme successfully encourages good independent learning and communication skills. Flexible choices in Years 10 and 11 provide a range of opportunities in conjunction with the local college. The school has a good work experience programme and encourages learners to think about prospective opportunities through the local careers service. However, the provision for other work related experiences across the curriculum is not yet fully developed.

Sporting, cultural and enrichment activities are good and opportunities include clubs for information communication technology, sport, modern languages, music and the breakfast club. Provision to broaden links with the community is more limited. Although

the curriculum does not offer citizenship at examination level there is a satisfactory programme of personal, social and health education.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Staff provide good care, guidance and support and this is a strength of the school. Staff are highly committed to the well-being of students and they effectively foster positive relationships and trust. A firm foundation for this is established by co-tutors through the induction programme for Year 7 students. This successfully helps those who are new to settle quickly and to know how to get support when they need it. The Student Support Team makes a significant contribution to the well-being of boys who may need a little bit of extra help to keep them on track from time to time. A particular strength is the way in which staff actively check that vulnerable students are doing as well as they can. There are effective links with other agencies and suitable procedures are in place to keep students safe. This personal attention often improves attendance, academic performance and confidence. For some students, alternative curriculum arrangements are in place and this successfully helps them to complete their education at the school. Older students are well-informed of their options for exams and further education and as a result increasing numbers of students are continuing their education at college.

Academic guidance is developing and is a current priority for the school. Plans are in place to ensure that students are given more opportunities to know how well they are doing and how to achieve more.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and senior team are well motivated and work together effectively. They know their school well but do not yet monitor and evaluate the quality of provision rigorously enough in all areas. The high focus and priority given to the curriculum and pastoral care is beginning to make a difference to the quality of learning. Slowly but surely improvements can be seen in students' attendance, behaviour and achievement. The English department has been particularly successful in sustaining developments because they work very closely together and make changes based on sound evaluations of what is working well and what needs to be done differently. Senior staff have already put suitable plans in place to improve the quality of assessment and to give pupils more opportunities to develop literacy skills. These actions have not yet had time to make a difference to students' achievement. Governors effectively support all areas of the school's work. They receive good quality information from staff and students are supportive in the way that they ask questions of what they see in the school.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Inspection judgements

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

### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	3

### The quality of provision

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

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

As we left your school recently, many of you were on the field playing football, supported by your Heads of House. You were all clearly having a great time. In fact, it was obvious to us throughout the inspection that you enjoy school and take good advantage of the opportunities that the school offers. We spoke to many of you about how well you were doing in school, the things that you like about it and the things that you would like to be even better. We also considered the many responses received from your families. Now it is our turn to tell you how well we think your school is doing. This is just a brief overview and we encourage you and your families to read the full report.

The Royal Liberty School is providing you with a satisfactory standard of education with many things that are good and it is getting better all the time. In particular, the results that you achieve at the end of Years 9 and 11 are more consistent. This is not only because the curriculum is good and helps to keep you interested in your work, but also because you have good attitudes to work, to one another and to the staff. You are quite rightly positive about the good care and support that you receive for your personal well-being.

As always, there are things that need more attention so that you can achieve greater success. We have asked your headteacher to work with staff to improve opportunities for you to know more about how to improve your work and to develop your literacy skills in different subjects. Senior staff also need to check more carefully how well the school is improving. You all have an important part to play in the continued development of your school. We know that staff will want to talk to you about how the whole school community can work together to achieve greater things.

It was a pleasure to spend time with you this week and we wish you well in all that you plan for your future.

Heather Yaxley Her Majesty's Inspector

Emma Aylesbury Additional Inspector

Roger Whittaker Additional Inspector