

# Rokeby School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102777
<b>Local Authority</b>	Newham
<b>Inspection number</b>	286491
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Barry Jones

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	780
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Veronica Martell
<b>Principal</b>	Ms Charlotte Robinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 June 2005
<b>School address</b>	Pitchford Street London E15 4RZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8534 8946
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8519 8239

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Rokeby serves a very disadvantaged, inner-city community. The proportions of boys from minority ethnic groups and with English as an additional language are higher than in the great majority of schools. This includes about one fifth of the boys who are at an early stage of learning English. The numbers of pupils who join or leave the school at unusual times is very high. The proportion of boys with learning difficulties and disabilities is average. When the school was inspected in January 2004 it was judged to require special measures. The inspection in June 2005 judged that the school provided a sound education and special measures were removed.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Rokeby is an improving school which provides a good quality of education for its boys in very challenging circumstances. The previous inspection showed that it was on the road to recovery. The new headteacher has galvanised the staff further and given the school a fresh momentum. She is a driving force and her high expectations for staff and boys are being met. This is tempered with encouragement and support when needed so that all feel valued and are part of a thriving community. As a result, there is a very positive response from all. Boys speak with pride about their school and the staff enthuse when discussing their contributions and plans for the future. There is a very positive ethos and relationships are good in this very diverse multicultural community. One older boy captured the sentiments of many when he said, 'I did not want to come to the school but I am pleased I did. We are getting better every year.'

Boys join the school with attainment that is well below average including many who come from overseas and start with little English. By the time they leave, standards are still below average. However, given their starting points achievement is good. Teaching in the school has improved significantly and is now good although not consistently so in all subjects. There has been an appropriate, strong emphasis on improving boys' numeracy and literacy skills. The good teaching in these subjects has been backed up with well-targeted additional support for boys, good curricula and good leadership. As a result, the gap with national averages is narrowing significantly. The school has vigorously tackled underachievement whenever it has been identified. This has led to improvements in all subjects. Despite strong action by senior managers, boys' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are below what they should be. The use of ICT is not coordinated well to ensure that it is used to its maximum potential to support learning in other subjects. The school makes effective use of data but analyses are not sufficiently incisive to fully identify trends in the progress of the significant number of boys who join the school after Year 7.

Boys are developing into mature young people who show respect for different beliefs and cultures. This is fostered by the caring environment and the good examples set by adults. Boys' good behaviour is helping to rebuild the growing reputation of the school with parents after it was dented by the imposition of special measures. As one parent commented, 'Rokeby is a good education institution as it has improved my son's grades rapidly over the years.' Boys enjoy being at school and this is shown by their attendance which is higher than in similar schools. However, the school's efforts to improve punctuality at the start of the day have not been fully effective. Boys' interest is stimulated by a curriculum that is good in many respects. The vision and planning for the curriculum are good. However, some of the developments are at an early stage and not yet fully established. Weaknesses in the curriculum for music, ICT and geography have been addressed but have not yet resulted in the good achievement found generally.

The headteacher shows excellent leadership and is supported well by an able senior leadership team and governing body. The school has improved significantly since the previous inspection as demonstrated by the school's improved results and its growing confidence. The school has good self-evaluation procedures and this underpins its good capacity to improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve boys' ICT skills.
- Ensure that changes to the curriculum mean that boys make good progress in all subjects.

- Improve the analysis of data to show the effectiveness of support for boys who join the school after Year 7.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Boys consistently achieve well in mathematics throughout the school. In 2007, provisional results show a marked improvement at GCSE level, particularly in English. Together with the good performance in mathematics, this reflects a successful whole-school approach to improving boys' basic skills. This is a strength of the school. The school's own data shows that boys who attend the school continuously from Year 7 onwards achieve well. A high proportion of boys who join at a later date start with little English and so are not able to perform to their ability until they have mastered English. This contributes to the standards being still well below average at Key Stage 3. They too make good progress and by the end of Year 11 the gap has narrowed although standards remain below average. There is some variation in performance between subjects and the school's analyses are not yet sufficiently penetrating to identify different rates of progress precisely. There are no underachieving groups of boys and those with learning difficulties and disabilities make the same progress as their classmates because of their good support.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Boys' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good and reflects the good provision for these aspects. Boys are given many opportunities to discuss issues around diversity and social and moral issues and respond very positively. A strength is that boys are able to express views about the school's work including feedback on the quality of teaching. For instance, the school council played a significant role in formulating the anti-bullying policy. The new policy is called 'the Respect policy' and is well understood and followed by the great majority of the boys. As a result, they say they feel safe and that bullying is rare. Boys have a good understanding of healthy-eating issues and there is good take up for sporting activities. All pupils are encouraged to play a full part in the life of the school and make a good contribution to the wider community. Their numeracy and literacy skills are just below average but their ICT skills are weaker.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school has a thorough and accurate monitoring programme which shows that teaching and learning have improved significantly since the previous inspection and are now good. Where the school has identified some weaknesses, action has been taken to raise the quality to at least satisfactory by additional support in the classroom or by well-targeted professional development. Observations by inspectors verified this. Some outstanding teaching was seen in art and drama. In these lessons, boys took responsibility for their own learning, participated fully and made excellent progress. All lessons have clear objectives and teachers are skilled at explaining principles and concepts and using questioning. They use a range of strategies to make lessons interesting. This adds to boys' enjoyment and means that very few lessons are disrupted through misbehaviour. Relationships in classrooms are good and teachers have

successfully created positive learning atmospheres. The use of interactive whiteboards is increasing but ICT is not yet used to its full potential in lessons. Assessment of boys' progress is used well to plan for further lessons in most subjects. There are good opportunities for boys to review their progress with teachers.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

There is a very thoughtful and evaluative approach to developing the curriculum. Boys' views are sought and acted upon in developing courses that meet their needs and interests. This has been one of the factors underpinning the recent significant improvements in English. In particular, boys have responded well to being given more opportunities to engage in media work. Evaluations of the course showed that they greatly appreciated the increased opportunities to write, edit and then publish articles. There is good provision for numeracy and personal and social education. The school has successfully broadened the curriculum including providing more options for performing arts. Staffing difficulties in the past have meant that the provision for a few subjects was unsatisfactory, including music and geography. The school has made good appointments and these issues are now being addressed rigorously but it is too early to judge the effectiveness of initiatives taken. Similarly, a range of vocational courses has been introduced. Take up for these courses has been low but is much higher this year. These courses have had mixed success in increasing the motivation and achievements of boys. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities both for sport and cultural activities. Some boys from Rokeby have excelled in representing the school both locally and nationally.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The strength of the support emanates from the caring culture in the school as much as from the formal systems in place. For instance, boys who join with little spoken English during the year are inducted well by support staff. However, equally vital is the welcome and acceptance from their peers who willingly take on the role of interpreter in the classroom. Additionally, the teachers themselves come from a rich variety of cultural backgrounds and between them speak an impressive range of languages. When needed, boys say these teachers give unstintingly of their time to help new arrivals, including after school. One boy commented, 'When I came to the school I could not speak English. The technology teacher speaks Turkish and helped me.' The formal support includes the nomination of two 'buddies' who speak the same language. There is less in-class support for these boys than in many other similar schools. The school's analysis of data shows that they make good progress overall but the analysis is not incisive enough to reveal whether there are variations between key stages or subjects. Otherwise, the quality of academic guidance for all boys is good. They know their targets and what they have to do to improve. There is a comprehensive careers education and guidance programme. The school is rightly proud that the great majority of boys, and more than in most schools, continue into education, training or employment.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

A sustained period of development work has resulted in a significant improvement in the standards and achievement of boys and high levels of care. The school has good induction

procedures so that new staff settle quickly and contribute effectively to the school's work. The school has addressed robustly the weaknesses in middle management identified in the previous inspection. There has been effective training as well as strong challenge by senior managers. Consequently, middle managers are increasingly a strength of the school and are given every encouragement to initiate and pursue their own ideas for improvement. The school has a very positive culture of self-evaluation firmly rooted in regular reviews of whole-school and departmental progress. The school recognises that its range of analyses of data need to be extended to give a more detailed picture of the progress made by boys who join the school after the start of Year 7. The school sets challenging targets for individual boys and this is contributing to raising standards. The changing population in the school does present difficulties when setting whole-school targets. Nevertheless, the targets set for 2008 are challenging. Effective governors are closely involved in monitoring and evaluating the school's work and hold it to account well. The school has improved its financial management. Since the previous inspection it has very significantly reduced its overspend while continuing to raise standards.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

21 September 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Rokeby School, London, E15 4RZ

Thank you for your help and cooperation when we inspected your school. We spoke to many of you in small groups or around the school. Without exception you told us how much your school has improved. You said that you enjoy school and feel safe. Representatives of your school council told us that their views are valued and acted upon. For instance, they are involved in interviewing new staff. Some of you said that Rokeby was not your first choice but how pleased you were to be a student there. You told us it is a good school and we agree. The things that we particularly like about your school are that:

- you look after one another really well, especially new arrivals
- you are doing well in your work, especially in English and mathematics
- you behave well which means that lessons are not disrupted
- you have good teachers who show an interest in you as young people
- the school is well led and has an excellent headteacher
- the headteacher is well supported by hard working staff and governors
- there are many opportunities for you to take part in sport and other activities
- it is a warm, welcoming place.

Rokeby is always looking to do even better. There are three things that we have asked the school to do to achieve this.

- Make sure that you have good computer skills.
- The school has given much thought to improving the courses that you take. Where there have been changes, we have asked the school to make sure you do as well as in your other subjects.
- Use the data it collects to do more checks on how well students do who join the school after Year 7.

You can help too. Continue to be good ambassadors for your school. Ask questions when you do not understand as the teachers will be pleased to help. Too many of you arrive late for school in the morning! If that includes you, get someone to give you a call in the morning. Once again, many thanks. We wish you continuing success in the future.

Barry Jones Lead inspector