



# Royds School Specialist Language College

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 108081  
**Local Authority** Leeds  
**Inspection number** 288022  
**Inspection dates** 11–12 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Heather Richardson 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>	Pennington Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Oulton, Leeds
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18		West Yorkshire LS26 8EX
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0113 2059559
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	1332	<b>Fax number</b>	0113 2059558
<b>Number on roll (6th form)</b>	155		
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Chris Peat
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Bernadette Young
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 January 2002		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
11–18	11–12 January 2007	288022

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Royds School is larger than average and has specialist status as a language college. Located on the outskirts of Leeds, its students come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and reflect the full range of ability. Students enter the school with average levels of attainment. Very few students have a minority ethnic heritage and the number of students for whom English is an additional language is very low. The proportion of students entitled to free school meals is lower than the national average. Although there has been an increase, the proportions of students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who have a statement of special educational need, are broadly similar to the national averages. The school works in partnership with local colleges and schools to provide additional curriculum opportunities for students aged 14 to 19. It uses the facilities of a local sports centre to supplement its own more limited facilities for physical education.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Royds School is an improving school with a clear emphasis on raising standards. There has been a legacy of underachievement which the school has been tackling. The progress which students now make is satisfactory overall and they reach broadly average standards in both their academic work and their personal development by the time they leave. There is still, however, some unevenness in the progress students make in different subjects. Standards, although rising, are not yet consistently high enough.

The most recent results for 2006 show the school has increased the proportion of students gaining five or more good GCSE passes including English and mathematics. These results are broadly in line with the national averages. There has also been an increase in the proportion gaining five or more passes at all grades, again bringing the school's results in line with national averages. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers.

Standards are rising because the school has introduced a number of strategies to improve teaching and learning and because it has a good curriculum in place. It is also tracking students' progress more carefully. These strategies are beginning to make a difference. For example, students are increasingly aware of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. However, some of the developments are relatively recent and not yet implemented consistently to ensure good teaching and learning at all times. Most students enjoy lessons and, when opportunities are provided, they take responsibility and collaborate well. A small but significant proportion of learners are passive rather than enthusiastic and a small minority do not always behave well. The school's action to improve behaviour has resulted in fewer exclusions because students have clearer guidelines. Students' attendance has improved and is now broadly average.

Royds School has been a specialist language college since September 2003. It has made good progress in developing international aspects across the curriculum. International weeks, for example, are greatly appreciated by the students and the number of visits abroad has increased considerably. Such activities make an important contribution to students' cultural development and to preparing them for future employment. The range of languages on offer has grown and now includes Japanese and Mandarin Chinese. However, GCSE results in modern languages remain stubbornly below what they should be. The school is tackling this by improved monitoring of teaching and learning and the systematic sharing of good practice.

Monitoring teaching and learning, together with other aspects of the school's work has, rightly, been a key priority for the headteacher and the school's leadership team. At the same time the expertise of middle leaders has been developed and their responsibilities have been clarified. The monitoring systems which the school has developed are sound, but are not yet used with sufficient rigour. As a result, not all inconsistencies are picked up, nor is there a sufficiently sharp focus on students' learning. Hence the school has an over optimistic view of its effectiveness. The majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are pleased with the school.

However, there was a significant proportion who expressed dissatisfaction with a number of aspects of the school's work.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 3**

Students make satisfactory progress compared with their starting points and capabilities. Although standards at A level fell to below average in 2006, they have improved markedly in recent years. Students receive good advice on entry to the sixth form and also when they are considering opportunities for employment and for further and higher education. This is appreciated by them and helps to ensure that the courses they take are well-matched to their abilities and interests. Students value the strong links with partner institutions which provide them with an increasingly wide range of academic and vocational courses at a variety of levels. They particularly enjoy the opportunities to follow extra courses provided through language college status. Teachers have a secure knowledge of their subjects and the quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. A significant minority of students in Year 13 voluntarily follow a community service module and many of them spend time mentoring younger students in lessons. This contributes to the personal development of both mentors and those being mentored. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is a clear focus on ensuring that the curriculum is developed continuously to meet the needs of their students more fully. Students are proud of the sixth form and there are increasing numbers applying to enter it each year.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards.
- Make teaching and learning consistently good or better.
- Ensure monitoring is more robust and produces accurate evaluations of the school's effectiveness.
- Develop effective procedures to consult with parents and carers and engage more widespread support.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 3**

Having started the school with average levels of attainment, students make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 3 to reach broadly average standards. Standards at Key Stage 4 have improved and are now broadly in line with national averages in most measures, although there is still some underachievement, notably for lower ability boys. The school generally meets its appropriately challenging targets at the end of Key Stage 3 but has only recently come close to its Key Stage 4 targets.

The few students from minority ethnic backgrounds and students that do not have English as a first language make satisfactory progress, as do students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

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

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Most students like coming to school and enjoy school life, as is evident from satisfactory attendance and widespread involvement in extra-curricular activities. Students feel safe and largely free from bullying and are keen on healthy lifestyles. They know how to seek help in the event of bullying. Students' spiritual, moral and social development is satisfactory and specialist language college provision enhances their cultural awareness.

Behaviour around school is generally satisfactory. Most students are mature and responsible, but some are slow in getting punctually to class. Most students listen carefully and are cooperative when working in groups and pairs. A small minority of students, mainly in Key Stage 4, are less than enthusiastic learners. At worst, the behaviour of a few students causes some disruption, but this is decreasing. Most students are responding appropriately to the school's behaviour policy. There have been very few permanent exclusions and the number of short term ones has reduced of late.

Students willingly accept any opportunities they get to demonstrate care and support for others, such as raising money for charities. When opportunities are provided, they are also eager to take part in decisions which affect them. As they progress through school, students acquire satisfactory skills and attitudes equipping them for later study and work.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Teaching and learning are benefiting from the improvement work which the school has undertaken, but some inconsistencies remain. In lessons where teaching is good or better teachers have high expectations and the students respond well to the challenges set for them. These lessons are well planned so that the teacher and the students are clear about what they are trying to achieve. Questioning is used effectively to check students' understanding and develop their confidence. In a significant proportion of lessons, however, the teacher dominates and does not involve the students enough in the development of their own ideas. As a result, there is limited dialogue and little scope for students to think for themselves. Consequently, learning becomes passive and the rate of progress slows.

The assessment of students' work is too variable. There are some good examples of teachers' comments in exercise books which indicate clearly how well students have done and what they should do to improve their work, but some marking is too

superficial. Students' own knowledge of their targets and of how well they are doing is improving.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 2**

The curriculum meets the needs, interests and aspirations of students well. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is balanced and there is provision for additional literacy and numeracy. The wide range of academic and vocational courses at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form is a strength of the curriculum. It results from strong relationships with partner schools and colleges and a commitment to providing courses at the right level to enable all students to succeed. Equal access to academic and vocational courses is promoted, thus preparing students effectively for higher education and the wider world of work. As a result, more students are staying on at school to pursue sixth form courses.

Language college status enriches learning opportunities through additional courses, special events and visits. There are some parental concerns about the extent of language study at Key Stage 4, to which the school is responding. There is a wide variety of extra-curricular activities, sports events and visits with good take-up rates. This includes the international weeks which have contributed to the school receiving the International School Award and to widening students' horizons.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 3**

The school promotes healthy living and provides satisfactory care and support for its students. Well-considered child protection procedures ensure their welfare and safety. Students are well supervised both in and out of school, by teaching staff, supervisors and a hard working team of behaviour support officers. Detailed risk assessments are conducted wherever needed.

Staff are sensitive to student's feelings and anxieties, particularly those of the most vulnerable. Teachers work hard to include all students in every aspect of school life. The school has several supportive facilities including a learning support unit. Teachers make increasingly effective use of data on students' achievements, keeping them and their parents informed about progress. However, long dinner queues, locked toilets, and lack of indoor social areas make school life less pleasant for some students.

Careers guidance is thorough and prepares students well for future study and employment. Students benefit equally well from profitable links with external agencies, local colleges and schools, which make valuable contributions to students' personal and academic development.

## Leadership and management

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. The headteacher has emphasised, rightly, the importance of raising standards and achievement. Teachers show a common sense of purpose and growing confidence. The roles and responsibilities of subject and pastoral leaders have been developed and defined. They are now held more accountable for students' achievement and standards. The school's procedures for monitoring progress and evaluating its own effectiveness are in place, including departmental reviews. The procedures are sound but they are not yet applied with sufficient rigour to reach accurate judgements. For example, teaching and learning are now monitored regularly but the school's judgement on their quality and effectiveness are too generous. The views of a range of stakeholders are taken into account in the process of self-evaluation and to inform the school improvement plan. The school invites feedback from parents, but has yet to deal fully with their concerns on a range of issues. Governors fulfil their duties conscientiously. They are supportive and also willing to challenge leaders and managers when necessary.

The school has taken effective steps to tackle the issues from the previous inspection. Leaders and managers are giving the school satisfactory capacity for further improvement. The school provides satisfactory value for money.





## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### 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	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	3
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	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	3	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	
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	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3	3

<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	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	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**

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to thank you for the way you made us feel welcome when we inspected your school. Your willingness to talk to us, both in the formal meetings and when we met you informally around school, was very helpful.

We think Royds School is providing you with a satisfactory education and that the school is improving. This is mainly because your teachers have been focusing on ways to improve lessons and to help you to understand the next steps you need to take. We think that your teachers are doing the right things to help your learning, but not enough lessons are really good lessons at present. One of the things we have asked your teachers to do is to try to ensure all lessons are good. Most of you enjoy your lessons and work hard, but some of you could try harder at times and this would help lessons to improve. Examination and test results have improved, but should be better still. This is another challenge we have set the school. We are pleased that your attendance has improved and that there are fewer exclusions than before. Please keep this up.

You have a good choice of subjects in Key Stage 4 and even more in the sixth form because of the way in which your school works with other schools and colleges in the area. You have a lot of opportunities to learn about other countries and to visit some of them because your school is a language college. The international weeks are real highlights and we enjoyed seeing the photographs and hearing your accounts. It is good that so many of you take part in the activities the school offers. This includes the opportunities you have to help others, for example, by acting as mentors to younger students and by working for charities, such as the leprosy charity we heard about in the Year 7 assembly.

We have asked your teachers to look again at how they check on the work of the school. They have got sensible ways of doing this, but need to ask tougher questions when thinking about how well the school is doing. We have also asked them to look again at the ways in which they find out what your parents and carers think. A lot of your parents and carers took the trouble to complete the questionnaire for the inspection. Please thank them for us.

We hope that you continue to enjoy your time at Royds School and that you are successful.