



Rachel Madocks School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116611
Local Authority Hampshire
Inspection number 290562
Inspection dates 10–11 October 2006
Reporting inspector Jacque Cook

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Eagle Avenue
School category	Community special		Cowplain
Age range of pupils	2–19		Waterlooville PO8 9XP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02392241818
Number on roll (school)	67	Fax number	02392269521
Number on roll (6th form)	4	Chair	Miss Tricia Pearce
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Headteacher	Mrs Chrys Browne
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2001		

Age group 2–19	Inspection dates 10–11 October 2006	Inspection number 290562
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Rachel Madocks is a school for pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Thirteen of the pupils also have autistic spectrum disorders. There has been an increase in the number of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties to over 40%. A few more able pupils transfer to the school from local primary provision for pupils with moderate learning difficulties at the end of Year 6. A further few pupils join the school for the Post-16 provision. There are three children at the Foundation Stage, two of whom are part-time. Six of the pupils are looked after. The school has an outreach consultancy service.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Rachel Madocks is a good and effective school. The headteacher has developed a strong and well focused leadership team. Their very clear vision and sense of direction for the school is shared by the staff and governors. Good leadership and management have led to many changes that have ensured that the changing needs of the pupils continue to be met. A robust self- evaluation process, that takes account of the views of pupils, parents and other professionals connected with the school, enables strengths to be celebrated as well as areas for development identified. Most pupils have very low levels of attainment, but from this low base they make good progress and their achievement is good. Many pupils make good progress towards targets on their individual education plans. However, there are instances where targets are difficult to meet, because they are not sufficiently specific.

The school is rightly proud of the outstanding provision at the Foundation Stage. Children make very good progress in gaining important skills, such as communication, that help them to learn. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders make excellent progress in improving their communication skills. Last year, the monitoring of pupils' overall progress showed that students were not doing as well as expected in the Post-16 provision. Since then, a great deal of work has been done, in establishing an effective curriculum and reorganising class groups. Overall, their achievement is satisfactory and there are already students who are doing well in work for their award scheme.

There are outstanding links with professionals who work with the pupils and their families. Strategies are effective and often involve more than one agency, supporting parents and their children in their homes where there are difficulties. Parents commented that they appreciate the willingness of staff to talk with them and the high level of care provided by the school. This safe and secure environment contributes to pupils really enjoying coming to school and to their outstanding behaviour. Staff are highly skilled in helping pupils with very difficult behaviour to conform to what is expected. This enables learning to take place. Safeguarding arrangements are robust and through careful teaching, pupils learn to keep themselves safe. Many know about healthy food and make sensible choices at lunch and snack time. During lessons pupils are helped to develop their independence. They contribute to their community, for example, by helping to tidy up. Pupils also raise money for a range of charities.

The good curriculum has been strengthened by the recent introduction of a topic based section. This is successful as subjects are linked together making it easier for pupils to learn. There are very good links with local schools and pupils talk enthusiastically about the opportunities for drama and dance that these links provide.

There are good procedures to monitor the work of the school but the information gained is not always analysed effectively. There is a great deal of information, for example, about pupils' progress, and targets are now being set for pupils' to aim for. However, data on the progress of groups of learners is not used well enough and weaknesses, such as the slowing of progress for students in Post-16, are not spotted early enough. Regular monitoring of teaching and learning has played an important

part in maintaining the good quality. Any training needed is organised swiftly. This contributes to good in-depth knowledge of how pupils learn and ensures the changing needs of the school population are met effectively. Although there are many good elements of teaching and learning, there are instances where staff do not plan well enough to include an effective review of learning at the end of lessons.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The effectiveness and efficiency of the Post-16 provision is satisfactory. Since weaknesses were identified in the progress of students in the Post-16 provision, the deputy head teacher has taken over the leadership and management and also contributes to the teaching of the students. This has had a considerable impact in raising the quality of the provision, particularly the curriculum which is already contributing to improvements in students' progress. More work needs to be done to track students' progress to ensure they reach annual targets successfully and as a result, improve their progress. Last year there was considerable upheaval for the students during the building work and one group was taught off-site. This was turned into an opportunity to make good use of the community facilities where they were based. The students were delighted to be in the new suite of rooms at the beginning of this term.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use information from monitoring more effectively to improve the progress of students in the Post-16 provision
- Ensure targets on individual education plans are sufficiently specific
- Improve lesson plans to ensure end of lesson reviews are more effective.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Pupils' attainment is very low but given their learning difficulties most pupils achieve well. The very good progress that children at the Foundation Stage make in their personal development and in establishing communication skills is largely due to the high level of expertise of the staff. They work intensively with the children using as many of the senses as possible to reinforce learning effectively. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders make excellent progress in improving their communication skills. They thrive in the well structured routine that gives them the security they need to learn. Progress in the Post-16 provision is only satisfactory but this slowing in the rate of progress is being tackled effectively. A much improved curriculum ensures that all students have work that is suitably challenging. The development of lifeskills and awareness of the world of work has particularly improved.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The good personal development and well being of pupils ensures they are confident and prepared to communicate what they like or dislike. Students are particularly proud to be members of the school council which is being developed so they can give opinions in a formal setting. They talk with enthusiasm about the new suite of rooms. Other pupils say school is a good place, and are especially pleased with the new play equipment. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their social skills are developed particularly well and they enjoy learning about other cultures. While preparing for a Caribbean event, pupils appreciated the music and learned about their cricketers. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are well-mannered and do as they are asked, even when it is difficult for them, for example, stretching during a physiotherapy session. Activities, such as making wooden inset jigsaws, lead to students experiencing the process of production and contribute well to their economic well-being. Although there are not so many work-related activities for pupils in Years 10 and 11 they develop necessary lifeskills. For example, they use money to purchase healthy items for snack time when they go shopping. Attendance is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Teachers have good expertise and understanding of how pupils learn best. Their knowledge and use of strategies to improve behaviour is very effective. Praise and encouragement are used well to reinforce good behaviour. This leads to pupils developing their self esteem and improving their concentration. The consistent use of visual timetables and other techniques that provide structure and routine are especially effective for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. They are able to calm themselves when there are difficulties and return to work. Staff are good at using symbols to support learning. Pupils use the visual cues well which contributes to their improving communication skills.

On the whole, lessons are planned well so pupils have activities that are suited to their needs. Occasionally, a starter activity as a whole class takes too long and pupils' attention wanders. Previous work is briefly recalled at the beginning of lessons which helps pupils to build successfully on what they have learned before. However, in some lessons teachers do not plan how to end lessons effectively, and opportunities are missed to draw together what has been learned. As a result, pupils do not always have a clear understanding of what they have achieved and a chance to celebrate their success.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Recent changes have strengthened the curriculum and many subjects are now taught through a cycle of topics. This is effective because it concentrates pupils' learning and makes natural links for them between subjects. Focus weeks and days provide good in depth study. A new scheme of work for personal and social development has ensured that important aspects for keeping safe are included. The provision for physical education has been broadened through a new scheme of work. For pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties there is a good curriculum using the senses. Good links with mainstream primary and secondary schools, particularly in expressive arts, enable pupils to perform and learn about the technical side of productions. The new Post-16 curriculum is well planned and follows on from Years 10 and 11 where pupils study for the award bearing course Transition Challenge. In Post-16 the Towards Independence course develops students' skills further. Students attend college where appropriate and use facilities in the local community, such as leisure centres to broaden their experiences. Arrangements to group pupils into broad ability classes are beneficial. However, detailed plans to provide opportunities for pupils to also work with their peers are not in place.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Care, guidance and support of pupils are good. Exceptionally good links with a range of agencies supports parents and pupils well in the home easing difficulties that potentially would slow learning. Regular on-site clinics reduce the time away from school and pupils are more comfortable being seen in familiar surroundings. The school has robust arrangements to safeguard pupils. Risk assessments and handling programmes are kept up to date and levels of supervision are high. The welfare of all pupils is carefully monitored. Particular attention is paid to the looked after children to check on their progress. In most cases, pupils make good progress towards meeting targets on their individual education plans. Because some targets are not specific enough staff are not always clear about the relative strengths and weaknesses in pupils' progress.

The attendance of pupils is monitored well. As a result, instances where pupils do not attend other than for medical reasons are very few and dealt with appropriately.

Recent changes were made to lunchtime arrangements to bring the school together for the mid-day meal. This has been successful but the hall is now rather crowded making it difficult to keep a family atmosphere. The outreach provision works well in supporting pupils in mainstream schools.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

School development and improvement planning are effective, based on a clear and good self evaluation process which is used to rigorously monitor the quality of education. As a result, there is a good track record of improvements and a clear agenda prioritising what needs to happen next, giving the school a good capacity to improve further. Developments such as the extensive playground equipment, which is wheelchair friendly, and the building works that have led to the new suite of Post-16 rooms are having a very positive effect in broadening the experiences for the pupils. Work on improving the progress for students in Post-16 is already raising standards. The various awards the school has including Healthy Schools, Investors in People and Charter Mark illustrate the success of the leadership.

There is a regular pattern of monitoring the work of the school and as a result, there is a lot of information. It has been used well in many areas, for example, to highlight the weakness in progress made by students in the Post-16 provision but is not analysed sufficiently. Not enough use is made of the annual targets, that were introduced last year, to alert staff to any underachievement and therefore to provide speedy intervention.

The role of the governing body is satisfactory. There are many new members and there have been three changes of chair in the last eighteen months. Governors provide appropriate challenge to the headteacher and senior management and are supportive of the work of the school. They do not, however, visit the school to gain sufficient first hand information about the school's work.

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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?	2	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
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	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
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	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	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 to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	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 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	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	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

Thank you very much for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed seeing you in lessons and looking at some of your work. A special thank you to those of you who came and told me what you thought about school. It was very helpful.

This is what I liked about your school.

- You have a good school.
- You work hard and do well.
- Young children are excellent in learning to communicate.
- Your teaching by teachers and support staff is good.
- The headteacher and senior management team run your school well.
- You clearly enjoy school and your behaviour is excellent.
- The school works brilliantly with your parents and others to help solve any problems.
- The topic work you do helps is good at helping you to learn.
- You enjoy working with pupils from other schools.

This is what I have asked the school to do now.

- Improve the progress of pupils in Post-16.
- Make better use of information about how you are doing and ensure your targets are clear so you can meet them.
- Plan the end of lessons so you know how much you have learned.

With best wishes

Jacque Cook

Lead inspector