

St Rose's Special School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115813
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	312066
Inspection dates	9–10 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael Farrell

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	52
6th form	23
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	M T Billington
Headteacher	Frances Billington
Date of previous school inspection	20 January 2003
School address	Stratford Lawn Stroud GL5 4AP
Telephone number	01453 763793
Fax number	01453 752617

Age group	2–19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Rose's School is a non-maintained Roman Catholic school educating pupils with physical disabilities and an increasing number with complex learning difficulties. The school campus includes St Rose's, which provides for pupils from nursery age to Year 11, and St Joseph's, which educates students over the age of 16. The nursery is a local provision, taking pupils with and without special educational needs. For those pupils with special needs attainment on entry to the nursery is exceptionally low. Eleven pupils are boarders at St Rose's or St Joseph's. There are two pupils of minority ethnic heritage, no pupils for whom English is an additional language, and five pupils in local authority care. The school educates pupils from 13 local authorities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Rose's is a good school with outstanding features. Pupils value it enormously and are proud of being there. The outstanding links with parents, between teams of staff in the school and with outside agencies and others enhance the provision considerably. This is reflected in parents' very positive comments such as: 'I can't praise the school enough – the staff are wonderful – caring and gentle and pull together as a team'; 'The staff are excellent and go way beyond their duties'; and 'There is a real serenity and calmness about the school'.

Pupils enjoy their schooling immensely because they trust staff and care for each other and because there is so much they can achieve. They are very proud of the school, and this is reflected in the fact that they make an excellent contribution to it and take part in and contribute to many activities in the local community. Pupils follow a healthy lifestyle, eating sensibly and seeking out and enjoying physical activities. There is excellent attention to pupils' care and nurturing in a warm and peaceful environment. Systems for child protection are robust and very careful attention is given to safety while at the same time encouraging independence. The school sets clear targets in its good individual education plans for pupils. However, the system for assessing the progress made by pupils is not finely graded enough to recognise the small steps in progress made by some pupils so opportunities are missed to raise standards still further.

The very effective leadership of the headteacher has successfully guided the school through a period of change when many pupils coming to the school have more complex difficulties than before. Staff are a unified team and the different qualities and skills of all are powerfully brought together for the benefit of pupils. The highly valued and well-led therapy team works seamlessly with other staff and great care is taken when pupils are withdrawn from lessons to ensure that educational opportunities are enhanced. The school clearly knows its strengths and weaknesses well and the inspection agreed with a number of the judgements. However, the school's overall judgements of its provision were a little over generous.

Children make a good start in the nursery where they progress well in the good provision. This is sustained right through the school and continues in the sixth form where students gain a wide range of suitable accreditation. Teaching is good throughout the school and is outstanding in its nurturing of communication because every opportunity is taken to encourage it. As a result, pupils make excellent progress in developing their communication skills. Learning is well supported by a well planned curriculum that meets the learning needs of pupils effectively, and is greatly enriched by opportunities for further education and leisure after school. However, current opportunities to experience the world of work including work experience are more limited.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Students are provided with a good curriculum that enables them to achieve a wide range of accreditation. The sixth form is well led and managed and has clear priorities for improvement. Teaching and learning are good, particularly in encouraging students to develop excellent communication skills. Students try very hard at their work and their learning is well supported. The care and support for them is very good and results in their outstanding behaviour and personal development. There are outstanding links with other services, clubs, colleges and

others. However, opportunities to experience the world of work and work experience are not extensive enough.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

In the Foundation Stage, skilled individual attention enables children to have access to the full range of activities. Children make good progress relative to their starting points. Their behaviour, personal development and enjoyment of what they do are outstanding. Activities are well planned, progress is carefully recorded and education and therapy staff work together very well. Although there are spacious facilities, spontaneous access to outside play is constrained by the siting of the provision on the first floor, although staff make every effort to ensure that children have sufficient access to outdoor play.

Effectiveness of boarding provision

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The school in its most recent Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) complied with National Minimum Standards with good or outstanding outcomes. A few points to improve were identified which the school has since addressed. The good boarding facilities provide a caring and warm environment for pupils and the wide range of activities that are on offer, including educational and leisure pursuits, contribute strongly to pupils' outstanding personal development. Child protection procedures are strong and pupils are very well supervised and feel safe.

What the school should do to improve further

- Refine assessment to allow smaller steps of progress to be identified for all pupils by extending the system already in place for mathematics.
- Extend opportunities to experience the world of work by using facilities in school and elsewhere and increase opportunities for work experience.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Although their attainment is exceptionally low in relation to pupils of the same age because of their special educational needs, pupils at St Rose's make good progress and achieve well. They get off to a good start in the nursery where all children progress well in relation to their starting points. This progress is sustained throughout the school and for students over 16 years old. Boys and girls and pupils with different disabilities all make good progress. All have targets that support their learning which are challenging and they make good progress towards these. Older students gain a wide and increasing range of appropriate qualifications including General Certificate of Education, Entry Level qualifications and ASDAN modules that are well pitched to their attainment and prepare them well for transition to life after St Rose's.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding. This was reflected in the Harvest Festival celebrations in which pupils participated with great joy and reverence and in school assembly where they showed great interest in the lives of people in other cultures. Behaviour in lessons and elsewhere is excellent as pupils are courteous and deeply considerate and caring towards others. They enjoy all that St Rose's provides immensely and take enormous pride in the school and what they are achieving. Pupils participate with great commitment in the student council, are enthusiastically involved in activities such as festivals and competitions with other schools, support fund raising for those in need, and regularly attend and fully contribute to groups in the local community. Their attendance is good and any absences are almost entirely related to medical conditions. They eat healthily and follow healthy lifestyles, participating well in a range of physical and leisure activities. Pupils develop work place skills well, for example in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, but there are insufficient opportunities for experiencing the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The contribution of teaching to encouraging pupils' communication is excellent with every opportunity taken to encourage pupils to respond and participate. Teachers and teaching assistants work harmoniously together and each knows exactly what their roles are because the lesson plans are very clear. Good use is made of information and communication technology, including the plasma screens, and activities are well chosen to engage pupils. The good individual education plans with their clear targets are used well but, occasionally, in individual pupils' tasks, there is not enough structure to enable the pupils to progress as well as they could do. For example, opportunities are sometimes missed to supplement developing writing skills by using computers to automatically put in some of the words.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is well planned and provides a wide range of subjects and activities that are well suited to the pupils' interests and abilities. The provision, including stimulating opportunities in and beyond the school for music and drama, contributes strongly to the pupils' outstanding cultural development. A rich variety of interesting resources is well used to engage pupils. A wide range of activities after school to which day and boarding pupils have access enriches the curriculum. Planning to enable older pupils opportunities to experience the world of work is not as fully developed as it could be.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Every opportunity is taken to encourage pupils' independence, dignity and feelings of self-worth in an outstanding ethos of calmness and care. The contribution of the highly valued and well-led therapy team is outstanding. Great care is taken with safety; for example, there are stringent procedures to ensure pupils' safety as they arrive at and leave school. Child protection procedures are robust.

In the good guidance to improve learning, careful use is made of the pupils' individual education plans. These are well monitored and pupils are aware of their targets which are suitably challenging. However, the school recognises that the system for assessing how well pupils are doing is not detailed enough to enable the very small steps in learning to be recorded systematically and consistently across the whole school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The headteacher has set a very clear sense of direction enabling staff with different qualities and skills to work together extremely well as a cohesive team. This has ensured that there is a seamless provision of therapy, education and care. The induction of staff and opportunities for training are very good. New staffing structures are contributing well to raising standards and all staff are very clear about their roles. The school's process of self-evaluation is good and enables the school to set itself challenging targets for pupils to raise standards. However, the system of assessment is not sufficiently embedded to allow the school to set targets for groups of pupils such as boys and girls and pupils with different special educational needs to further raise standards. Since its previous inspection, the school has progressed well and is well placed to do even better. Staff are well supported by governors who strike a good balance between encouragement and support and holding the school to account.

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	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?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	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	2	

The quality of provision

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

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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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	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

12 October 2007

Dear Pupils and Students

Inspection of St Rose's Special School, Stroud, GL5 4AP

Thank you for being so welcoming and courteous when my colleague Mary Geddes and I inspected your school on 9–10 October. It was a delight to meet you and talk with you and it was very clear to us how much you valued the school.

We found many things that were good or excellent about St Rose's. Your behaviour and your contribution to the school and local community are excellent. The headteacher provides very effective leadership, and links between different staff, with parents and with different services are excellent. You achieve well and make excellent progress in communication. Teaching and learning are good right through the school and the curriculum is good. The care you receive is excellent and the guidance you get in your work is good. The boarding provision, sixth form and provision for the very young children are good too.

There are a couple of things I have asked the staff to improve:

- Make sure the assessments of your progress allow it to be followed in more detail.
- Extend opportunities for you to experience the world of work and increase your opportunities for work experience.

It really was lovely to meet you all and I wish you well for the future.

Yours faithfully

Michael Farrell Lead inspector

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Michael Farrell
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