

Rosebery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125307
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	315231
Inspection date	18 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Jennifer Smith HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number on roll	
School	1445
6th form	274
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Stammers
Headteacher	Ms H Saunders
Date of previous school inspection	20 January 2003
School address	White Horse Drive Epsom KT18 7NQ
Telephone number	01372 720439
Fax number	01372 749219

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector. The inspection team evaluated the overall effectiveness, gathering evidence from discussions with senior leaders, other teachers and pupils across a range of year groups, including the sixth form; scrutiny and analysis of school documentation and published performance data and responses to parents' and carers' questionnaires issued in advance of the inspection.

Description of the school

Rosebery School is a popular, well-respected and heavily oversubscribed school. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is lower than the national average; however, the number of pupils with learning difficulties has been rising of late. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is around the national average but very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. Most pupils come from economically and socially disadvantaged circumstances and very few are entitled to free school meals. The school gained specialist school status in mathematics and computing in 2005 and has been awarded Investors in People, the Artsmark award and Healthy School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'In the year that my daughter has been at Rosebery she has become independent and more confident both academically and emotionally. I feel the school strikes a balance between pushing the girls academically and nurturing their emotional and social well being.' This view, expressed by many parents about the school, is supported by the inspectors' judgements.

Rosebery School is a good and very effective school with a number of outstanding features. The school is very well led by the headteacher and her senior team, who provide a clear direction and vision for the school's future and are ably supported by the governors. Significant development has taken place since the last inspection including the much-needed improvements to the school buildings and computer infrastructure. This will be augmented in the coming year by new sports facilities. The school's self-review is thorough at all levels and the heads of department know their departments well, effectively analysing test and examination performance and focusing accurately on areas for further development. The capacity for future improvement is very good.

Students enter the school with standards that are well above the national average. The standards achieved at the end of Year 9 are well above the national average, with some pupils reaching exceptionally high levels, especially in mathematics. Similarly, the percentage of students who achieve more than five grade A* to C GCSE examinations, including English and mathematics is well above the national average at 76 percent. Those gaining more than five GCSE grades overall are also high at 86 percent. However, the number of students achieving the very highest grades in GCSE varies across subjects, with mathematics, history, information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education being less strong. The standards in the Sixth Form are high, with many students achieving the top two grades of A and B (62 percent). Standards are particularly good in English, history, sociology, theatre and media studies at GCE AS level in Year 12 and in English literature, mathematics, geography and chemistry in Year 13 at A2 level.

Students make very good progress between Year 7 and Year 9; this is less well marked in Years 10 and 11, where progress has been less consistently good over the last few years in ICT and mathematics. Evidence from examination results in 2007 and the school's own monitoring suggests that the trend is now firmly upwards. The slower rate of progress was partly due to considerable difficulties in recruiting permanent staff in these subjects in recent years. To a lesser extent, this also affected both English and science. However, from September 2007, the school has recruited full-time permanent teachers and the use of a modular GCSE in mathematics is having a positive impact on students' progress.

Students spoken to report that they enjoy their learning; they behave in an exemplary fashion in lessons and around the school. Students are polite, eager to help and rate their school highly, being proud to be members of Rosebery School. They respect the views of members of the community and contribute to making the school a very pleasant place to live and learn. Students have a strong sense of right and wrong and have positive views on issues such as litter and dealing with bullying. They contribute well to supporting people who are less fortunate than themselves, through numerous charity events. Attendance levels are only just above the national average because too many pupils miss school in order to take family holidays.

The quality of teaching and learning are good, which is reflected in many comments from students and parents, as well as from the school's own observations. Consistently good teaching is enhanced by teachers' good subject knowledge, professionalism and commitment to their

students and their high expectations of them. Lessons are well prepared and have appropriate resources, with an increasing use of the newly installed computer facilities, such as the interactive white boards. Not all lessons, however, actively engage the students as much as they might, which the school recognises and is seeking to improve. The quality of learning has been considerably enhanced by the school's specialist status, providing resources that enable teachers to use ICT across the curriculum and work in a 'virtual learning environment'. This has provided an excellent vehicle for students' learning. They can work at home from materials that are stored on the schools computer system and catch up their lessons when they have been absent. Homework can be accessed at home, finished on the computer and sent straight to their teacher for marking. They are able to access lesson resources and revision materials not only from their own teachers but also from others. Students reported very positively on this aspect of learning. The specialist status outreach work provided by the school to their partner primary school has been evaluated and is a real strength.

The curriculum is well constructed, broad and balanced, providing good access to foreign languages. A well thought through curriculum in Years 10 and 11 provides for differentiated pathways, allowing students to choose either a course that combines ten GCSE subjects, a course with fewer GCSEs but more support in English and mathematics, or one that is run with the local college and includes elements of vocational education. The cross-curricular nature of ICT is not adequately tracked and, therefore, not all students in Years 10 and 11 have sufficient ICT experiences to meet fully the statutory requirements. Extra curricular activities are outstanding, with many students participating in an excellent range of clubs and activities provided, music playing a very important part in the life of the school. School trips and journeys are enjoyed by very many and are highly valued by the students. They have a chance to visit various European countries and other more distant shores including China, a world challenge expedition to Brazil and exchange trips to the United States of America. Teachers give freely of their time to enable these to take place.

The care, guidance and support provided by the school are outstanding. Recent changes from a year-based system to a house-based system are fully supported by the students, whose views were actively sought in bringing about this major change. The prefect and peer mentoring and support systems operated by the older students are just some examples of where students show their maturity and care for all. Teachers know their charges very well and care for them very effectively. Many students recognise the school nurse as a point of call if they need help. All staff work to ensure students do as well as they can. The new tracking and academic review system engages successfully staff, students and parents in a dialogue celebrating students' progress and setting them challenging, yet manageable targets.

This highly effective school, providing a very good all round education for its students, is best summed up by a parent who reported that, 'We, as parents, are delighted with Rosebery and would highly recommend the school.'

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The Sixth Form is outstanding in many areas and students achieve very high standards. A wide range of academic courses to AS and A2 level is provided, and has been broadened to include vocational courses in health and social care and in travel and tourism. A good range of additional studies, including work experience, prepares students well for university and preparation for adult life. However, the teaching of religious education within the Sixth Form does not meet statutory requirements. Students are given excellent support and guidance for the transition

from Year 11 to the Sixth Form and recruitment into the sixth form is therefore very high. The 'Aim Higher' programme raises students' aspirations, so that most succeed to university entrance. Students who look for other pathways are very well supported to pursue careers or further education and training. Very few students fail to complete their courses due to the success of the support structures and the guidance given. Students report that they are suitably challenged academically but are given opportunities to enjoy and develop other personal skills by participating in the wide range of activities in the sixth form. For example, their enterprising rag week raised nearly £7000 for charity by providing a range of activities for the whole school. Students' personal development then is outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on the good and outstanding teaching that already exists across the school so that it consistently inspires and engages all pupils more actively in their learning, accelerating the rate of achievement in Years 10 and 11.
- Ensure that ICT in Years 10 and 11 and religious education in the Sixth Form meets the statutory requirements for all students.

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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	1
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	1

Achievement and standards

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

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	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
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	1	

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	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

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	1	
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	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
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

1 October 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Rosebery School, Epsom, KT18 7NQ

On behalf of the inspectors who visited your school recently, I should like to thank you for the very polite and helpful way you welcomed us. We enjoyed discussing with you the work that you were doing and looking at the progress you were making. You talked enthusiastically about how much you gained from being a student Rosebery School and in particular the friendly ethos of the school. We thought you would like a summary of the inspection findings but we hope that you and your parents will take the opportunity to read the whole report.

Rosebery school is a good school with outstanding features. It provides you with a very good education, which enables you to make good progress academically and achieve outstanding examination results in Year 9, Year 11 and in the Sixth Form. You also achieve highly in other areas of school life. For example, over one hundred of you participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and many of you are involved in a great number of musical activities, in sports and in your commitment to the community, particularly through your charity work. You leave Rosebery School as well rounded responsible young adults.

The leadership and management of your school by Ms Saunders, her senior staff and governors are very good and they are always seeking to improve the school still further. The quality of teaching is good and sometimes outstanding, helping you to succeed in your studies. We were very pleased to hear about the 'virtual learning environment' and hope that as it grows you will make full use of it.

We were very impressed with the speed that Year 7 students have settled in, just three weeks into term! They told us that this is because everyone has been very friendly and has made them feel at ease. You have excellent attitudes to your work, in which you take great pride, and your behaviour and respect for each other are excellent. Your teachers are committed to ensuring that you do well and provide excellent care and guidance providing you with a safe environment in which to learn.

We have asked the school, with your help, to develop the following areas.

- Build on the best teaching so that you become more active in your learning, which we know already happens in some lessons.
- Ensure that you receive the expected amount of teaching in ICT in Years 10 and 11 and religious education in the sixth form.

At the start of this new academic year, we would like to wish you all every success for the future.

Jennifer Smith

Her Majesty's Inspector