

Rosewood School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 103882 |
| Local Authority | Dudley |
| Inspection number | 323924 |
| Inspection date | 16 September 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Patricia Potheary |

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

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| Type of school | City technology college |
| School category | Community special |
| Age range of pupils | 11–16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 56 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Helen Edwards |
| Headteacher | David Kirk |
| Date of previous school inspection | 21 September 2005 |
| School address | Bell Street Cosely Bilston WV14 8XJ |
| Telephone number | 01384 816800 |
| Fax number | 01384 816801 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Rosewood is a small school for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. It has recently become co-educational but there are no girls currently on roll. There has been a recent and substantial increase in the number of pupils with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). Pupils are predominantly White British, with a very small minority from other ethnic backgrounds. The school has been designated a behaviour specialism since September 2007. The school relocated to a new site in January 2008. The headteacher has been in post since April 2008, following two terms with an acting headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Rosewood is a good school. It is very successful in helping pupils to overcome their difficulties and begin to learn. When pupils arrive, the standard of their work is well below national averages. They have often been out of school for some time and find it difficult to settle. Skilled care and support and a flexible, well-constructed curriculum quickly help them to begin to enjoy learning, often for the first time. By the time they leave school, standards have risen to below national averages and they achieve a wide range of qualifications, including vocational courses. Strong, effective leadership and management and good teaching ensure that pupils achieve well in their academic work and make good progress.

Initiatives connected with the school's behaviour specialism have led to a marked improvement in the behaviour of the pupils, which is usually excellent while they are in school. This in turn has led to faster progress and improving standards in all subjects, making the school much more effective. In addition, the school successfully supports other local schools with their behaviour management. It is beginning to involve its new community in other ways, including the building of an exciting new vocational centre on site to support local young people.

Skilled specialist subject teaching means that progress for pupils of all abilities is good in a wide range of subjects. Pupils make particularly good progress in mathematics, which has greatly improved. Pupils usually enter the school with very limited skills in reading and writing. Special programmes make a significant difference to pupils' reading, but despite good progress in English lessons, standards in writing fall below those in other subjects. The school does not plan sufficiently systematically to develop writing skills in every subject in order to raise standards further in this crucial skill.

School leaders monitor progress thoroughly and teachers know exactly what pupils have achieved so that lessons and the curriculum are well adapted to meet their different needs. The school rightly recognises that pupils are not sufficiently involved in this process, and that they are unsure of their subject targets or what they need to do to improve. This inevitably slows the drive for further improvement.

Parents strongly appreciate the school; several commented on the helpful way that staff support them and listen to their children. As one reflected, 'This school acts for the benefit of its pupils at all times.' Pupils are equally positive, showing a clear enjoyment of their work and appreciation of the support they receive, not least through the very strong links with external groups such as social services. Their very strong enjoyment is reflected in the remarkable improvement in attendance for many of them. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy. Their good personal development and well-being also includes an increasing ability to appreciate others' differences and contribute not just in school, but also by helping others such as local primary school children. The result of this personal as well as academic growth is that they are well prepared for their future lives.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the strategies used to support writing in all subjects so that standards of writing are raised.
- Ensure that students are fully involved in the process of monitoring and improving their own progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Although below average, standards are rising each year and represent good progress compared with pupils' starting points. Pupils of all abilities achieve up to nine different qualifications, including GCSEs in science, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT). The progress made by pupils increases each year and there is an annual increase in the number of subjects being accredited. Achievement is strongest in mathematics, where most Year 11 pupils gained a full GCSE in 2008. Several pupils now take entry level in Year 10 in this subject. Many pupils in Year 10 also gained accreditation in ICT last year. Despite evidence of good progress in English, standards in writing fall below those in other subjects. The progress of different groups of pupils is carefully monitored, ensuring that no pupils fall behind.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' social skills improve substantially during their time at the school and they establish very caring relationships with each other and staff. In lessons and other activities in school, pupils' behaviour is remarkably good. Lunchtime and breakfast club are havens of pleasant, sociable and exemplary behaviour. A few pupils are unfortunately not able to transfer this excellent behaviour to life outside school, a fact the school is seeking to help them with. Pupils show enthusiasm for a range of subjects, especially ICT, sport and mathematics. Attendance for the majority substantially improves, with outstanding examples of previous non-attendees coming to school regularly. Pupils also show a great deal of understanding about the need for exercise, which they enjoy regularly in school, and in their desire to keep healthy. They have been instrumental in improving the quality of school lunches. Pupils are confident to express their opinions, feeling that their views are valued. Pupils actively contribute to the school via the school council. They support various charities and have established positive relationships with people from different areas of Dudley, particularly via work experience. The contribution pupils are able to make in the new local community is limited, but improving. Good progress is made in basic skills and in understanding finance, and pupils make the most of the opportunities for work placements and vocational courses, preparing them well for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are consistently good for all age and ability groups. Lessons are sometimes outstanding in the progress and enthusiasm they encourage. They are varied and interesting and hold pupils' attention well. This supports the highly skilled management of behaviour, where lessons run smoothly and pupils are keen to do well and try hard. Pupils respond very positively to requests by staff, work together well and are fully engaged in tasks. Their ability to work independently is also developing well. There is effective encouragement in lessons for pupils to think carefully and contribute. Pupils are not always sure about their progress or what their subject targets are, which hinders their ability to focus on what they personally need to do to improve. Teaching is particularly skilled in mathematics and ICT, with some rapid progress evident for all age and ability groups. In one mathematics lesson for pupils with ASD, the use of individual computer programs allowed each one to make great strides while enjoying the

tasks and not feeling pressured. Assessment is thorough so that work is well matched to pupils' different needs. As one typically commented, 'They set work at your level but it is challenging.'

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum supports pupils' personal development and academic progress well with a rich and varied range of activities to hold their interest and keep them motivated. Good links with other providers mean that, from school trips to sport, camping and vocational studies, pupils have many exciting things to do which strengthen their skills and understanding in a host of areas. One area of weakness is in writing: there is no whole-school focus for developing pupils' writing skills and insufficient strategies are used in all subjects to ensure greater improvement. The curriculum is flexible and well matched to pupils' interests and aptitudes. For example, pupils are increasingly able to take qualifications when they are ready instead of waiting until Year 11. Pupils really like the new building and equipment and they respond by taking good care of the environment. There are very good and effective opportunities provided to encourage pupils to keep healthy and safe. These include sporting fixtures with other schools and an engaging approach in many subjects towards healthy eating. A strong spiritual element and encouragement of tolerance for differences in others contribute well to pupils' increasing social skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There is some very effective provision to begin to turn pupils' difficult behaviour and poor attendance around, which happens relatively quickly after they arrive. This is essential, as pupils join the school throughout the year into every year group. There are also robust systems for keeping pupils safe. The school has developed extensive links with other agencies and parents to provide high quality support and care for pupils whose lives are often difficult. The guidance to help pupils reach high standards is satisfactory. Pupils make good progress overall because the groups are carefully selected, with plenty of individual support, skilled teaching and careful matching of the curriculum to their needs. The school is fully aware, however, that pupils are not involved closely enough in the process and most do not have the information needed to help themselves progress even more quickly. Senior staff are beginning to develop a system to address this by using computers, which the pupils find motivating. Great care is taken when pupils join and leave the school to see that work levels, courses and placements are the right ones.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management, including governance, have led to some substantial improvements in pupils' progress since the last inspection. This has been enhanced by the success of the school's behaviour specialism. All previous issues have been addressed well. This is despite the sudden absence and change of headteacher and relocation to a new site. Good self-evaluation is based upon thorough monitoring of pupils' progress, and this has led to the many evident improvements throughout the school. There is a good capacity to continue improving. School targets, connected to the specialism, are increasingly challenging and are being exceeded year on year. The school works effectively to secure a good understanding

among pupils of community needs and issues. This has supported the high quality relationships and equality of outcomes within the school community despite pupils' behavioural difficulties and differences. This is not yet planned and evaluated sufficiently well and community links in the new location are just beginning to be forged, although the school's behaviour specialism has resulted in an aspirational project to include a vocational centre for the community on site, and this is progressing well.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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? | 1 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress | 2 |

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good are 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 | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| The extent to which 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 | 3 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 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 eliminated | 2 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 3 |
| 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 |

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

17 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rosewood School, Dudley, WV14 8XJ

Thank you for being so welcoming when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed meeting you, joining you for lunch and seeing some of your lessons.

Your school has a most welcoming and happy atmosphere. It is a good school, with some excellent things going on, just as you described. Good teaching helps you to make good progress in your lessons, especially in mathematics, and also good progress in your social and personal skills. We are very impressed with your excellent behaviour in school and how much you value learning.

Staff and governors work hard to keep improving the school. For this reason, the progress you make is increasing all the time. We have, however, asked them to make sure that you make even more progress in your writing, by giving you more ideas about how to write in different subjects. We have also asked them to give you a better idea of how much progress you are making and to set clear targets so that you know exactly what you need to do to improve in each subject. I am sure that you will discuss this with your teachers and help them by working hard and doing your best to reach your targets.

Your teachers see to it that you have a good range of activities to help you enjoy school, develop your confidence and understand about the world of work. You were keen to tell us that the school also keeps you safe and looks after you well. It is therefore very pleasing to see that you are helping yourselves by taking plenty of exercise and eating plenty of fruit. We are also impressed with the responsibilities that you take on and the support you give to others. You clearly really enjoy coming to school. All these things, together with some good basic skills and growing understanding of working well with others, will help prepare you well for your college, work and future lives.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Potheary Lead inspector