

# Rumworth School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105277
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bolton
<b>Inspection number</b>	324194
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Marian Thomas

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	136
Sixth form	42
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr John Hill
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Bill Bradbury
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 March 2006
<b>School address</b>	Armadale Road Ladybridge Bolton Lancashire BL3 4TP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01204 333600
<b>Fax number</b>	01204 333602

---

<b>Age group</b>	11–19
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 June 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	324194

---

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

## Description of the school

Rumworth is a school for students with complex needs, and severe and moderate learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school is co-located with a local high school and shares sports, dining and assembly hall facilities. Currently 33 of the students on roll have severe learning difficulties, 53 have significant speech and language needs and 16 have physical difficulties which impacts on their mobility. Within the school there is resourced provision for students with autistic spectrum disorders. Nine students attend this resourced provision and there are another 36 students within the school on the autistic spectrum. The nature of the students' difficulties means they are working well below national expectations. Currently, 12 students from minority ethnic communities are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language and 13 students are looked after by the local authority. Over a third of students receive free school meals. Rumworth has specialist school status in communication and interaction. It has attained recently an International School Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Rumworth is an outstanding school which is extremely effective in meeting the complex and diverse needs of its students. It has built upon the excellent provision identified in the last inspection and has now attained specialist school status in communication and interaction. Parents are very supportive of the school and feel it is a place in which their children flourish happily. A typical parental comment is, 'My child goes into school laughing and comes home laughing.' Students' achievement and personal development are outstanding. They make exceptional progress in gaining academic, communication and social skills. Because of this their self-confidence grows and many show a considerable reduction in challenging behaviour soon after they join the school. The school's high expectations ensure that students' behaviour is excellent both in and outside the classroom.

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers plan lessons comprehensively to meet the individual needs of all students. Teaching assistants' expert support allows all students to flourish and to play a full part in lessons. The school is very effective in ensuring that all students' success in their work is recognised and older students study courses which lead to national qualifications including GCSE art and science. Care, guidance and support are excellent and contribute significantly to students' excellent progress in all aspects of their learning and development. Those students in care of the local authority, others who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities all make first-class progress from their individual starting points. Students with autistic spectrum disorders, either in the unit or elsewhere in school, benefit greatly from a wide range of strategies developed by staff in the unit. This improves their communication and response to different situations and so allows them to access learning with a very high degree of success. Relationships between adults and students are excellent. Students feel secure in the knowledge that staff are there for them at all times. The outstanding curriculum enables students to develop academically, socially and emotionally. The recently awarded International School Award has added an extra dimension for learners with visits from teachers from across the world. One student described learning to make pizza with a group of Italian visitors as, 'the best thing I've ever done in my life'. Students greatly enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their very positive attitudes in lessons and around the school. Students' attendance is excellent.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The school demonstrates an excellent capacity to continue to improve. The headteacher and senior leaders have an extremely clear and focused vision for the school which is understood and shared at all levels. The very challenging targets drive the school forward in its continuing quest to make even better provision for all its students. Governors and school leaders have an exceptionally good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. This, coupled with the quiet determination of school leaders, staff and students to continue to work together, makes the school a very special place.

### Effectiveness of the sixth form

#### Grade: 1

Outstanding teaching, a highly flexible curriculum and first-rate leadership and management ensure all students achieve extremely well and make excellent progress. Flexible programmes of learning are very well designed to suit individual students and give an excellent balance between academic, vocational and social skills. A very wide range of accreditation is provided,

enabling all students to gain nationally recognised qualifications in a broad range of skills. For example, students with more severe and complex needs gain accredited experience through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) life skills programme. They also gain an Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) unit award for farm studies through work undertaken on the neighbouring secondary school's farm. Higher attaining sixth formers gain GCSEs in applied business studies as well as undertaking the Duke of Edinburgh award. Teaching and support staff form very strong relationships with the students and this, coupled with their excellent knowledge of each student, provides exceptional challenge for learners. Students' time in the sixth form is characterised by a rapid growth in independence and confidence. Staff guide them exceptionally well and ensure they are prepared for the next phase in their lives.

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

- There are no areas for improvement other than those already identified in the school's development plan.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

The school is highly successful in building students' confidence, self-esteem and self-awareness. From very low starting points, students achieve extremely well and make excellent progress against challenging targets. Individual educational plans are sharp and detailed and support students' outstanding progress in English, mathematics and social and emotional skills. All students make equally excellent progress because of the individual nature of learning programmes in all key stages. External accreditation is sought at every opportunity to ensure students' work and skills are fully challenged and endorsed. A close match of accreditation to individual students' achievements enables all to gain nationally recognised qualifications, for example, in GCSE art and science or unit awards for French. Students with autistic spectrum disorders make great gains also in communication and in the flexibility of their response to different situations.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Students have very positive attitudes to school and show great mutual respect. They are extremely polite, friendly and confident when greeting each other, staff and visitors. Varied links with other schools in this country and abroad ensure students have an extremely strong understanding of different cultures. Examples are learning how to do traditional dancing with a group of Greek teachers or making pizzas with Italian visitors. Students enjoy coming to school immensely and this is reflected in their excellent attendance. As summarised by one, 'I love school because my friends are here.' Behaviour is excellent, both in and out of the classroom. A calm and supportive atmosphere ensures that all students, including those with autistic spectrum disorder and behavioural emotional and social difficulties, reach a high level of mutual cooperation. Students have an excellent knowledge of healthy lifestyles as shown by healthy choices at lunchtime and in their enthusiastic participation in all sporting activities. They adopt safe practices, for example, in practical lessons and in moving around school. Tending the grassed public areas just outside the school, under close and safe supervision, is one example of the way in which students make an excellent contribution to the school and local community. Students' outstanding progress in literacy, numeracy and information and communication

technology (ICT) skills and in independence and social skills prepares them exceptionally well for the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teachers have excellent subject knowledge in all areas of the curriculum. This combined with an excellent knowledge of students' needs ensures that students learn rapidly in lessons and make outstanding progress. Lessons are very well planned with work very closely matched to individual needs. Lessons also have excellent challenge which keeps learners engaged and on task. Oral feedback from peers and adults helps students to understand what they have done well and how to improve further. Excellent opportunities are offered to students to participate and communicate in lessons developing high self-esteem. In a Year 7 English lesson, with a focus on speaking and listening, students who use sign language participated well, with skilful signing and dramatic gesture. Teaching assistants play an excellent part in lessons supporting students very well, working closely alongside teachers in ensuring outstanding progress for all students, irrespective of need.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is designed exceptionally well to meet the needs of the diverse range of learners. It is enriched at every opportunity with off-site visits, visitors, sporting events and residential visits. For example, students enjoyed a recent trip to Bala in North Wales, as well as a trip to France in which, for example, they used the French language to order a cup of coffee in a café. Basic skills of English, mathematics and ICT are also developed extremely well. An excellent balance between academic subjects and personal and social development prepares students most effectively for the next stage of their lives. A huge range of clubs is on offer to students at lunchtime and after school covering a wide range of subjects including ICT, sports, personal and social skills and art. This very flexible curriculum offers students the best possible opportunities for rapid academic, personal and social growth.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

Students are exceptionally well supported. Outstanding pastoral care ensures individual students' needs are paramount. Very strong relationships ensure students feel safe and know they have someone to turn to if they need help. A highly effective nurture group supports the most vulnerable students both in and out of the classroom. Excellent relationships with outside agencies ensure that students' additional needs are met very well. Outstanding annual review and individual educational plan processes involve parents and students and provide excellent guidance on the next steps in learning. The leadership team monitors targets regularly and takes immediate action when progress slows a little. Instant feedback given by staff and peers in lessons provides encouragement and celebration as well as very good guidance on how to improve further.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

The school is exceptionally well led and managed: characterised by very effective teamwork at all levels, promoted through the extremely clear vision of the headteacher and other senior leaders. The school sets very challenging targets for itself and the students. These are a clear factor in the school's first-rate development and in students' rapid progress. The school's specialist status has had a major influence on extending opportunities for students' communication and interaction. All current government safeguarding requirements are met. Self-evaluation is accurate, sharp and used rigorously to promote continuous improvement. The school development plan ensures there is no complacency: exciting development is always ongoing. Excellent equality of opportunity is evidenced in the exceptional progress of all students and how harmoniously students get on with each other. The highly cohesive atmosphere of the school, the students' very strong understanding of different cultures and all of their work in gaining International School Award are examples of the school's tremendous drive for community cohesion. Governors make an excellent contribution in both supporting and challenging the work of senior leaders. The school offers exceptionally good value for money and has an excellent capacity to improve further.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



**Annex A**

**Inspection judgements**

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
---	-----------------------	--------------

**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>	1	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	1	1

**Achievement and standards**

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1	

---

<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.

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

### Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	

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

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited to inspect your school. I really enjoyed meeting you all and I was very impressed by how polite and kind you are towards visitors. Thank you also for inviting me to take a turn on your excellent adventure playground, you are right it is not easy to balance on the ropes. I know that some of you may find this letter difficult to read but I know your teachers will tell you what is in it.

The things I liked best about Rumworth

- All of you work very hard at learning and as you get older pass a lot of exams.
- You help each other in lessons, praising each other's work but also making suggestions for how to make work even better.
- The 43 clubs that you can join and the fun you have choosing what to do at break and lunchtimes makes the school a very exciting place to be.
- All the adults in school work hard to make sure you are safe and happy.
- The headteacher and staff work very hard to make school an even better place all the time.
- All your parents and carers think Rumworth is an outstanding school which just keeps on getting better. I agree.

I have not picked out any particular area for your school to improve upon. Your headteacher and governors are so good at making the school better and better: they are very clear what to do next. I am sure you will carry on working as hard as you can. Well done.