

Rodillian School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108080
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	331283
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Jan Bennett HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1267
Sixth form	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr B Sheldrake
Headteacher	Mr Andy Goulty
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2008
School address	Longthorpe Lane Lofthouse Wakefield West Yorkshire WF3 3PS
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Introduction

Rodillian School was last inspected in February 2008 when it was served with a notice to improve because of significant concerns relating to achievement and standards, the quality of teaching and learning, and the sixth form. This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Rodillian is a larger than average school serving an area to the south of Leeds that includes pockets of social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is slightly above average. The vast majority of students are White British. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around the national average, as is the number of students who have a statement to support their special educational needs. The school has over 30 children in public care which is more than any other school in Leeds. Students from a local special school have access to the mainstream curriculum and facilities. Rodillian has specialist status in performing arts and is the hub school for the South Leeds Sports Partnership. The school moved to new purpose-built accommodation in September 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act of 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Rodillian is a satisfactory school with some good features. The new headteacher is a strong leader with a clear vision for the school. He is very ably supported by governors, managers and staff and is transforming the school at a rapid pace. The headteacher took up post in June 2008 and a new senior leadership team has been appointed over the last year. Together they are working relentlessly to improve the education and life chances of the students and although standards remain below average, they are rising faster than the national average. Teaching, which was inadequate at the last inspection, is improving and is now satisfactory; behaviour has improved and is now good; and the quality of care, guidance and support has also improved and is good. Leadership and management are going from strength to strength and are now good. There is a new mood of optimism and a growing pride in the school. Most parents are supportive and very pleased with the way that the school is improving.

Improving students' achievement and standards is a major priority for the school. The percentage of students obtaining five or more high grade GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics went up from 19% in 2007 to 35% in 2008. The school's internal data and modular GCSE results indicate that a similar rise is expected this summer. The impact of the new curriculum in Year 10 will not show in external examination results until 2010 but internal school data show that it is already having a very positive effect on students' achievement. Students now make satisfactory progress across the school.

Much effort has gone into improving the quality of teaching. Vacancies have been filled, weak teaching has been addressed and the quality continues to improve as the impact of effective performance management and training is felt. Inspectors saw examples of outstanding lessons in which students were enthusiastic and played a full and active part in their learning. However, in other lessons students behaved well but were passive and not enjoying learning.

Behaviour has improved markedly and is good. The school has been successful in working with external agencies, students and their families to improve attendance. Good and improving care, guidance and support ensure that every student is increasingly well supported. Vulnerable students are very well cared for and they make good progress. Robust target setting and monitoring of students' progress alongside a good intervention programme are helping to improve standards and achievement.

The school's specialism makes a very good contribution to all aspects of its work. Teachers in the specialist subjects are often called upon to share good practice with colleagues at training events. Much of the work with local communities and primary schools is driven by the specialist team and the specialist subjects make a very valuable contribution to students' personal development.

Leadership and management are good. Managers at all levels are relatively new in post but they are having a very positive impact and show tremendous promise as their expertise continues to grow. Governance is outstanding. Governors have guided the school through challenging times and are playing an important role in its transformation. It is difficult to see how any more could have been done to move the school forward in the time available. The school has good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 3

Standards on entry to the sixth form are lower than average and standards reached in both Years 12 and 13 were below average in 2008 reflecting the legacy of inadequate provision. However, the work seen in lessons and reliable school data show a marked improvement and satisfactory achievement. Retention rates are high, helped by the new school building and facilities plus sixth formers' recognition of other recent improvements. They talk of enjoying the sixth form more recently and are more motivated because of closer monitoring of their academic progress and developing relationships with their personal tutors. Targets are known and are challenging. Students are satisfactorily prepared for their future economic well-being and receive sound careers advice. Sixth formers' personal development and well-being is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory with examples of good or better practice, particularly in the specialist subjects where students are encouraged to develop as independent learners. However, too many lessons in the sixth form are no better than satisfactory because students show little enthusiasm and avoid full and purposeful engagement. The curriculum has developed since the last inspection and meets the needs and abilities of students, who speak well of performing arts subjects. Leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory. The recently appointed director is beginning to have a positive effect. He has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. Plans are in place to affect further improvements but it is too early to see the full impact of the changes.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards so they are at least in line with national averages.
- Ensure that teaching encourages independent learning and greater enjoyment in lessons.
- Maintain the pace of improvement and implement plans for the curriculum and sixth form.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit from an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Attainment on entry to the school is average overall but few students join having reached the higher levels in national tests at the end of their primary education. Students make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3. In 2008, national test results were broadly average but the proportion of students securing the higher levels was low reflecting students' attainment on entry. The school's current information shows that students are reaching standards close to those expected for their age. In Key Stage 4, standards have improved over the last three years but they have not yet reached the national average. Reliable data collected by the school, including results of external examinations already taken, indicate that standards at the end of Year 11 will rise again confirming that achievement is satisfactory. Students in Year 10 are on track to do even better. Of the specialist subjects, in 2008 standards in dance exceeded target but were below target in music. Current data indicate that all specialist subjects are likely to exceed targets in 2009. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children in public care make good progress because of the targeted support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Students' personal development is satisfactory with some good aspects. Students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. They treat each other with respect, are encouraged to take time for reflection and have good opportunities to increase their cultural awareness in many areas of the curriculum. Healthy lifestyles are promoted well in subjects such as science, food technology and physical education. There is a wide choice of healthy food options in the refectory and students participate very well in the wide range of sport and fitness opportunities offered. Behaviour has improved considerably and is now good, both in and out of lessons. Students feel safe in school and appreciate the work of the community police officer to reduce bullying. Both racism and bullying are treated seriously and dealt with effectively. Students are well aware of the dangers of using the internet and drug and alcohol abuse. Although students enjoy being in the new building and joining in clubs, too many are still passive participants in their learning. Attendance is now satisfactory and the number of persistent absentees has reduced. Students make a positive contribution to the community through charity work and fundraising but most especially via the specialism. Students are consulted and have influence. For example, they chose the new physical education kit and are involved in interviewing staff. Enterprise events and good opportunities to develop information and communication technology (ICT) skills prepare students well for life after school but too few students obtain good qualifications in English and mathematics.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection and the impact is seen in rising standards and improved achievement across the school. There are examples of outstanding teaching. Lesson planning is much better with teachers considering the varying needs of their students when they set tasks. Most students respond well to challenging activities and they enjoy practical investigative tasks. Lessons are clearly structured, the aims are shared with students and teachers make regular checks on understanding and progress. Strategies to improve behaviour and a more relevant curriculum have improved students' attitudes to learning. Staff can now concentrate on teaching instead of having to focus on poor behaviour. Although these improvements are secure, the school is aware that more work is required to increase the motivation of some students, to promote independent learning and to ensure that the new approaches to teaching are used consistently by all staff. Opportunities are sometimes missed for teachers to use skilful questioning to extend, challenge and develop students' thinking skills. There are very good examples of marking and assessment being used to support learning and all students' progress is assessed regularly.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The Key Stage 4 curriculum was strengthened in September 2008. New vocational options were introduced in Year 10 including construction, hair and beauty, and health and social care courses. These are motivating students to work harder but it is too early to see a positive impact on the school's results in national examinations. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is satisfactory but improvements are needed to help students become more effective learners; these are planned

for September. The school's performing arts specialism makes a very good contribution to the curriculum through the quality and range of courses provided. Personal, social and health education courses are good but the withdrawal of work experience for current Year 10 students has limited their work related learning. The curriculum is adapted very effectively to meet the individual education plans of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is an excellent range of clubs, visiting speakers and trips that is valued by students and their parents. Almost all students attend at least one club and many attend one every day.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Close links with primary schools ensure that Year 7 students settle quickly at the start of the year. All Year 6 pupils are invited into school to work on projects and teachers and students from Rodillian visit local primary schools regularly. Academic guidance is strong in the main school. The vast majority of students are aware of their target levels and know what needs to be done to improve. Form tutors receive very informative reports on individual students' progress enabling them to offer praise, encouragement and support as appropriate. Extra mentoring support is targeted at students in Key Stage 4 which is helping to raise standards. Students receive high quality personal support that is closely monitored. There are effective strategies to help students and their families improve attendance. Vulnerable students receive very good support from the learning support team and other agencies that work in close partnership with the school such as Barnados and Travellers' Support. Children in public care are cared for very well and their progress is closely monitored. Aim Higher mentors have contributed well to improving the achievement of these students. Arrangements for safeguarding are good and meet statutory requirements. Health and safety is carefully managed and child protection is given a high priority.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has very ambitious plans and realistic strategies for moving the school forward. He is very visible around school and provides dynamic leadership that is driving improvement at a fast pace. Many senior and middle leaders are new. They are enthusiastic and capable, have a good range of complementary skills and have formed very effective teams. Middle managers are rising well to the challenge of devolved leadership and increased accountability. Leaders and managers are continually striving to improve their own performance and that of the school. The self-evaluation process is good and involves staff at all levels. Data are used well to drive up performance and both staff and students understand the target setting and monitoring systems. Performance management procedures are new this year but are robust and bringing about improvements. The school promotes equality of opportunity well, works hard to eliminate discrimination and is very inclusive. Students from the special school are welcomed into mainstream lessons and integrate very well. Community cohesion is good. A thorough analysis has been carried out to identify the needs of the school and local communities. The specialism is making a very significant contribution to forging links across and within communities.

Governance is outstanding. Governors know the school very well and have an excellent understanding of its current position. They give invaluable support to managers and act as very effective critical friends providing challenge where necessary. They have a wide range of

expertise that they use well to support managers, teachers and students. They have very good links with subject areas that have strengthened two-way communication between teachers/students and the governing body. Financial management is very good and a substantial deficit has been removed quickly. Value for money is satisfactory because even though resources are very good and staffing has been strengthened considerably over the last year, achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average.

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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?	3	3
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?	2	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	3
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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
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	3	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	3
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 eliminated	2	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
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**

Inspection of Rodillian School, Wakefield, WF3 3PS

Thank you for contributing to the recent inspection of the school. We enjoyed meeting you, seeing you at work and hearing your views.

Rodillian has improved a great deal since the last inspection and is now a satisfactory school with a number of good features and no longer requires a notice to improve. We were very impressed by the new school building but that is just one of a number of big improvements that have been made. Here is a summary of our findings which we hope will be of interest to you.

- Behaviour has improved both in lessons and around the school. You show respect for each other and your lessons are no longer disrupted by silly behaviour. Attendance has also improved which will help you to learn better.
- GCSE results have been below average for a number of years but they are improving fast and we have asked the school to raise standards to meet the national average.
- You told us that teaching had improved and we could see this for ourselves. Your teachers plan a good range of activities for you and many of you work hard and participate well but we would like to see everybody actively involved in lessons and enjoying their learning.
- You are given good care and support in school and you know where to go for help.
- The sixth form has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. The new head of the sixth form knows exactly what improvements still need to be made.
- Your headteacher is a very strong and effective leader, he has a good team of managers supporting him and the governors are outstanding. They could not have done anymore to improve the school in the time available.

We have asked the school to improve even further and you have an important part to play by working hard and doing your best in all your subjects. We would like to congratulate you on the part you have played in improving the school and wish you well for the future.