

# Rodney House School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105616
<b>Local Authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	336530
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Saleem Hussain

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–6
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	39
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Gill Baldwin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Margaret Codd
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	388 Slade Lane Burnage Manchester M19 2HT
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited nine lessons and observed seven different teachers. He also held meetings with governors, staff, and parents and carers. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, its plans for improvement, records related to safeguarding and the school's data on pupils' progress. The inspector took into account 14 questionnaires from parents and carers and also read questionnaire responses from staff.

- the quality of teaching
- the learning and progress of different groups of pupils, particularly those with autism
- the quality of care, guidance and support.

## Information about the school

Rodney House School's main function is to assess pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities. All but five of the pupils are in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school provides for pupils with complex needs. Around one third of the pupils have severe learning difficulties; the remainder have autism and profound and multiple learning difficulties. Many have severe medical needs. There are five classes, including a specific class for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Each of these classes comprises children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and two include a small number of pupils who are of Year 1 age. A small number of pupils are based in a children's centre located a few miles from the school.

As an assessment school Rodney House has a considerable turnover of pupils and the number on roll can, therefore, vary. Pupils generally stay on roll for between 18 months and two years. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The number of pupils from minority ethnic families who speak English as an additional language is high but, like their peers from English speaking families, most of them are non-verbal. The school has gained the National Healthy Schools Award and a Healthy Schools Gold award from Manchester local authority. It also has the Eco-Schools, Sports Activemark and Investors in People awards.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

This is a fabulous school. The result of its excellent provision is that pupils make outstanding progress in their learning and personal development. Outstanding teaching and care, guidance and support are the key reasons for the school's success. The very strong commitment, shown by leaders and shared by staff at all levels, towards inclusion runs like a thread through all the school's work. The school was judged to be good at the last inspection and is now outstanding in nearly every respect. The whole track record of improvement demonstrates well the ambition and drive that senior leaders provide. Self-evaluation is insightful and very accurate. The school is fully aware of its strengths and areas for development and plans very carefully to remedy any areas of weakness. Leaders and managers tackled the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection very effectively. These factors illustrate the outstanding capacity that the school has to improve further.

The teaching is now outstanding and this has resulted in pupils making excellent progress. Teachers know pupils' personal and special educational needs very well and their careful planning ensures that all groups and abilities are fully challenged in their learning. In lessons teachers capture everyone's attention from the outset through excellent presentation of work. Teachers encourage all groups to learn by using all their senses and this is very effective. Pupils work hard in lessons. The pace of work is good and this helps pupils to develop their ability to concentrate over sustained periods. Teaching assistants are highly skilled and work with teachers very effectively to ensure that everyone is fully engaged.

Pupils are happy because they are treasured and valued as individuals. They receive outstanding care, guidance and support. Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent. Pupils are treated with dignity and respect at all times. The school provides very well-targeted support for everyone. As a result of these factors, pupils are able to take full advantage of the learning opportunities and their personal development is excellent. Outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development makes a very strong contribution to learning. Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils enjoy their work very much. They feel safe and secure in school and are very confident about approaching staff with any worries.

Links with the health service and therapists are very effective. Parents and carers value highly the support and treatment provided in school. Attendance is above average because the school has excellent arrangements to promote good attendance, including very good support following health-related absence.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- There are no significant areas for development that the school is not already aware of and addressing.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Children start school with levels of attainment which are low because of their acknowledged special educational needs and/or disabilities. It is remarkable that each one makes at least good progress and most make outstanding progress from their starting points. Overall, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieve extremely well in relation to their early learning goals. Achievement in literacy, numeracy, science, and information and communication skills is excellent overall for pupils in Year 1. Everyone makes equally impressive progress, regardless of their special educational needs and/or disabilities or ethnicity. For instance, those with the most complex difficulties move forward in very small steps but their achievements are just as outstanding as those with other learning difficulties. Communication and language development is always a strong focus in learning and so everyone makes exceptional progress in this area. The spoken word is accompanied by signing or, more usually, the use of symbols, pictures and aids that enable pupils to understand and be understood. Adults take every opportunity to promote a love of books and this helps pupils to get used to books and printed words.

Pupils respond very well to the school's very high expectations about learning. They develop an enthusiasm for learning from a tender age and show admirable levels of concentration and perseverance despite their special educational needs and/or disabilities. Spiritual development is outstanding. Pupils' faces light up as they experience something for the first time, or marvel as their knowledge and understanding of the world develops. These factors make a significant contribution to their progress.

Pupils have an excellent knowledge of healthy lifestyles as a result of the very good support and teaching they receive in this area. They make an excellent contribution to the community. The older pupils display a remarkable level of maturity and helpfulness as they move around the school and, for example, share learning resources or toys with others. In the outdoor play area, pupils using tricycles move around with excellent consideration for others. This illustrates their excellent moral and social development. Everyone plays happily together regardless of each other's difficulties or ethnicity. Pupils are developing a sense of equality and appreciation of diversity as they play and learn together in harmony. In view of their above-average attendance, outstanding achievement and personal development, it is clear that pupils are extremely well prepared for their future well-being.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Teachers and their assistants know how to motivate pupils and get the best out of them. They use their knowledge of each pupil's special educational needs and/or disabilities very well and adjust learning activities to meet their needs. Management of behaviour is excellent. Basic skills in communication, language, literacy and numeracy are taught extremely well. Adults provide excellent support for different groups, including the most able, and this helps them to achieve as well as they can. Health professionals and educational staff work as a dedicated team to remove as many barriers to learning as possible for each pupil. For example, they ensure that pupils are positioned perfectly to benefit from teaching and that the right resources are made available. Assessment procedures are very thorough. The school has very good systems to record even the smallest amount of progress. Records about attainment and progress are accurate. Adults use this information very effectively to plan challenging lessons and set future learning targets. The school has made good improvements to the consistency of lesson planning since the last inspection.

Pupils love the sparkling array of exciting learning opportunities on offer. Excellent personal, social and health education pervades the whole curriculum and adults take every opportunity to improve pupils' skills in these areas. Therapy is integral to the curriculum, benefiting pupils' speech development and their mobility. The sensory

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

\* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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curriculum is excellent. In addition to classroom opportunities, the school has a well-equipped multi-sensory learning room and sensory garden. Eco-school activities help pupils to develop their awareness of outdoor environments as well as supporting learning about plants and animals. A very strong enrichment programme ensures that learning is fun and promotes pupils' health, safety and fitness. Regular visitors include the lollipop person who helps to raise awareness about safety. Theatre groups and musicians also make an excellent contribution to learning.

As a result of the outstanding care, guidance and support, all pupils, including the most vulnerable, feel secure and develop excellent levels of self-confidence. Rewards and treats are very effective in motivating pupils to learn as well as they can and to behave outstandingly well. The school makes excellent use of many outside support agencies to ensure pupils' well-being. Very good care is taken to ensure that the school provides a safe environment.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The effectiveness of leadership and management can be seen in the high quality of provision and outcomes achieved. The determination of senior leaders has ensured that the school has moved from good to outstanding. Provision is now excellent and almost every outcome is outstanding. This owes much to the development of very rigorous systems to monitor the effectiveness of provision. For example, leaders frequently observe teaching to ensure that pupils make as much progress as they can. The school has fully remedied the issues identified at the time of the last inspection, including the suitability of planned activities in lessons where pupils with autism are taught. The school knows exactly what it needs to do to improve even further because self-evaluation is very accurate. Inspection judgments match those of the school exactly. The governing body is supportive of the school and well involved in evaluating the school's work and setting priorities. Governors have helped to drive key improvements including, for example, the accommodation and safeguarding procedures. Although a few governors have only recently joined the governing body, they are being well supported in their roles.

The school has excellent mechanisms in place to seek the views of parents and carers and it is developing its systems in relation to staff even further. Engagement with parents and carers makes an excellent contribution to pupils' outcomes. The school

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provides a wide range of workshops and training events which help parents and carers to be as well involved as possible in their children's education and care.

Inclusion lies at the heart of the school's work and pupils are treated as unique individuals. The school is very effective in promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination. Equalities strategies and policies are fully in place, including those relating to disability.

The school implements a very effective strategy to ensure community cohesion. It participates regularly in cultural, multicultural and other events and works very closely with the wider community. Links with educational institutions are very well developed. Many early years settings across the local authority area take advantage of the advice and training that the school's outreach service provides, for example, in relation to teaching pupils with autism.

Safeguarding procedures are excellent. Staff understand the procedures very well and implement them with great care. Arrangements for training staff in safeguarding and child protection are very good.

The management of resources is highly effective, including the use of interactive whiteboards and communication aids. The school provides outstanding value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The impact of very effective leadership and management can be seen in the outstanding outcomes. Children start school with skills which are at low levels in comparison with those expected for their age in all areas of learning. Their progress is outstanding



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overall. It is best in communication, language and literacy and in personal, social and emotional development. Since the last inspection, the school has made excellent improvements to the outdoor environment to enhance the curriculum and ensure that there are opportunities for all areas of learning out of doors. All provision is now outstanding. Children enjoy mixing with others in school, including Year 1 pupils, and they take great delight in the opportunities to learn using all their senses. Very effective arrangements exist to ensure children's health and safety, which is always given a top priority.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

## **Views of parents and carers**

A significant proportion of parents and carers returned questionnaires. The inspection supports their positive views of the school. Representative views from parents and carers include: 'Rodney House has given my child and my whole family a future. Before, we just couldn't see it.' Parents and carers were keen to express their appreciation of the quality of teaching, care, leadership and management and the fact that the school keeps their children safe. They feel valued as partners in promoting their children's learning and well-being.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rodney House School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 14 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 39 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	11	79	3	21	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	11	79	3	21	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	11	79	3	21	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	9	64	5	36	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	11	79	3	21	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	79	3	21	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	71	2	14	1	7	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	8	57	5	36	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	71	3	21	1	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	64	3	21	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	64	3	21	1	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	9	64	4	29	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	10	71	3	21	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



29 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rodney House School, Manchester, M19 2HT

Thank you for making me welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed meeting you. This letter is to tell you some of the things I found out about your school.

I saw how happy you are. This is because the teachers and other adults make sure you are safe and help you to do lots of exciting things in school. Your behaviour is excellent. Well done!

You have great teachers and this is why you all learn such a lot. This helps to make sure you are ready to leave school when the time comes.

The leaders and staff all work very hard to make sure you all keep learning so quickly. They know what to do to make the school even better so I don't need to tell them anything.

Lots of parents and carers think the school is wonderful. I agree with them. It is outstanding!

Everyone is proud of you and amazed at how hard you work. Well done and keep doing your best.

I send my best wishes to each one of you.

Yours sincerely

Mr Saleem Hussain

Lead inspector

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