

Royal School, Manchester

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106166
Local Authority	Stockport
Inspection number	336627
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Caroline Broomhead HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
The inspection of social care was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Type of school	Special
School category	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils	4–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	38
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	17
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tim Exell
Headteacher	Mr Mark Geraghty
Date of previous school inspection	0 March 2007
School address	Stanley Road Cheadle Hulme Cheadle SK8 6RQ
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Boarding provision**Social care Unique Reference Number****Social care inspector**Monica Hargreaves

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's inspectors and one additional inspector. The boarding provision was inspected at the same time by a social care inspector. The inspectors visited nine lessons, and held meetings with the chair of governors, senior managers, and some staff. They met informally with pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including school policies and assessment data, and analysed the responses of the 10 parent/carer questionnaires, 16 pupils' questionnaires and 25 staff questionnaires that were returned.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- pupils' progress and achievements
- the effectiveness of provision in meeting pupils' complex individual needs
- the effectiveness of leadership and management in securing and sustaining good quality outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

The Royal School is a non-maintained residential special school for pupils aged four to nineteen years who have complex needs, in particular, multi-sensory impairment and/or autism. Additionally, the pupils have severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties and many have additional medical needs. Nearly half of those on roll are resident on site, and their pattern of residence is dependant on their needs. All the pupils have a statement of special educational needs and are placed at the school by their local authorities. A third of pupils are looked after. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.

The school was inspected in March 2007 when its overall effectiveness was judged to be good. The school is part of a trust which also owns a college and adult residential provision on site. The trust recently changed its name to Seashell Trust. As part of this restructure, separate governing bodies were formed for the school and college. The chief executive and principal of the school is new to post since September 2009. The head of school was appointed in September 2008 as a result of internal promotion.

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

The Royal is an exceptional school which has gone from strength to strength since the last inspection and meets the pupils' complex needs very well. The pupils enjoy coming to school and make outstanding progress in their learning and personal development, as a result of the extremely good teaching and excellent care, guidance and support they receive. The pupils go about their daily lives, enjoying the wide variety of activities on offer both on site and in the local community, and benefiting from the high levels of individual attention routinely provided by the school. The staff are very sensitive to pupils' individual needs and highly skilled in enabling them to communicate effectively with others, thus reducing their anxieties and contributing very effectively to their emotional and physical well-being. A calm, positive, welcoming atmosphere permeates the whole school.

Senior leaders have established very high expectations, based on a clear understanding of what constitutes excellent practice in this specialised provision. They have successfully built up a wealth of staff expertise and promote ongoing professional development. They closely monitor all aspects of the school's work and set a clear direction for improvement. However, the school's targets do not make clear the expected improvements in pupils' attainment. Staff, governors and other professionals share in the drive for improvement and their commitment to the pupils is very evident in the way they encourage them to achieve their best and treat them with respect. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils and promoting their well-being are robust. There is close and effective liaison between education and care staff which promotes a shared understanding of pupils' needs and consistency in approaching how these are met. Parents hold the school in high regard and speak of its excellent provision.

The school works extremely well with other organisations in the wider community and has established positive and productive partnerships with, for example, schools, employers, voluntary groups and faith leaders; all of which enhance pupils' experiences and help to prepare them well for adult life.

Governors provide good, effective support and challenge as critical friends. The chair of governors has been in the role for several years and has ensured stability during recent restructuring. The school leaders, managers and governors have a clear vision for the school's future and demonstrate excellent capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Refine the effectiveness of target-setting by making greater use of information about pupils' attainment.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

All the pupils have severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties, consequently, their attainment is well below that achieved by pupils of a similar age. However, the progress they make, given their starting points, is exceptional. In particular, their communication skills improve rapidly, sometimes with a marked impact on their ability to interact socially with other people in and out of school. Some become confident users of signing or symbols and use visual timelines and timetables to help them to predict and plan the day. Others respond well to photographic prompts or objects of reference, recognising what is expected of them or use these to indicate their wishes. As a result, they are able to make choices and have some influence over the activities they take part in. In this nurturing environment, the pupils increase their ability to concentrate, to focus on specific tasks and to tolerate being near other people or in groups, for example in assembly. Their excellent behaviour can be seen in their positive attitudes to school and in how polite and courteous they are to others. In art, they enjoy drawing and painting and are proud that their work was exhibited and sold to the public recently. Through music, theme days, festivals and assemblies the pupils gain some awareness of spirituality and their own self-worth and a better understanding of different cultures. They also learn empathy, for example, through caring for animals, and some are able to express sorrow and regret.

The pupils have a very positive attitude to healthy living. They willingly take part in a wide range of sporting activities such as swimming, cycling and climbing which improve their personal mobility and fitness. They become aware of how to keep themselves safe, for example through remembering to wear a helmet or learning to use the pelican lights when crossing the road. They trust the staff to keep them safe and will try new challenges.

During their time in school they take part in an array of activities which help them to contribute to the community, including raising funds for different charities through sponsored events. Those on the school council are making suggestions about possible lunchtime activities. The pupils gain independence in life skills, such as washing and dressing themselves and making snacks, and in progressively requiring less support in finding their way around the site and using community services such as shops, buses and libraries. The older pupils achieve ASDAN accreditation on the Transition Challenge and Towards Independence courses. Some undertake supported work experience placements on site or with local employers. The pupils grow in self-confidence, maturity and readiness to move on, usually to college.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ 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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	*
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The teaching is at least good and sometimes inspirational. A strong feature is the team teaching where teachers and support staff take different roles and know each of the pupils equally well. Lessons are planned in detail to ensure that all staff are fully aware of what is expected from each pupil and how it is to be achieved. Pupils are taught individually and have opportunities to take part in small group activities, which promote their social development. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent as is the quality of guidance and support given. Staff skilfully capture pupils' interest and motivate them to learn. The staff know when to help pupils and when to wait and let them try something themselves; as a result, pupils learn to be more independent. There is generally a good pace to lessons. Staff know when pupils are tiring and need a change of activity and when they can be challenged to try harder. Resources for teaching and learning are generally good, although occasionally are too young for a pupil's age. Assessment is good. A multi-professional baseline assessment of needs is carried out when a pupil joins the school. Regular reviews are conducted to ensure that programmes are up to date and remain relevant. In lessons, pupils' small steps in learning, measured against lesson objectives, are carefully recorded and progress in attainment is measured at the end of each year. Pupils have very effective individual education and care plans which address their priority needs across the curriculum.

The curriculum is carefully tailored to meet individual needs and provides a broad range of experiences relevant to pupils' ages. Strong features of the curriculum include sports, communication and social development, art and music, independence and life skills and vocational education. The school is particularly successful in enabling the pupils to

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develop their knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum in very practical ways which are relevant to their everyday lives. The school is set in extensive grounds and has many facilities which enhance the curriculum such as the hydrotherapy pool and sports hall. Extensive use is made of the local community to enrich the curriculum and to provide extended challenges for pupils. Some pupils take part in lessons in local mainstream schools, enhancing their self-esteem and social development. The vocational curriculum enables pupils to take small steps towards learning life skills and having a better understanding of what it is to take responsibility for daily tasks.

Provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is outstanding. Throughout the day pupils receive skilled individual support which helps them to access all areas of the curriculum and to achieve success in all aspects of their school life. This enables them to take part in activities which may at first seem beyond their capabilities, but which they go on to thoroughly enjoy and benefit from in terms of self-confidence. The school is to be applauded for its efforts to involve pupils in decisions about their everyday lives and futures. Other professionals such as speech and language therapists and a physiotherapist are an integral part of the school team and their expertise is highly valued. Careful attention is paid to safeguarding pupils' welfare and promoting their emotional and physical well-being. Excellent relationships between staff and pupils are built on trust and mutual respect. The staff 'go the extra mile' to protect pupils' privacy and dignity. Great care is taken in ensuring that their medical and health needs are met. The school makes every effort to welcome parents and to keep them informed about their children's progress and welfare.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

There have been recent changes to the senior leadership team and the governing body. New senior leaders have built successfully upon the good practice which already existed in the school and are providing renewed vision and drive. The head of school has a very accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning as well as other aspects of the school's work. She and the new principal are well respected by staff for their collaborative approach to school improvement. They set high standards and involve other managers and teachers in reviewing provision. Teachers report on their curriculum areas and draw up action plans, although these are not always informed by a detailed analysis of data on pupils' attainment. New software is being installed to support this

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work. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are stringent and meet all requirements. All staff are suitably trained and understand their responsibilities for the protection of vulnerable children. Every pupil is encouraged to take a full and active part in school life and discrimination is unheard of. The school has involved staff in an audit of equality across the provision and has begun work on a more detailed action plan to improve it further. The school also promotes community cohesion well. It has made good headway in establishing excellent local community links and is building on this by developing links globally and with contrasting communities in the United Kingdom. The school provides excellent value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

The provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Under the strong leadership of the teacher in charge, there is meticulous attention to planning for individual needs within all the areas of learning. The children's abilities on entry are well below those expected for their age, but they make outstanding progress in their learning and personal development from their starting points. Activities are suitably adapted for individual needs and resources are generally adequate. All staff are extremely sensitive to children's needs and work exceptionally well with parents, who express great satisfaction with the support they receive and their child's progress. Welfare arrangements are outstanding.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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

Sixth form

Provision for pupils in post-16 is good overall. The curriculum is very relevant and provides opportunities for students to participate in experiences which prepare them well for adult life. There is a strong focus on developing independence skills and pre-vocational skills. The students take part in supported work experience, wherever possible, with local employers and linked to their interests. Students generally make good progress. They complete modules for their ASDAN Towards Independence course. They also run mini-enterprise activities in school, such as the café and use computers to record their experiences and to prepare materials, such as menus. Students are involved in their annual review meetings; one young man prepared a PowerPoint presentation. Leadership and management of the post-16 provision are good.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Boarding provision

The school meets all national minimum standards. The overall effectiveness of its boarding provision is outstanding. A separate report on the quality of the boarding is published separately on Ofsted's website.

National Minimum Standards (NMS) to be met to improve social care

This is the grade for the boarding provision

The effectiveness of the boarding provision	1
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Views of parents and carers

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Just over a quarter of parents completed and returned questionnaires. The vast majority expressed positive views about the school and were pleased with the progress their children are making and the high standards of care they receive. During the inspection, inspectors spoke informally with three parents who were in school and two were full of praise for the impact the school has had on their child's life, one describing the school as 'fantastic'. A very small number of parents commented on the sometimes variable quality of teaching and whether staff were adequately trained to support children during transition. Inspectors brought these points to the attention of the senior leaders, who were already aware of individual concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Royal School, Manchester 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 5 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 38 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	8	80	2	20	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	6	60	3	30	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	6	60	3	30	1	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	5	50	5	50	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	8	80	2	20	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	6	60	4	40	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	6	60	4	40	0	0	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)	6	60	3	30	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	9	90	1	10	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	5	50	4	40	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	5	50	5	50	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	5	50	3	30	1	10	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	7	70	3	30	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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



10 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Royal School, Manchester, Cheadle, SK8 6RQ

On behalf of the inspection team I want to thank you for welcoming us into your school this week and for being so polite and courteous to us. I also want to tell you what we found during our inspection.

- We were very impressed with how well you are progressing at school and how much you enjoy your lessons and all the other exciting activities you take part in. We could see that you feel very safe at school and trust the staff to look after you and encourage you to try new things. It was amazing to see some of you reaching for the top of the climbing wall – well done, what an achievement!
- I could see that you love the music sessions and I was impressed with how well you were picking up the rhythm.
- The staff care for you extremely well. They know exactly how to help you to communicate with other people; I was very impressed with their skills and expertise. They also help you to do things for yourself so that you do not always have to rely on other people.
- The teaching is extremely good. Teachers plan their lessons carefully to make sure that they and the support staff are clear about the small steps you need to take to achieve success.
- The school is extremely well led and managed by the head of school and the new principal. They work hard with the governors and staff to make sure that the school knows how well it is doing. They monitor what you are learning very closely and we suggested that they use this information a bit better when they are setting targets for how the school can improve.

We wish you a very happy new year and every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Caroline Broomhead

Her Majesty's Inspector

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