

Royds School Specialist Language College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108081
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	337021
Inspection dates	13–14 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Josephine Nowacki 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
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1242
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	136
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Chris Peat
Headteacher	Mrs Bernadette Young
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2007
School address	Pennington Lane Oulton Leeds LS26 8EX
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors. One other HMI shadowed the team. A majority of the time was spent looking at learning; the inspectors visited 37 lessons. They held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work and scrutinised documentation including information which tracks the academic progress of pupils, analysis of school pupils' and sixth form students' attainment and progress, school development plans, records of classroom monitoring and minutes of governors meetings. In addition, 306 parental questionnaires were scrutinised, along with questionnaires returned by a representative sample of pupils and staff.

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

- pupils' attainment and progress overall and particularly for lower ability boys
- students' progress in the sixth form
- whether teaching is sufficiently challenging to promote good or better outcomes for all pupils and students in the sixth form
- the effectiveness of evaluation and action planning by leaders and managers at all levels to drive improvement.

Information about the school

Royds School is larger-than-average and has specialist status as a language college. Located on the outskirts of Leeds, the school draws pupils from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and has a fully comprehensive intake. The majority of pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to the national average. The proportion with a statement to support special educational needs is around average. The number of looked after children is small

The school holds the following awards: Healthy Schools, Inclusion, Sportsmark, Silver Artsmark, International School status and Investor in People.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Royds School is satisfactory with many good features. Attainment has fluctuated over the last three years; it is average overall. Attainment in languages is high. In mathematics attainment has been low. This has been due mostly to staffing issues which are being resolved. Interventions to improve attainment of boys have been successful; the gap in overall attainment between boys, including those of lower ability, and girls has narrowed. The school has worked hard to improve the quality of teaching and much of it is now good. However, it remains satisfactory overall. In the main this is because not all teachers use assessment information consistently to plan their lessons so that learning activities meet the full range of pupils' abilities. As a result the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to that of their peers due to the good support they receive.

Pupils enjoy school. Behaviour in lessons and around the large site is good and this makes for a calm and happy environment. Pupils' achievements are celebrated well; the wonderful, vibrant displays of pupil work in classrooms and corridors are a good example of this. Attendance is above average for school pupils but below average in the sixth form. The curriculum is good. The school's language specialism adds an international dimension to the provision through an extended choice of languages and the many international trips and visits enjoyed by pupils. Partnerships with other schools, the local further education (FE) college and employers are strengths. The FE college and local employers enhance the curriculum by offering an increasing range of vocational options and work experience opportunities. These have enabled many disaffected pupils to succeed and, as a result, the proportion of pupils who do not progress to education, employment or training after leaving school is low. The school provides good care, guidance and support. Clear procedures are in place to ensure pupils' safety and systems for child protection are secure. Links with parents and carers are good.

The headteacher and her senior staff provide strong leadership and are ambitious to secure further improvements. Effective systems to track and monitor pupils' progress both at senior and middle leader level have been established and are beginning to impact positively on pupils' attainment. Leaders and governors know their school well, but in the self-evaluation of the school's work, including that of the sixth form, there is a tendency to overstate the strengths. This results in a lack of sharpness when action planning for overall school improvement. Lines of accountability for sixth form work are unclear and this is leading to inconsistency in the monitoring of sixth formers' progress, especially at subject level. The school provides satisfactory value for money and has a

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satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise attainment and improve progress by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use assessment to inform the planning of lessons more effectively so that the level of challenge is increased for all pupils and sixth form students.
- Improve the sixth form by:
 - ensuring that students' progress is monitored more systematically in subjects
 - improving the attendance of sixth form students.
- Eradicate remaining inconsistencies in school and sixth form performance so that all aspects are at least good by:
 - more incisive evaluation of school and sixth form work and clearer action planning for improvement by senior leaders and middle managers.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Almost nine out of ten pupils enjoy school and similar proportions are confident that they learn a lot in lessons. A high percentage of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire feel their children enjoy school and make progress.

Taking into account the improving trend in pupils' performance against key national indicators over the last three years, achievement is satisfactory. Observations of lessons show that pupils make satisfactory progress and an increasing proportion make good progress, for example in physical education (PE). Attainment in languages is well above average; a very high proportion of pupils achieve a GCSE or equivalent in a modern foreign language. Slower progress is made in mathematics and the school is tackling this as a matter of priority. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to that of their peers as a result of the high quality support that they receive.

Pupils report that they feel safe in the school and adopt healthy lifestyles. The uptake of sporting activities is high. Inspectors did not agree with the concerns expressed by a minority of parents and carers that their pupils had insufficient choices of healthy food. Pupils contribute willingly in lessons and build positive relationships with their teachers. Behaviour is consistently good; pupils manage their own behaviour well especially when asked to work in groups. Above average attendance is testament to the hard work the school has put into ensuring that pupils attend school regularly. Pupils say that instances of bullying are rare and that the school has effective means of dealing with this. As part of their contribution to the community, pupils talk enthusiastically about the school council. They point to its success in bringing about changes to the school uniform and

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the improvements in the quality of food served in the dining room. A particular strength of this school is pupils' foreign language acquisition. This, alongside good literacy and information technology skills, and strong personal development, is ensuring that pupils are well prepared for life after school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory and an increasing amount is good. The best lessons are well planned and conducted at a good pace. They include many opportunities for peer assessment to help pupils reflect on and consider what they have learned in the lesson. In the good lessons, teachers use assessment information about pupils' abilities to ensure that activities are well matched to pupils' individual needs. The level of challenge and expectations are high. However, teachers' use of assessment information is not consistent and this is resulting in satisfactory progress for most pupils.

A good combination of academic and vocational courses increasingly meets the needs of individual pupils. Good partnership arrangements with the local FE college and employers have enabled more Key Stage 4 pupils to follow courses and take up

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

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apprenticeships in construction, hair and beauty therapy, and motor vehicle mechanics. Increasingly, these opportunities are impacting positively on attendance and pupils' outcomes. The school's language status is explicit throughout the curriculum. All pupils study at least one modern foreign language during their time at school. For example, in Years 8 and 9, pupils sample Mandarin Chinese and in Years 10 and 11, Japanese. There is a good range of trips and visits; some residential and some taking place overseas to support the development of languages and cultural understanding. In addition, there is a good range of enrichment activities including sport and drama, which are well supported by pupils and students.

There is a strong culture of high quality care, guidance and support. The school has very good relationships with its 22 partner primary schools. Transition arrangements are well organised and help pupils to settle into school life quickly. Transition between Key Stage 3 and 4 is equally strong and ensures that choices are appropriate. The small number of looked after children are well cared for, as are pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Very good links have been established with external agencies to provide extensive additional support where this is needed. The school has been effective at working with parents and carers to improve levels of attendance, particularly amongst pupils who were persistently absent.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is unequivocal in her drive to move the school forward. The focus on improving attainment is strong, but a number of issues including staffing difficulties in mathematics have slowed developments. Since the last inspection, the school's performance has fluctuated at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Greater staffing stability, robust interventions and an increase in the amount of good teaching are beginning to put the school back on track; current data including pupil tracking information and recent GCSE modular results confirm this.

Senior leaders and governors are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, there is a tendency to overstate what it does well. Consequently, some action plans are not focused enough in terms what the school needs to do to improve. Governors have very good links with subject departments and this helps keep them up-to-date with the school's work. They are both supportive and challenging. Collaboration with key partners such as local schools, FE colleges and local business and

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community groups is very good and has a positive impact, particularly on the outcomes of disaffected pupils. Equality of opportunity is central to the school's work. Much is done to ensure that all pupils can make the most of the educational, sporting and cultural activities available to them. Monitoring of the performance groups of pupils is good. Gaps in the achievement of boys especially lower ability boys and girls are narrowing. Arrangements for safeguarding are well established and effective. The school's active promotion of community cohesion is underpinned by well considered plans.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. Students' attainment and progress have fluctuated in recent years, with an increase in 2008 and a decline in 2009. In the past year too many students failed to finish their courses; measures are in place to rectify this. Teaching in the sixth form is satisfactory with enough good teaching to further promote improvement. Pastoral care is good and students value highly the support they receive from the teachers and the head of sixth form. The tracking and monitoring of students' progress at subject level is insufficiently rigorous. Sixth formers play a positive role in mentoring younger pupils in the school. The head of sixth form is highly committed and is determined to improve provision. However, evaluation of the strengths of the sixth form is over generous and some of the weaknesses, including low attendance, have been overlooked.

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These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

Inspectors received questionnaire responses from 306 parents and carers. Analysis of responses indicates that the vast majority are happy with their child's experience at school and that appropriate steps are taken to ensure their child is well prepared for the future. Parents and carers were also positive about the quality of teaching and the leadership of the school. Few parents made negative comments. Of those, the main concern was about the short lunchtime break resulting in some pupils having to eat unhealthy snacks. Inspectors looked into this and were satisfied that there was sufficient time for all pupils to access the good range of healthy food available in the canteen.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Royds School Specialist Language College 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 inspection team received 300 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1242 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	66	22	209	70	20	7	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	75	25	206	69	12	4	4	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	87	29	195	65	13	4	4	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	72	24	211	70	13	4	3	1
The teaching is good at this school	68	23	216	72	8	3	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	56	19	205	68	28	9	5	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	51	17	202	67	35	12	4	1
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)	56	19	207	69	11	4	4	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	65	22	209	70	13	4	4	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	87	29	177	59	23	8	7	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	53	18	196	65	26	9	7	2
The school is led and managed effectively	86	29	188	63	9	3	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	96	32	189	63	10	3	4	1

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



Dear Pupils

Inspection of Royds School Specialist Language College, Leeds, LS26 8EX

Thank you for the warm and friendly welcome that you gave my colleagues and me when we inspected your school. Thank you as well to those who completed questionnaires. We were pleased to note that most of you enjoy coming to school, feel safe, and appreciate the care shown by staff.

These are our main findings from the inspection:

- Royds is a satisfactory school and some of the outcomes for you and the provision the school makes are good
- your attainment is average. Progress is satisfactory and the school is aiming for this to become good
- the way you are taught is mostly satisfactory and sometimes it is good
- your behaviour is good and your attendance has improved and is above average. We think you have done very well to achieve this and it will help you to succeed further.

The leaders in your school worked with us to consider some of the ways in which your school can improve and become good. We decided that the school should:

- make sure that all teachers use information to help them plan lessons so that they contain activities that enable you all to make good progress
- improve the provision in the sixth form by making sure that subject teachers monitor students' progress more carefully. We have also recommended that attendance needs to improve for sixth form students and to be at least as good as it is in the main school
- improve some aspects of how senior and middle managers plan and evaluate ways to make your school and sixth form better.

You can help your school to improve further by ensuring that you continue to behave really well and attend school regularly.

I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Ms Josephine Nowacki

Her Majesty's Inspector

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