

Rachel Madocks School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116611
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	338839
Inspection dates	4–5 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Kay Charlton

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	72
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	16
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julian Mandiwall
Headteacher	Jackie Sumner
Date of previous school inspection	0 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation such as policies, planning, assessment, pupils' records, home school diaries and annual reviews.

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

- The effectiveness of teaching and learning in ensuring that all groups of pupils achieve of their best with a sharp focus on the sixth form.
- The success of the school in ensuring improvements in pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The impact of leadership and management at all levels, but particularly at subject manager level, on school improvement.

Information about the school

Rachel Madocks is a special school catering for pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. The needs of pupils joining the school have become increasingly complex over the past few years. All pupils either have a statement of special educational need or are in the process of having one drawn up. They come from a wide geographic area. Virtually all are of White British heritage and none speaks English as an additional language. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a shared Nursery and Reception class. The school has a number of awards including the Activemark and Sportsmark awards. There have been a number of changes of staff since the last inspection including the appointment of a new headteacher in September 2007.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Rachel Madocks is a good school. It is highly supportive and welcomes new arrivals whatever their needs, so that they very quickly become valued members of the school community. Pupils are cared for extremely well. They feel very safe and secure and readily turn to adults when in need of help. They improve their self-discipline, often dramatically, from first joining the school and behaviour is excellent. As a result of an interesting curriculum and a wide range of additional learning opportunities, including residential visits away from home, pupils are well prepared for life once they leave. Most parents are very positive about the school and comments such as, 'Since my child has joined Rachel Madocks he has come on in leaps and bounds', exemplify their views.

Pupils enjoy school. Their achievements are good and all gain a range of national accreditation by the time they leave. This is due to good quality teaching and learning and the commitment of staff and governors who share the headteacher's values and high ambitions for the school. Discerning and honest self-evaluation has resulted in improvement in a number of areas, for example in planning and assessment, in the use of information and communication technology and in physical education. In addition, the quality of provision in the sixth form has been enhanced. Older pupils are now making much better progress than seen at the time of the last inspection.

The headteacher and senior staff provide strong leadership. They are very effective in driving forward improvements in teaching and learning. There is some excellent teaching, as seen in a Key Stage 4 literacy lesson where pupils achieved exceptionally well. However, there are occasions, across the school, where teaching is only satisfactory, and as a result, pupils' achievement is not as good as it could be. This is because support staff are not always used effectively enough and some pupils are not always challenged sufficiently to reach their individual targets or the planned learning outcomes. The school has rightly highlighted the need to improve this aspect of its work as a priority development. Subject managers also play an important role in improving practice in classrooms. Their role in monitoring is not yet fully developed because they do not use information from data to identify areas for improvement or observe lessons. This is mainly because of recent changes in personnel.

Links with other schools and agencies, such as health professionals, are excellent. The links with parents are strong and the school works well with them so that they can be partners in their child's education. Although the school has been through a period of staff change as well as changes in the pupil population, good leadership and management have ensured that it has maintained the many strengths noted at the last inspection. There is an atmosphere of high expectation and a commitment and enthusiasm from all to achieve further improvement. Along with the school's track

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record of improvement this means that the school is well placed to build on its present strengths.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that in all lessons teaching is good or better so that pupils achieve their best by:
 - staff always challenging pupils to reach their individual targets or the planned learning outcomes
 - teachers using support staff to advantage.
- Extend the role of subject managers in monitoring their subjects so that they more systematically:
 - observe lessons to help check and improve classroom practice
 - use data to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they are capable.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils try hard and approach their activities with enthusiasm. Relationships with staff are very good and an atmosphere of trust allows pupils to respond positively to staff's high expectations. Consequently, throughout the school most pupils achieve and some exceed the challenging targets they are set. The school caters effectively for individuals and so pupils of different backgrounds and abilities, including those with very complex needs, achieve well. Although the standards reached by pupils when they leave are well below those in mainstream schools this represents good progress from their starting points.

Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins their academic progress. They develop confidence and independence, and work together very well showing great respect for each others' differences. In a science lesson seen in Key Stage 3 it was noticeable how well pupils listened to the views of a higher ability pupil when he explained his thoughts about separating a flour and rice mixture. Pupils know what is right and wrong, and develop a clear sense of justice and fairness, as seen during a game of skittles. Pupils take part in many well thought out physical and sporting activities and they understand how to choose a healthy lifestyle. This is recognised by the school's Activemark and Sportsmark awards. To build on this the school has rightly identified the need to extend the opportunities for pupils to take part in physical activities at break times. Pupils contribute well to school life through the school council. They know that their views are listened to and acted upon and wheelchair users appreciate the fact that kerbs near the school entrance have been dropped at their request. Work started on increasing pupil participation in determining their own targets is also starting to pay dividends. Pupils make a very effective contribution to the wider community, for example in the way they contribute to the Rock Challenge events. The good development of their personal and basic skills, and also their good attendance ensures that pupils are effectively prepared for their future

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well-being. As a result, all move on to a placement in either the world of work or further education once they leave school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
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	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	2

How effective is the provision?

Staff praise and encourage pupils in their lessons and there is a very harmonious working atmosphere across all age groups. Their approach to behaviour management is highly effective. Teachers have good subject knowledge and most use this and different teaching approaches successfully to make learning interesting and meaningful. They use interactive whiteboards and 'hands-on' resources to make learning relevant as well as fun and to bring variety to lessons. Signs and symbols are also used well as aids to communication. Support staff are usually very effective and contribute skilfully to teaching and learning. Occasionally, however, they do not have enough direction to ensure they have maximum impact. Pupils' skills on entry are accurately assessed. A comprehensive system enables each pupil's progress to be tracked and compared with national data for pupils of similar abilities. This system, along with staff's very good knowledge of individual pupils, ensures that challenging targets are set that closely

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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match pupils' needs. There are a few lessons however, where staff are not sufficiently rigorous in using these or the planned learning outcomes to ensure that all pupils are fully challenged.

The good curriculum closely reflects pupils' needs. The numerous partnerships with colleges, schools and external providers support the provision very effectively. There is an appropriate emphasis on communication, literacy and numeracy which, together with a good work-related programme, effectively supports students' future well-being. Even though information and communication technology is much improved since the last inspection and is now good overall, it rightly continues to be a whole-school focus, particularly to make it more personalised to individual pupils' needs. Personal development is given high priority and as a result, pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning improve noticeably. Strengths in music, dance, drama and physical education support pupils' personal development particularly well.

The support, guidance and care given to pupils are outstanding. The majority of parents value the close links they have with the school. They particularly appreciate the support given both to them and their children if difficulties arise, for example if a pupil needs to spend time in hospital. The School Home Integration Project (SHIP) programme is highly effective in supporting pupils with identified needs. Pastoral care is very strong and the school works hard to develop pupils' self-esteem and help them stay safe and healthy. The school has an extremely positive impact on improving pupils' behaviour. Vulnerable students are carefully monitored and interventions are very well organised to ensure that they achieve well. Pupils are closely supported when leaving or joining the school, and are given excellent guidance for the next steps in their educational lives. Their 'personal passports' play an important part in ensuring smooth transition through the school and onto the next steps in their lives.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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?

Senior leaders and governors are strongly committed to continuous improvement for individual pupils and the school as a whole. They have set out and communicated a clear vision and programme for improvement and secured the support of all concerned. Governors provide constructive professional challenge because they are well informed and have a wide range of skills. They ensure that they meet their statutory duties and that safeguarding procedures are extremely effective. Self-evaluation is rigorous and

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honest. Staff and governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and the school improvement plan reflects those areas that are most in need of improvement. Resources are well deployed to achieve the most positive outcomes for pupils and the school provides good value for money.

The school's work is focused successfully on providing pupils with equal opportunities. It does this by tailoring work and support to meet individuals' needs. Pupils are very accepting of one another's widely differing needs. In an excellent religious education lesson in the sixth form students showed very good understanding of and great respect for those of different cultures and religions. Community cohesion is good. The school shows a strong commitment to promoting cohesion both within and beyond the school. It has undertaken an audit of its work and can clearly identify its impact with effective plans to develop aspects further. Through its very strong links with others it is extremely effective across the locality. Pupils act as excellent ambassadors for those with learning difficulties in many contexts, for instance when linking with a family in Africa.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The youngest children make good progress in all six areas of learning. Their progress is particularly good in communication, language and literacy and also in their personal development. All make huge gains in developing their confidence and independence. They learn to make choices well and participate in activities with a good degree of independence. They have a clear understanding of daily routines. Children make very good progress in learning to express their ideas, as seen when deciding where the 'bear'

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from 'The Bear on a Scary Night' story was located in the classroom. They gain clear awareness of number, shape, space and measures, widen their knowledge and understanding of the world and develop their creativity well. Children's physical development is good because of the regular opportunities they have to swim and the high level of support they receive from therapists.

Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Staff match children's learning well to their individual levels of understanding. They are skilled at providing a wide range of activities that challenge the children to make choices and investigate although there are some restrictions on the use of the outdoor areas. Staff are adept at picking up on and developing spontaneous situations to challenge children's thinking, for example during registration. Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage is detailed and guides the adults' questioning so that they extend children's understanding. A good example seen was in the way staff developed the children's skills in number and in learning about the concepts of big and small. Staff provide excellent care and support to the children and provision for their welfare is second to none.

Leadership is good. It is clear about the strengths and areas that are in need of improvement. Through a time of change it has maintained many of the strengths seen at the last inspection and is supporting new staff well to ensure that teaching is always good and better. Leaders are aware that the accommodation is not ideal for children of this age and are doing all that they can to improve the situation. This is particularly so with the increased number of children entering the school with very complex needs and the extra space that is needed for their specialist equipment. Improvements have been made to the outdoor provision but there is still more to do to make it a fully integrated part of the provision. Parents are very involved in their children's education and indicate that they are very pleased with the support given to their children.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Sixth form

Teaching and learning are good. As a result sixth form students make good progress and move on successfully to further education or employment. Exemplary care and guidance support the decisions students make about life beyond school. Students appreciate the advice and support that they receive from staff, who inspire confidence through their positive approach. As a result, students' behaviour is excellent, and their learning is enthusiastic and well focused.

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Students benefit from a curriculum that is much improved since the last inspection. It gives a clear focus to the development of life skills as well as to the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. As in other parts of the school, physical education is much improved and students very successfully participate in a range of sporting activities with other schools. Learning about the world of work is very well organised and students are very enthusiastic in taking a full part in the good range of opportunities offered. Enrichment activities, including clubs and visits, enhance the provision very well. As a result of increased numbers into the sixth form the accommodation has been very restricted. However a new mobile classroom was being installed during the week of the inspection.

The leadership of the sixth form is good and it gives a very clear focus to ensuring students contribute to both the school and the wider community. As result, students gain in maturity. They act very effectively as role models for other pupils with a very positive presence around the school; a good example being when one helped one of the very youngest children who was learning to become ambulant. Their contribution to a wide range of activities, such as the school council, is much appreciated by all. They also contribute very well to the wider community, for example by helping in a local nursery and gardening at a home for those with disabilities. As in the rest of the school the sixth form rightly has a priority focus on ensuring that all teaching is good and better and fully challenges the students. This situation is working well, with mostly good and some outstanding teaching seen during the inspection.

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

Views of parents and carers

More than half of the parents and carers responded to the Ofsted questionnaire. Their responses are very positive about all aspects of the school. They are particularly positive about the fact that their children enjoy school. Very few raised any queries and generally the inspection findings answer these. There were a few concerns about the communication between home and school, the extent to which parents are informed of their child's progress and the support parents receive about helping their child at home. The inspectors judge that all of these arrangements are very effective. In response to parents' concerns the school has recently introduced a regular coffee morning to provide parents with extra advice and support. The one seen during the inspection about the use of massage was particularly good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rachel Madocks 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 inspection team received 44 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 72 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	57	19	43	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	68	12	27	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	55	16	36	3	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	45	21	48	1	2	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	25	57	17	39	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	43	20	45	3	7	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	43	22	50	1	2	1	2
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)	14	32	25	57	2	5	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	50	20	45	1	2	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	43	22	50	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	39	22	50	3	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	45	20	45	2	5	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	57	15	34	2	5	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.



6 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rachel Madocks School, Waterlooville PO8 9XP

Thank you for helping us so much when we came to inspect your school to find out how well you are getting on. We particularly enjoyed visiting your lessons and talking to some of you.

We think that you go to a good school and here is a list of the really good things that we saw:

- You try hard in your lessons and your teachers make sure that you make good progress.
- Your behaviour is excellent.
- You clearly enjoy your lessons as well as other activities such as Rock Challenge.
- You feel safe and the adults make sure that you are very well looked after.
- Your headteacher and all of the other people who help run your school do a good job.

All of the adults in your school want it to be even better. To help them to do this, we have said that the most important things to do next are these:

- For all staff to make sure that your lessons are always good and better so that you make good progress all the time.
- For subject teachers to check across the school that you are all doing your very best.

We look forward to seeing your school go from strength to strength in the future.

Yours sincerely

Kay Charlton

Lead inspector

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