



The Redway School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110592
Local Authority Milton Keynes
Inspection number 288712
Inspection dates 18–19 September 2006
Reporting inspector Judith Charlesworth

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Farmborough
School category	Community special		Netherfield
Age range of pupils	2–19		Milton Keynes MK6 4HG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01908 206400
Number on roll (school)	100	Fax number	01908 206420
Number on roll (6th form)	26		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Mike Rowlands
		Headteacher	Miss Ruth Sylvester
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
2–19	18–19 September 2006	288712

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

The Redway school caters for pupils with severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder and complex needs including degenerative conditions. Pupils are predominately White British with an increasing number of pupils coming in from abroad. Due to pupils' significant health and therapy needs, a number of health professionals work within the school and support pupils' individual programmes. The head teacher and two assistant head teachers all took up their appointments in the last year and were new to the school. The Redway has established partnerships with a number of local organisations and schools and has gained the Healthy Schools bronze and Sportsmark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The Redway is a good school. The care, guidance and support given to pupils to stay safe and healthy, enjoy and achieve in their work and be prepared to take their place in the community as young adults are good. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good as a result of this effective provision. Their enjoyment and participation in lessons and other activities are excellent, whatever their age, and their attendance is good despite the frailty of many. Some parents said that their children would come to school seven days a week if they could, and that they themselves dread the time that their children have to leave the 'oasis of peace' that the school provides.

The school's curriculum and everyday provision encourage pupils to make suitable choices in their lifestyles where they are able to, for example to eat healthily, take exercise, and to manage their own difficulties and behaviour. Staff work hard to improve the quality and autonomy of pupils' lives. They show respect and concern at all times, which encourages excellent relationships within the whole school community and helps the pupils to feel safe and included in all aspects of school life.

Pupils achieve well because the teaching and curriculum are good. Teaching is supported by careful planning to meet individuals' needs, excellent staff team-work and good use of the school's resources and facilities. The curriculum for each age group is appropriate and relevant, and enriched by a range of additional activities and events such as drama performances and residential journeys. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is strong and gives them a very good start to their school life.

Throughout the school, work is carefully planned for each pupil, based on a detailed assessment of their communication skills and levels of attainment in every subject. Although standards are understandably well below average, pupils achieve well in relation to the targets set for them and parents are happy with their children's progress. However, the information gathered on progress has not been systematically analysed in order to set challenging targets or to help staff focus more clearly on improving achievement. This is one of a number of issues that the new leadership team has identified for improvement. Amongst these issues is governance, since the governing body does not contribute enough to school improvement, provide enough challenge or hold the school sufficiently to account for its standards.

The senior staff set an ambitious improvement plan as a result of the school's self-evaluation processes. Some improvements have been implemented and are working well, such as the organisation and provision for pupils at Post-16. A number of improvements were prepared and scheduled for implementation this academic year, and as yet, it is too early to judge their effectiveness. The school's work has begun to improve on the basis of self-evaluation and development planning to date, and effective plans are in place for continued improvement. Therefore, the capacity for further improvement is good.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Since the introduction of strong new leadership, the Post-16 department has improved significantly from its position a year ago. It is becoming increasingly autonomous and now has a more age-appropriate organisation of lessons and teaching groups and a better curriculum. Some accreditation has been re-introduced and more work is taking place in the community and at college. Although pupils continue to achieve well against the targets set on their individual education plans (IEPs), it is too early to judge the effectiveness of the developments on their overall achievement. Other developments, such as the introduction of further-accredited learning and college links, are planned but not yet in place.

What the school should do to improve further

- the governing body should be more involved in the school self-evaluation processes so that it can offer suitable challenge to school leaders;
- information on pupils' progress should be analysed more effectively to help the school focus more clearly on improving the quality of its provision.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school and for all groups of pupils. Due to their severe learning difficulties standards are well below average but pupils make good progress and achieve the targets set on their IEPs. They achieve well in relation to their starting points and capabilities. School staff are very competent at recognising achievement for individuals, and how factors such as pupils' health or condition is affecting it. They acknowledge, for example, that slowing down regression for a pupil with a degenerative condition is a great achievement. Curriculum planning is underpinned by a detailed assessment of pupils' communication skills which then informs careful planning for their learning. This system is well established and very effective.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They are happy, friendly and have excellent relationships with each other and their friends. Pupils clearly enjoy school and their activities. This is shown by their enthusiastic participation in lessons, and their willingness to explore new materials and experiences. For example, pupils in Key Stage 1 experimented happily with a microphone and enjoyed hearing their own voices when played back. Behaviour is good, and staff support those with challenging

behaviour effectively. Pupils contribute to their class and school community, and are involved in a number of activities with local community groups such as the church, theatre, and local mainstream and special schools. The school's emphasis on pupils' social development helps them access community facilities more easily. New curriculum developments are helping older pupils to become increasingly well prepared for adult life and to take their place in the community in which they belong.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their sense of spirituality is clearly evident at certain times, such as when listening to live guitar music or during contemplation in yoga. The school is racially harmonious. Faith and cultural diversity is actively promoted and pupils enjoy taking part in the related activities such as tasting foods from different countries.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching is typically good throughout the school, although some lessons are better, and some less effective than this. Nevertheless, learning is good for all groups of pupils. Staff have detailed knowledge of each pupil and know how to encourage and support them to help them learn. Pupils' achievements are immediately celebrated which encourages them and helps them understand their own success and how to repeat it. Planning for learning is detailed. The new information and communication technology equipment is used well to engage pupils, and they are clearly very motivated by seeing themselves on screen. Lessons are interesting and make good use of resources. For example, Year 7 pupils thoroughly enjoyed exploring shredded paper packing material. Two common weaknesses were evident in a few lessons. Firstly, sessions at the end of lessons in which staff reviewed with pupils what they had done tended to be too long. They were not properly introduced or structured and staff did not always involve pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties sufficiently. This period of time, therefore, was sometimes wasted. Secondly, staff did not explain transitions between lessons or parts of lessons clearly enough, so pupils were not properly prepared for what was to happen next.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The curriculum is good. There is a strong emphasis on the core skills of communication and personal development, and very good use is made of electronic communication aids for those pupils who need them. The curriculum is resourced well and classrooms include attractive displays and enhancements such as drapes to support pupils' interest and learning. Specialist facilities such as the art room are well used, and the high quality art work, courtyards and internal 'garden room' promote pupils' spiritual and

personal development very effectively. The school offers an extensive range of enrichment and after-school activities which enhance the curriculum.

The Foundation Stage curriculum is well established and planned very effectively to build up children's skills through interesting and relevant activities. In a music lesson, for example, the staff chanted children's names in different patterns and volumes which delighted them, and made some children laugh and ask for more. The Post-16 curriculum has much improved in recent months, and the school has laid good plans for the further improvements identified. The school has recently re-written the schemes of work for Key Stages 1 to 4 in line with the re-organisation of classes into year groups. This ensures lack of unnecessary repetition and allows pupils to build up their skills systematically as they mature. The plans incorporate good planning for different ability levels. However, the curriculum does not yet take advantage of a more creative cross-curricular approach for the younger pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

This area of provision is good. A strong emphasis is placed on pupils' well-being. The high level of staff commitment, excellent relationships and calm, multi-disciplinary approach all support pupils' personal development and learning. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust and comply with current requirements. Risk assessments are rigorous and adhered to, and child protection and the health and safety of pupils are well attended to. The IEPs reflect pupils' personal learning needs and give effective guidance to parents and staff. Written information for parents on their children's progress is good, and the newly-designed annual review report and the end of year report give them a good all-round picture of pupils' achievements. In the past year, the school has renewed its efforts to work in collaboration with parents and they are increasingly coming to school and attending social events such as coffee mornings. However, although the school consults parents over certain specific issues such as the re-organisation of the Post-16 department, they are not consulted regularly enough about school issues and developments.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The school was judged to be very effective in its last inspection, however, development slowed during a following period of disrupted leadership. In order to set the agenda for change, the new leadership team undertook an extensive school review, and put a good initial improvement plan into place. Whilst the senior staff have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, this is not shared by all members of the governing body. Some members are not involved enough in the self-evaluation processes and do not

have enough knowledge and understanding to challenge appropriately or hold the school to account for the quality of its provision. This affects the effectiveness of the governing body's work.

The school staff are now managing a period of considerable change in the school, whilst ensuring it maintains its many strengths and positive ethos. Some developments are already effectively in place, such as improving the provision at Post-16 and establishing the performance management of teaching staff. However, not all improvements planned for last year were completed and some changes were scheduled for the start of this academic year so it is too soon to judge their effectiveness. For example, new systems for tracking pupils' progress in order to improve their achievement have just begun.

The school runs smoothly on a day to day basis and resources are effectively deployed to achieve value for money. The accommodation is spacious, although lacking external space for older pupils, and the school is generous with its facilities in order to forge links with other community groups.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	2
The behaviour of learners	2	2
The attendance of learners	2	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	2

The quality of provision

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

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for letting me come into your lessons when I visited your school this week to see how it was working and how well you were all doing. I was pleased with what I found at The Redway. I agree with the staff that it is a good school.

I found that the staff work very hard to help you stay safe and healthy, enjoy your work and prepare you for your adult lives. You make good progress in your school work and in your personal development. It's lovely to see how much you enjoy your lessons and how well you join in with all the activities. It's also great to see what good relationships you have with one another, and with the adults who look after and teach you.

The head teacher and senior staff run your school well, but I think that the governors could be more involved in helping the school to improve. The staff are always looking for ways to make the school better and better, and it would be good if the governors could help them more with this.

The school has some very good systems to help you learn. Teaching is good, and the staff give you some really interesting things to do. They keep a lot of information on how well you are progressing, and what you need to learn next which is very helpful for you and your parents. I have suggested to them that they use all this information a bit differently so that they can get a better picture of how to improve the school and help you learn even better.

In all, I think that you are fortunate to attend The Redway School, and I know that your parents do too. I wish you all the best for your futures.

Yours sincerely

Judith Charlesworth