



Rigby Hall Day Special School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117049
Local Authority Worcestershire
Inspection number 290699
Inspection dates 13–14 November 2006
Reporting inspector Liz Bull

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Rigby Lane
School category	Community		Astonfields
Age range of pupils	3–19		Bromsgrove B60 2EP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01527 875475
Number on roll (school)	101	Fax number	01527 870211
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	John Russell
		Headteacher	Marilyn Calvert
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Rigby Hall is an all-age special school for pupils with moderate and severe learning difficulties. Many have additional needs such as social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders. Pupils join the school at any time during the year, although most join in September. Many pupils travel considerable distances to school. There are twice as many boys as girls and very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Pupils' attainment on entry is well below average because of their learning difficulties and disabilities. The pupils come from a broad cross-section of social and economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, at 40%, is higher than usual for this type of school. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Rigby Hall School is a welcoming and caring community which the parents hold in high regard. The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory, with some good features. Some of the young people achieve particularly well, for example, in Year 11 and in the sixth form. Standards and provision in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. The overall efficiency of the relatively small sixth form is good and pupils in the sixth form make good progress. The increase in sixth form courses has enhanced provision, which is good.

Achievement overall is satisfactory. Self-evaluation is generally secure and accurately identifies many of the school's main strengths and areas for improvement. Leadership and management, the monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance and strategic planning are all satisfactory. However, there is insufficient focus on the impact of the school's actions in raising achievement for all pupils. Whole-school and pupil targets are challenging, although not enough use is made of assessment information to identify where pupils' progress could be better. Middle managers have made a sound start in their new roles, although this has yet to have a sufficiently positive impact on achievement and standards. The quality of teaching ranges from outstanding to satisfactory and is satisfactory overall. The senior leadership team has worked hard to raise standards in teaching and learning through regular monitoring of teachers' plans and by observing lessons. Nevertheless, much of the feedback to teachers does not make clear exactly what teachers need to do to improve their work and again there is insufficient reference to the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement.

The curriculum is good and the use of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities is a strong feature. The school works very well with other schools, agencies and the local community to enrich the pupils' education and ensure their well-being. The pupils' personal development is good. They feel safe, well cared for and thoroughly enjoy school. Relationships are very good among pupils and between teachers and pupils. This creates a calm, purposeful and supportive environment where pupils learn to become caring and tolerant individuals. Pupils' behaviour and attendance are good. The quality of care, support and guidance is good. Just over a quarter of parents returned inspection questionnaires and nearly all are overwhelmingly positive. One parent said, 'Rigby Hall is a friendly, open, caring school. Teachers are approachable, understanding and positive. The school's attitude of including and rewarding all is excellent. The 'can do' ethos is exciting'. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop and extend their self-esteem and responsibilities.

The school is emerging from a period of recent instability and has been through some challenging circumstances, which have been managed well. The school is well placed to improve further. Its exciting challenge is to become a good and outstanding school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the rigour and consistency of monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance.
- Raise the achievement levels of all pupils.
- Strengthen the quality of teaching further, ensuring good and outstanding teaching becomes a more consistent feature.
- Ensure that middle managers are more effective in monitoring performance and raising achievement in their subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. Some pupils make good progress, for example, in their personal development. The standards pupils reach are well below those expected for their ages, but this reflects their particular learning difficulties and disabilities and low starting levels when they join the school. Whole-school targets are challenging but not consistently met. The processes by which the school evaluates pupils' achievements and progress year on year are not sufficiently sharp enough to show where achievement is better than similar cohorts of pupils. All Year 11 pupils either gain national accreditation in Entry Level examinations in a range of subjects or gain the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) transition challenge. Many pupils achieve distinction or merit awards in their Entry Level examinations. Pupils in the sixth form do well. They either gain further qualifications in ASDAN delivered through school or are undertaking a Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) qualification through the newly introduced college link course.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good as a result of the good care, support and guidance the school provides. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported by assemblies, their personal, social, health and citizenship education, and arranged special events. The school makes a significant contribution to pupils' awareness of healthy and safe lifestyles through an impressive range of sporting activities and inspired healthy eating initiatives. They feel safe and secure, really enjoy coming to school and speak very highly of the wide range of activities provided for them by staff. Pupils are well behaved in class, when moving around the school and in the wider community. The many favourable comments from parents support the evidence that pupils quickly gain in confidence and enjoy coming to school. Attendance is good and reflects the improving attitudes of pupils to their learning. Pupils have a good sense of living in a community and appreciate the care and support provided for them. They gain in self-esteem and learn skills that should be of benefit later on in their lives. Careers guidance, college and work-related experiences prepare pupils increasingly well for life after school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Regular monitoring of teachers' lessons by the senior leadership team has led to some improvements in teaching. However, the feedback to teachers does not show how teaching is either helping or impeding the pupils' achievement and progress. There is not yet enough good and better teaching throughout the school. Planning is consistent throughout the year groups and ensures equality of opportunity for all pupils, including those with more complex needs. The most effective lessons are well prepared, proceed at a brisk pace and include the use of a range of stimulating activities and resources. Pupils enjoy these lessons as they are stimulated and engaged. Assessment is not used sufficiently well to identify what pupils need to do next to improve their work. Similarly, teachers do not have a consistent and agreed view about what levels the pupils are working at.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides many good opportunities for learning. It is enriched with frequent visits and visitors and this contributes positively to pupils' achievement. The new science facilities and computer suite have further enhanced pupils' learning opportunities. All pupils benefit equally from a good range of learning opportunities and find most of these interesting. Individual education plans are well used to personalise the curriculum for each pupil and these make a significant contribution to the pupils' good progress in personal, social and independence skills. Pupils are also given many opportunities to take responsibility and to be aware of the needs of others. Older pupils benefit from work-related learning and college links, which helps prepare them for life as young adults.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care and welfare of pupils are given a very high priority and is good overall. The school has a strong commitment to knowing and supporting all the pupils. The views of parents and pupils are regularly sought and acted upon through an annual questionnaire and the work of the school council. Parents' views are positive and most feel well supported by the school. Pupils' progress is tracked through their individual education plans and many pupils achieve the targets set.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust and reviewed on a regular basis. Health and safety procedures are effective and risk assessments for visits and trips are robust. Extensive liaison with other professionals, agencies and school and college partners successfully promotes pupils' welfare, health and safety. There is good

provision for careers guidance and there are good opportunities for work-related learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff absences and problems with teacher recruitment have been managed well. As a result of accurate self-evaluation, some successful measures have been introduced by the senior leadership team, such as beginning to improve the quality of teaching, reviewing the role of middle managers and extending provision for the sixth form. However, procedures for checking how well the school is doing lack rigour. Strategic planning provides a satisfactory framework for further improvement but too little reference is made to the impact of actions on pupils' achievement and progress. Although assessment information is widely available, it is not yet used consistently by subject coordinators for identifying areas for improvement. Governance is satisfactory and governors fulfil their statutory requirements. The governing body is well organised and supportive of the school.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	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

Recently I visited your school to see how you are getting on. You made me very welcome and I enjoyed eating lunch with some of you. Please thank your parents for the helpful comments they made on the questionnaires. I also want to thank the school council for talking to me. Their views were very helpful and showed how much you like school. Thank you and well done.

Your school is a satisfactory school with some good features. These are its strengths:

- The school is a happy place to be and you really enjoy being there.
- The school looks after you well and you feel safe.
- The school tries hard to help you live a healthy lifestyle.
- You are helped to be as independent as possible and to take responsibility for your own actions.

There are some things that the school could do better:

- Some of your lessons could be more exciting and interesting and more focused on helping you achieve more highly.
- I have asked your headteacher and the adults in charge of each subject to keep a closer eye on your progress, as this will show if lessons are getting better and help you to do even better.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly. I wish you every continued success in the future.