

St Rose's Special School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115813
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	357821
Inspection dates	6–7 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Andrew Redpath HMI

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Non-maintained
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	61
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	14
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Teresa Billington
Headteacher	Mrs Simone Thurbon (acting)
Date of previous school inspection	9 October 2007
School address	Stratford Lawn
	Stroud GL5 4AP
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Inspectors visited 12 lessons and observed the teaching of eight teachers. They held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff, therapists, parents and carers, and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, including two assemblies, a musical performance with other schools, therapy provision and break and lunchtime. They also looked at a range of evidence, including data on pupils' progress, pupils' work, teachers' planning, curriculum documents, minutes of meetings and information on the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning. Questionnaire responses from 26 parents and carers, 23 pupils and 34 staff were also analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The attainment and rate of progress of different groups of pupils, particularly of those with profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- The effectiveness of the curriculum in meeting the learning and therapeutic needs of pupils.
- The impact of the school's specialism on the education of pupils who have additional sensory and physical needs on extending the curriculum.
- The success of the senior leadership team in implementing changes to meet the needs of pupils with more complex needs.

Information about the school

St Rose's Special School is a Roman Catholic school which provides education for pupils with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties. Ten pupils are boarders and an additional eight have short-stay breaks. Day pupils attend from Gloucester and neighbouring local authorities. Boarding pupils are drawn from Wales and local

authorities in the south of England. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and the large majority have a statement of special educational needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage admits children from the local community, most of whom do not have special educational needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average.

The school's extended provision includes medical and therapy support for parents and carers and a range of after-school clubs which are managed by the school.

In September 2008, the school was granted specialist status for the education of pupils who have additional sensory and physical needs. Since the last inspection, the school roll has fallen and the proportion of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties has increased markedly. Modifications have been made to the accommodation in response to pupils' changing needs, including a new hydrotherapy pool and extensions to the post-16 provision. Following the retirement of the previous headteacher, the former deputy has been acting headteacher and is leading the school on an interim basis with support from an executive headteacher. A new headteacher has been appointed to take up post in November 2011.

The school has gained several awards in recognition of its work, including Artsmark Gold, Healthy School status, Sportsmark, Activemark and the International Schools Award.

The boarding provision was not inspected as part of this inspection. It was last inspected by Ofsted's Children's Directorate in March 2011

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

St Rose's Special School provides a good quality of education. The outstanding quality of care, guidance and support ensures that pupils make excellent progress in their personal development. In the words of one parent, 'I cannot commend the dedication and care of the staff enough. My son is severely disabled and yet the staff always think of new and interesting ways to engage his attention to enhance his education. He always comes home with a smile on his face.' The school's positive ethos is at the heart of pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school is very inclusive and ensures all pupils are made to feel welcome and are encouraged to achieve. As a result, given their capabilities, pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community and their behaviour is excellent. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle well and make a good start to their education.

The school has made excellent use of its specialist status for the education of pupils with additional sensory and physical needs to strengthen its curriculum and to forge close links with the local community. It is extremely successful in working with parents, carers and other partners to extend pupils' education and to promote community cohesion.

All groups of pupils, including those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, make good progress with their learning. This is due to the good quality of teaching, which takes close account of pupils' individual needs, and the provision of extensive therapeutic and medical support. The curriculum contains a very broad range of activities which are very effective in ensuring pupils lead an extremely safe and healthy lifestyle. Staff have introduced several positive changes to the curriculum in a relatively short period of time to meet the needs of pupils who have more complex needs. However, the linking of pupils' therapeutic and educational needs is not yet reflected fully in curricular planning. Senior leaders recognise this as a next step and have very good plans to strengthen this area of its work.

The quality of provision in the sixth form is good and includes a good balance of community and school-based activities. A suitable range of accredited courses is on offer, although the pathways for students as they progress through the sixth form are not sufficiently clear.

The acting headteacher and senior leaders provide strong leadership and they are supported well by a committed staff team who share the school's aims and values. Senior leaders have good systems for evaluating the work of the school and have recently introduced a good system for assessing and recording the progress of pupils, although this is not yet implemented consistently in all classes across the school. While senior leaders have a good overall understanding of the quality of teaching and

learning, there is some variation in the quality of information received regarding the performance of different subjects and areas of the school. Since the last inspection, there have been significant improvements in the school's work, including new systems for recording pupils' progress; a higher standard of care, guidance and support; adaptations to the building; the development of its specialist status; and the extension of the curriculum for pupils with more profound needs. The successful management of recent changes, combined with the school's use of resources to achieve excellent value for money, demonstrates that it has a good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning by implementing the new assessment systems consistently in classes across the school.
- Improve the curriculum by:
 - implementing plans to link more closely the learning and therapeutic aspects of pupils' development in curricular planning
 - clarifying pathways for students as they progress through the sixth form.
- Strengthen leadership and management by drawing together and analysing more systematically information on the quality of teaching and learning in different subjects and areas of the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

All groups of pupils achieve well in their academic learning and extremely well in their personal development. Pupils really enjoy coming to school and they are proud of their achievements. A few pupils learn to write simple sentences and to express themselves verbally. One older student reported that he liked coming to school because 'I learn something new every day.' Those with more profound needs express their views through gesture and the use of signing, pictures, symbols, and switches. Pupils' learning and progress in the classroom are good due to the high expectations of staff and the effective use of sensory resources. Good examples were seen during the inspection when musical instruments, a sound beam, communication screens and objects of reference were used effectively to deepen pupils' awareness and understanding.

Pupils develop their self-esteem extremely well through participating in a wide range of stimulating activities. For example, they perform in musical productions with other

schools, make contributions in assemblies and take part in a residential trip to an outdoor pursuits centre. The personal, social, health education and citizenship (PSHEC) programme and the wide range of physical activities and therapies reinforce pupils' self-confidence and understanding of how to lead a safe and healthy lifestyle. Pupils contribute fully to the life of the school, for example through the school council or when older students draw up rules for the new hydrotherapy pool. They contribute to the community through participation in community events and by raising funds for charities. Pupils' attendance is good when compared with similar schools, although there is some unavoidable absence due to the nature of pupils' medical needs.

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	2
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	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	2
Pupils' attendance ¹	
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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.

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is always at least satisfactory and it is good overall. Teachers and teaching assistants form excellent relationships with pupils. They are very alert to

the individual needs of pupils, especially their medical conditions, and adapt tasks flexibly to take account of small changes in concentration. Classrooms are busy environments where pupils are encouraged to try hard and to overcome difficulties. Occasionally, resources to support learning and the content of the lesson are not matched closely to the age of the pupils being taught. Teachers and teaching assistants are involved in assessing and recording pupils' progress during each lesson using a 'response sheet'. Information is then collated at the end of each term, or unit of work, to check pupils' overall progress and to set targets for improvement. This new system is working well but is not yet established fully, and the detail of records varies between classes.

The curriculum is planned well to ensure an appropriate balance between core education activities and therapy. A very wide range of therapies ensures that pupils' individual needs are fully met. This includes speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and hydrotherapy. The school has used its specialist status extremely well to extend provision for the sensory curriculum and to strengthen links with the local community. For example, new sensory resources have been purchased, a sensory garden created in the school grounds and links established to enable older students to study in mainstream school. The curriculum is enriched by the popular after-school clubs, regular outings in the local community and residential trips and visits, for example to Exmoor and London.

The strong team of teachers, support assistants and therapists, working in close partnership with parents, carers and other professionals, underpins the school's very caring and supportive environment. Parents and carers value the school training sessions and the home visits by therapists which help to extend their knowledge of how to meet their child's needs. A full range of policies ensures that pupils' intimate care needs are met sensitively. Pupils are clearly at ease in the school and respond to the respect shown by staff. The residential care team work closely with the education staff to ensure that the individual needs of boarders are met very well through the 24-hour curriculum. Attendance is monitored carefully and when pupils with medical needs require stays in hospital, very good support is given to minimise disruption to their education.

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
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How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher and senior leaders are successful in driving improvement and have ensured that the school has adapted well to the admission of pupils with more profound needs. Equal opportunity is promoted very strongly at all levels, and every effort is taken to ensure pupils participate in the life of the school. The school promotes community cohesion extremely well and this is demonstrated by its very strong links with the local community and with other countries, for example through the Comenius project which has supported links with European countries and the Philippines. Outstanding safeguarding arrangements, including high-quality risk assessments for individual pupils, are very thorough and meet all current requirements. The governing body gives a good level of support and challenge to the school and has organised successfully the recent improvements to the building and the interim leadership arrangements.

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	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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage receives children who have skills and abilities which are as expected for their age, as well as some who have profound and multiple learning difficulties. Activities are planned well to take account of children's different needs and they make good progress in relation to their different starting points, especially in communication, language and literacy. Children are happy and sociable. The school has made significant improvements to the provision since the last inspection, and provides an attractive learning environment. Children are able to move freely between the indoor and outdoor learning areas, although the outdoor area is small, which limits opportunities for their physical development.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
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

The location of the sixth form provision in a separate 'St Joseph's Extended Education Department' gives older students a real sense of progression. Students relax and socialise in a more adult atmosphere whilst having access to the facilities in the main building. Good induction arrangements are supported by a welcome booklet which contains information in an accessible form and includes the views of students. The range of accredited courses has been extended in recent years and now all students gain a qualification which recognises their personal development and independence skills. A small number of students also benefit from attendance at a local secondary school, where they complete information and communication technology and hospitality and catering courses. Students develop an understanding of the world of work through, for example, small enterprise activities, a work awareness week and occasionally work experience. The PSHEC curriculum includes topics which prepare students well for leaving school, for example making positive relationships, lifestyle choices and keeping safe in the community.

My child enjoys school	24	92	2	8	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	88	3	12	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	18	69	7	27	1	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	85	3	12	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	24	92	2	8	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	69	7	27	1	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	69	8	31	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)	19	73	3	12	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	88	2	8	1	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	54	10	38	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	77	5	19	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	12	46	12	46	2	8	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	92	2	8	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



8 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Rose's Special School, Stroud GL5 4AP

Recently I visited your school with another inspector. We enjoyed our visit very much and thought it was a very happy school. Thanks to those of you who took time to talk to us about your work and life at school.

Here are the things we liked best.

- Your school is good and helps you to take part in lots of exciting things, both in school and in the local area.
- The school helps you to make good progress with your learning, to become more confident and to play a big part in school life.
- The school helps you to feel good about yourself and to think about the feelings of others.
- You really enjoy coming to school and your behaviour is excellent.
- Adults run the school well and work together to make sure you are looked after very well.
- The school also works very closely with other people in the local area and with your parents and carers to help you learn.
- Your parents and carers are very pleased with the work of the school and how it helps you to succeed.

I have asked the school to do a few things to help it get even better.

- Make sure all teachers are checking and noting how well you are making progress.
- Plan lessons that take account of all your learning needs.
- Make clearer how the courses for older students fit together.
- Get a clearer picture of teaching and learning across the school.

You can help by always trying your best.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Redpath Her Majesty's Inspector

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