

Rutherford School

Independent special school standard inspection report

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Rutherford School is part of the Garwood Foundation and is an independent special day school opened in 1950 for pupils aged from three to 19 years with profound and multiple learning difficulties and complex medical needs. The pupils do not have any verbal communication skills. There are four children in the Early Years Foundation Stage attending full-time, all of whom receive government funding. There are currently 26 pupils on roll. All pupils have been referred by local authorities and have a statement of special educational needs. The majority come from the London Borough of Croydon and a minority from neighbouring boroughs. The school is situated in a residential area of South Croydon and occupies a building that was originally a large family home which has been significantly extended to include specialist facilities. The school was last inspected in October 2008, when it met all but one of the requirements.

The school aims to:

'provide a positive and life enhancing education which enables every child to achieve their full potential. This is to be achieved through an effective multi-disciplinary team working in partnership with parents, carers and the community, where communication and fun are the key elements.'

Evaluation of the school

Rutherford School provides an outstanding quality of education. This is achieved through the successful achievement of their aims, specialist trained staff, the encouragement of high expectations and a commitment by senior management to ensure that all the pupils have every opportunity to succeed. The outstanding curriculum and teaching is very carefully matched to the specific needs of the pupils, who make outstanding progress according to their starting points, in the very caring, stimulating and supportive environment. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, their behaviour and welfare, health and safety are outstanding. The Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. All requirements regarding safeguarding are effectively met. The school has improved considerably since the last inspection, and now meets all the regulations.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

Quality of education

The curriculum is outstanding and is very effective in meeting the specific needs of the pupils, as identified in their statements of special educational needs. The very well planned and documented curriculum has been specifically devised to meet the needs of pupils with profound and complex needs and the school day is 'action packed' with activities. It focuses on developing their understanding both of the world around them and social interactions and relationships. It is delivered in an integrated manner, incorporating learning, therapy and health needs. Music is used extensively as an integral part of the curriculum to elicit responses and familiarise the pupils with activities and events.

A wide range of additional learning opportunities and activities are included. Religious education (RE) is delivered through planned weekly assemblies and the three-year cycle of topics enables the pupils to access themed activities. Creative arts include art, cookery, gardening, music and drama. Pupils at Key Stage 4 and post 16 are provided with a wide range of opportunities and experiences in order to extend their skills in preparation for their next stage of life. The curriculum is carefully implemented by staff who have a high level of expertise, using an intra-disciplinary and integrated therapy approach. Therapies include physiotherapy, hydrotherapy, music, rebound therapy and speech and language, and occupational therapies. Visual and sensory awareness programmes are also a major feature of the curriculum, which is very well resourced and geared to successfully empowering pupils, many of whom have profound visual impairment.

Excellent use is made of the local community to support the curriculum, through, for example, visits to centres of cultural and sporting interest. The curriculum for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding and is very effectively delivered. The curriculum promotes highly effective communication and basic skills.

Teaching and assessment across the school are outstanding. The well-trained and dedicated team of teachers, assistants, therapists and medical specialists work together seamlessly to provide a very stimulating, enriching and holistic educational environment. The staff enable the pupils to access the learning environment extremely well and to make independent choices in many cases. A recommendation in the last report, to increase the use and range of information and communication technology (ICT), has been fully implemented with exceptional provision now available in the interactive learning area, with the provision put to excellent use. All the pupils are highly valued as individuals and successfully achieve the targets set for them by staff. The school uses the P scales 1 to 4 of the National Curriculum and has extended these levels to identify and record the often very small but important steps in pupils' achievement through very careful, focused target setting. Rigorous assessment using these levels demonstrates that most pupils make outstanding progress through and up a P level in the areas of global development, cognition, communication, social, sensory integration, motor skills, emotional well-being and happiness. All of the pupils' detailed individual education plans include the wide range of targets necessary to their holistic development and follow their statements

of special educational needs very closely. Parents, carers and placing authorities attend annual reviews and six-monthly target and review meetings where video footage is also used to show the pupils' progress in relation to their individual education plans.

Very high levels of staff care and support and intensive communication systems make a significant contribution to the pupils' personal development. This is effectively demonstrated in the pupils' positive facial expressions, head and eye movements and vocalisations in response to exciting and enjoyable sessions and consistent stimulation. Consequently, pupils experience a meaningful and enjoyable learning experience. For example, their enjoyment of learning was evident when a pupil moved his hands in response to musical rhythms and successfully activated a musical instrument. The school day is 'action packed' with activities.

The outstanding provision and outcomes for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is due to the high quality of the leadership and management that has resulted in the setting of challenging targets, with staff recognising and meeting the children's individual needs very well, based on highly accurate assessment. As a result, children make rapid and outstanding progress from their starting points, which are significantly lower than the levels expected for children of this age range due to their multiple, complex and profound needs. The learning environment is safe and secure and all children have excellent opportunities to contribute to their active learning. Leaders have swiftly identified the priority for improvement, which is to extend the outdoor play experience by the addition of an adapted outdoor play area.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils, their behaviour and the personal development of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are all outstanding. The exceptional provision contributes enormously to the pupils' enjoyment, which is evident in happy faces and attempts at interactions. Specialist theatre outings and visits provide a wide range of aesthetic and cultural experiences; for example, pupils are given an opportunity to handle exotic animals. Pupils' behaviour is expertly supported through individually planned therapeutic interventions and specialist dedicated staff who know them exceptionally well. Attendance overall is good, but some pupils have missed considerable periods at school due to medical problems. Pupils respond very positively to social interactions by trying to communicate through eye or head movement. Video and DVD evidence captures the happy faces of pupils on school outings or enjoying outdoor activities. Pupils sometimes have limited opportunities for purely social interaction, especially the more senior pupils, to help further develop their social skills.

Pupils are encouraged to develop their independence and life skills wherever possible and this contributes to their positive experiences at school. The well-planned environment helps pupils to stay calm and gain impressive independence in relation to their profound learning difficulties. They use specialist tracking equipment to move around independently and confidently in their wheelchairs. They follow specialist diets and individual eating programmes to assist with meeting their complex medical

needs, supported very efficiently by the expert medical team. A designated area of the sensory garden is dedicated to the memory of former pupils who passed away and this provides an opportunity for reflection and is aimed at enriching pupils' spiritual experiences, together with religious education. There are opportunities for bird-watching and a quiet appreciation of the outdoor spaces, including the imaginative Yellow Brick Road garden. Pupils experience a wide range of cultures as the school population reflects the multicultural mix of the surrounding area. Throughout the year they have the opportunity for appropriate multi-sensory experiences through a diverse array of festivals and celebrations; for example, harvest festival, the nativity and Easter celebrations are held at a nearby church, where they are joined by their families.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The welfare, health and safety of the pupils and the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Very high levels of staff care and support and consistent supervision actively promote the safety and welfare of the children and pupils. The school has devised and effectively implemented an extensive range of policies which pay due regard to national guidance. These include anti-bullying, health and safety, including visits outside school, behaviour and safeguarding. The designated persons responsible for child protection are trained appropriately in both safeguarding and safer recruitment. All staff are trained in safeguarding, the detailed policy fully meets the requirements and staff are fully aware of it. The school very carefully risk assesses all activities both within and outside the school and is very vigilant in checking safety within the school site and play areas. A large number of staff are fully trained in first aid, including paediatric nursing, and levels of personal care for pupils are extremely high and accidents are carefully recorded. Regular exercise regimes are fully implemented, including use of a hydrotherapy pool, which encourages the pupils to stay fit and healthy. Precautions for fire prevention are very thorough, with a risk assessment undertaken. All fire appliances are checked annually and fire drills undertaken very regularly and recorded. The pupils are extremely well supervised at all times and staffing ratios are very high. The admission and attendance registers meet the regulations. The school fulfils its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and has devised and fully implemented a three-year accessibility plan.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

Procedures for checking the suitability of all staff are robust, and meet all requirements. The required single central record of such checks meets requirements.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The premises and accommodation provide a very safe and effective context for learning. The main teaching areas are located in a high quality, purpose-built facility. This comprises wheelchair accessible amenities, spacious classrooms with en-suite

bathrooms and overhead hoisting systems, height adjustable life-skill resources, therapy and nursing suites, and an emergency response, wireless, nurse-call system. The multi-sensory room and interactive learning area provide rich sensory learning environments which include music, motion and eye-control and environmental-control technologies. Other areas include a hydrotherapy pool, music room, sensory garden, quiet room and outdoor play areas.

Provision of information

The school provides all interested parties with a very good range of information and keeps them very well informed on all aspects of the pupils' progress and well-being. Informative reports and reviews give a very clear picture of each pupil's progress. A recommendation in the last report was to encourage more formal parental involvement. This has been achieved through establishing a parents' association. Parents, carers and placing authorities are overwhelmingly pleased with the school and responded positively in the pre-inspection questionnaire. Many made comments such as, 'It is a wonderful place for my son, he has made great progress...this is not just a school, it is my extended family.'

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has a set of written procedures which meets the requirements

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- provide the pupils with more opportunities for social interaction, especially for older pupils
- extend the opportunities for outdoor play experience by the addition of an adapted outdoor play area for the younger children.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education	✓			
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils	✓			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs	✓			
How well pupils make progress in their learning	✓			

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Special		
Date school opened	1950		
Age range of pupils	3–19 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 17	Girls: 9	Total: 26
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 17	Girls: 9	Total: 26
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 2	Girls: 1	Total: 3
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 50,400		
Address of school	1a Melville Avenue South Croydon Surrey CR2 7HZ		
Telephone number	020 8688 7560		
Email address	sylvia@garwoodfoundation.org.uk		
Headteacher	Ms Sylvia Kerambrum		
Proprietor	The Garwood Foundation		

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.



19 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rutherford School, Croydon CR2 7HZ

Thank you for the kind welcome you gave to the team when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed our visit and were very pleased to see how much you enjoy your school life. All the staff at the school work very hard to make your school life and learning as much fun as possible. We were very pleased to see you all taking part in such a range of activities.

The school provides an outstanding quality of education. The teachers are providing you all with an outstanding curriculum and teaching which meets your needs very well and ensures that all the planned activities are entirely appropriate for you. They take every care to ensure that the school is a very happy and safe place in which you can learn. They give you many opportunities to go on visits outside school and they invite visitors to school, which helps you to understand more of the world around you.

We have asked your teachers to make sure you have some more time to enjoy each other's company. They are planning to extend the garden area for the younger pupils and we hope you enjoy the experiences which will be available.

Yours sincerely

Jill Bainton
Lead inspector