



# Rossett School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 121696  
**Local Authority** North Yorkshire  
**Inspection number** 292208  
**Inspection dates** 15–16 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Jan Bennett HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	Green Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Harrogate
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18		North Yorkshire HG2 9JP
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01423 564444
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	1332	<b>Fax number</b>	01423 502301
<b>Number on roll (6th form)</b>	200	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Phil Kilford
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs P Hunter
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 October 2001		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
11–18	15–16 January 2007	292208

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Rossett School is an 11–19 mixed comprehensive community school. It attracts students from over 40 primary schools including some in north Leeds. A very large majority of students are from White British backgrounds: others are from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. The overall attainment of students on entry to the school is above national average. The school was awarded specialist mathematics and computing status in September 2005. There is a Nursery on-site and adult and community learning provision is offered at the school.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 3**

Rossett School provides a sound education for its students. It is an improving school that has good capacity to improve further. A new headteacher was appointed in 2004. She is an energetic and determined leader with a clear vision for the school and she is effectively assisted by a capable senior leadership team. They have successfully tackled a number of difficult issues and they know exactly what needs to be done to improve the school further. Resources are carefully managed and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

Examination results at Key Stage 3 and 4 are above the national average and students make good progress at Key Stage 3 but the school has further work to do in improving the progress made in Key Stage 4. Middle managers, supported by the leadership team, are driving improvements in teaching, assessment and progress monitoring. It is too early to see the full impact of this work but there are clear signs of improvement.

Care, guidance and support; personal development; and the curriculum are major strengths of the school. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and other vulnerabilities are supported well. There is a good range of vocational and academic courses and a wide choice of enrichment activities. The Nursery and the adult and community provision are utilised well to support the personal development and academic progress of students from the main school.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is some outstanding teaching but more needs to be done to actively engage all students in their learning. The quality of marking is improving but it is not consistent. The school was awarded specialist mathematics and computing status in 2005. The main impact has been in the expansion of information and communication technology (ICT) resources. This is having a growing impact on the quality of teaching and learning in a variety of subjects across the school. There are good relationships with the school's partner primary schools whose pupils enjoy the mathematics and ICT 'roadshows'.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 3**

Sixth formers' personal development is good. They show maturity and benefit from good opportunities to take responsibility by helping in the main school and at a local primary school. The sixth form committee is active and influential. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The curriculum is good and a growing range of vocational courses is meeting the needs of students. A significant number of sixth formers are studying a mixture of academic and vocational courses. Induction arrangements are thorough and careers guidance is good. Academic mentoring is effectively targeted to support those at risk of underachieving. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement especially in Key Stage 4.
- Improve lesson planning to ensure that the needs of all students are met.
- Ensure the consistency of marking and feedback to students.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

#### Grade for sixth form: 3

In the Key Stage 3 national tests, the standards reached are above national averages. At Key Stage 4, the proportion of students obtaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C (including mathematics and English) is also above the national average and students achieve well in mathematics and English. Girls generally reach higher standards than boys at Key Stage 4 but the gap between them is narrowing. In the sixth form, standards at GCE AS level are above average and many students achieve high grades. At GCE A level pass rates are above average but relatively few students achieve the higher grades.

Students make good progress at Key Stage 3 but their overall progress between Key Stages 3 and 4 is average. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 3 and 4 and students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make satisfactory progress. In the sixth form, students generally achieve the results that are expected of them on the basis of their GCSE grades. Students make particularly good progress on the applied health and social care course and in GCE AS English literature, physical education, sociology, business studies, ICT and French.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

#### Grade for sixth form: 2

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport, music and drama, provide very good social and cultural opportunities. However, form time is not always used effectively to extend students' experience and understanding. Students enjoy school and value its happy atmosphere. Students say that most lessons are interesting. Attendance is good. Students generally behave well, both around school and in class, but they do not always listen carefully when the teacher is speaking.

Students are confident that any incidents of bullying are now dealt with appropriately and they feel safe in school. They are well informed about how to keep safe and the importance of a healthy lifestyle. There are plenty of sporting opportunities, both within and beyond the curriculum, together with good quality food in the dining room. Students value the school council and the improvements that it has achieved, notably in altering the dining arrangements. Students undertake valuable work experience and

receive good advice on careers. However, students' achievement, although satisfactory, is not as good as it might be in helping to ensure their future economic well-being.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Teachers have good subject knowledge and they share learning objectives at the start of lessons. They are skilled in using questions to probe students' understanding and they

have established good working relationships in the classroom. In the best lessons, carefully devised activities capture the interest of all the students and learning moves at

a very lively pace.

There are important areas for improvement. In a small but significant number of lessons, the work is not adapted for students at different levels of understanding and less able students, in particular, lose concentration and interest. A significant minority of students

are quiet and well behaved in lessons but they are not listening to the teacher and their

learning is impaired. Plenary sessions at the end of lessons are sometimes rushed and opportunities to consolidate or check learning are missed.

Systems for setting targets and monitoring and reviewing students' progress are developing. Student performance data are being used increasingly by subject and pastoral managers to target support and improve achievement. The quality of marking is

improving but is not consistent between or within most subjects.

### Curriculum and other activities

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Clear pathways incorporating academic and vocational courses lead from Year 9 through to the sixth form. The needs and interests of able students are met well. The work-related dimension of the curriculum is strong in Years 10 and 11. There are good relationships with partner institutions and local employers enabling the school to provide an extended range of accredited work-related courses that prepare students

well for future training or employment. Students are able to gain GCSEs alongside vocational qualifications.

The college's specialist status is well reflected in the curriculum through, for example, the successful promotion of the use of ICT across other subjects, notably in modern foreign languages. The Nursery is used to enhance the curriculum. Key Stage 4 students visit the Nursery to develop their parenting skills and sixth formers on health and social care courses use the Nursery to support their studies.

A rich and varied programme of enrichment activities, including sports, music, drama and theatre visits, makes a valuable contribution to students' achievement, enjoyment and personal development.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 2**

Several aspects of care, guidance and support are very good but academic support is still developing. Procedures for child protection, checking staff and promoting health and safety, meet current requirements. Students appreciate the good arrangements for induction and enabling them to settle easily in Year 7. The school cares well for all students, including those who are vulnerable. The Bridge project is particularly valuable in raising students' self-esteem and helping them to get back 'on track' when they have trouble coping with normal lessons or coursework, for whatever reason.

Several aspects of the support for students' academic progress are either new, or have recently improved, and have yet to have a full impact on students' achievement. Students know their target grades and their progress is monitored against those targets. However, teachers' skills in setting targets are still developing. Mentoring of pupils is improving with more students receiving extra guidance. Similarly, the support provided for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has improved this year and is now good.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 3**

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory with some good features. The headteacher is a strong leader and provides a clear strategic direction. With the effective assistance of the senior leadership team and middle managers, she has gradually introduced a raft of changes aimed at improving students' achievement and standards. Difficult staffing issues have been tackled with determination and diplomacy and the use of student performance data, to evaluate and improve achievement, is now widespread. Already there are initial signs of success, but insufficient time has elapsed to judge the longer-term impact of recent initiatives.

The issues resulting from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. The school's assessment and tracking systems have improved and students have an increasing knowledge of what they need to do to improve. However, there is still too much variation in the quality of marking. The promotion of equal opportunities is evident in the school's aims and policies, but there are some inconsistencies in practice, particularly in the classroom where work is not always matched to students' variable needs.

Governors are actively involved in the life of the school. They have an awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses and they act as critical and challenging friends to the headteacher and her staff. The school's finances are carefully managed and staff and resources are effectively deployed. The school provides satisfactory value for money.



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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	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	2	
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	3	

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
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	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 contributing to the recent inspection of your school. We enjoyed meeting you, seeing you at work and hearing your views. Here is a summary of our findings which we hope will be of interest to you.

- Key Stage 3 and GCSE examination results are better than average. Comparing the progress made with that of students in similar schools, you make good progress at Key Stage 3 but you are not doing as well as you should at Key Stage 4. Sixth formers generally get the grades that are expected of them based on their performance at GCSE. Teachers and students must work together to ensure that progress in Key Stage 4 is improved.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. We saw some outstanding lessons in which teachers had planned interesting and challenging activities and students were working hard and making excellent progress. However, we saw some lessons where students were not focused on their work and not listening attentively to the teacher. Teachers need to make sure that they plan lessons that meet the needs of everyone in the group and ensure the consistency of marking and feedback to students. Students must respond by concentrating on their learning.
- The range of courses that are offered is good and there are lots of opportunities to take part in sports and other activities.
- Behaviour is good, you are confident that bullying is dealt with appropriately and you enjoy coming to school.
- The care, guidance and support that you receive are good and vulnerable students are supported well.
- The headteacher has already made changes that have improved the school. She is well supported by the senior management team and the directors of study and they are very clear about what needs to be done to improve the school further.

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school.