

Rowan Gate Primary School

Finedon Road, Wellingborough, NN8 4NS

Inspection dates 5–6 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The headteacher, in conjunction with her leadership team and governors, has continued to develop the school since the previous inspection.
- Pupils, regardless of their background, make outstanding progress.
- Pupils' achievement in literacy, mathematics, personal development and behaviour are excellent.
- Teaching is outstanding which brings about pupils outstanding achievement. Teachers and other adults who support learning provide excellent development in pupils' language and communication skills.
- Teachers have very high expectations of every pupil.
- In all lessons adults make sure that all pupils' needs are met, with a wide range of switches, recorders, computer equipment and other aids.
- Pupils who receive pupil premium funding make outstanding progress in line with that of their peers in school.
- Parents and staff all feel the school is safe and behaviour is excellent.
- Behaviour is outstanding and pupils feel that behaviour in school is very positive.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make outstanding progress.
- Safety is outstanding and pupils' stated they feel very safe and secure and all adults look after them. They stated the school is a safe place, the doors are locked and any strangers are challenged by adults.
- The school constantly modifies the range of subjects taught to meet the changing groups of pupils coming into the school.
- The senior leadership team and governors check teachers' performance highly effectively and closely link this to their pay and progression.
- The school uses its links with local schools and the local authority to both moderate and help improve the school's work.
- Governors have an accurate picture of the school through careful monitoring of all aspects. They use this effectively to both support and challenge the school.
- Governors are fully aware that the sports funding is improving the quality of physical education teaching and extending the sports available.
- Attendance is high compared to similar schools.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 10 lessons and were joined by the headteacher in eight of these observations.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, senior members of staff and the Chair and four other members of the Governing Body. A telephone conversation took place with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at documentation regarding pupils' progress, the school's self-evaluation, school improvement, minutes from governing body meetings, safeguarding and child-protection documents and attendance figures. They also scrutinised pupils' work both within classrooms and around the school.
- The inspectors took account of the 19 responses to the parents' online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 41 responses to a recent school parent questionnaire.

Inspection team

Ronald Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Philippa Holliday

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Rowan Gate Primary School is a mixed special school for pupils between the ages of 3 and 11, which provides for pupils with significant, severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties. The school has an increasing numbers of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and pupils with profound and multiple learning disabilities.
- The school has a high proportion of its pupils who enter the school at times other than those usually expected.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- Almost half the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium funding, which in this school provides extra funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement further by making sure that all adults who support learning have the subject knowledge needed to support pupils and are clearly told how to carry out the learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Achievement in Rowan Gate Primary School is outstanding, as pupils make excellent progress in their literacy, mathematical and personal and social skills during their time in the school.
- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are well below the levels expected for their age. Due to consistently good and outstanding teaching the children settle into the school extremely well and make outstanding progress. This is especially so in their personal, social and behavioural skills. Children quickly learn the routines, build excellent relationships with each other and all adults and enjoy all aspects of their learning.
- Following the very rapid progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, progress in Key Stage 1 slows a little, which is mainly due to pupils entering and leaving the school during this time. However, good and often outstanding teaching supports particularly new pupils to the school, and all pupils make at least good progress in their literacy and mathematics skills and knowledge.
- Throughout the whole school all staff have high expectations both in terms of what is expected in the pupils' learning and in terms of their personal and social development. In Key Stage 1 this is especially so, as an increasing number of pupils join the school with more difficult emotional, social and behavioural difficulties.
- Staff are all very conscious of making sure that all pupils' needs are fully met. A wide range of resources are used such as switches, recorders, hearing aids, sensory equipment and signing and symbols to develop the pupils' language and communication skills. Music is used as a major part of this process and this was clearly seen during an excellent choir session for Key Stage 1 pupils. Pupils were encouraged to sing, use signing, actions and a wide range of electronic devices to both join in the activities and to allow them to fully understand and enjoy their learning.
- Pupils who receive extra funding through the pupil premium make progress in line with their peers across the whole school. By the time they reach the end of Year 6 there is no difference between them and their peers in school.
- The primary sports funding has been used effectively to employ a sports specialist, who not only teaches much of the physical education, but also fully supports and develops the skills of the other teachers in the school. This has resulted in a marked increase in the number of sporting activities available to the pupils, which has improved their understanding of how to stay healthy. As one pupil stated, 'We think sports are great, they are so much fun and it keeps us fit and healthy'.
- Pupils' reading skills develop well across the school, as all staff encourage pupils to look at books, stories on electronic readers and/or on computers. This has created a very positive view of reading and even the youngest pupils enjoy books. In the Early Years Foundation Stage for example, one little boy was observed independently looking through a variety of books and comics for at least twenty minutes. Throughout he laughed and giggled at the pictures and made comments about what he saw, and where he recognised words he read these out.
- Throughout the school teachers make sufficient demands of pupils at all levels. In Key Stage 2 pupils' progress accelerates rapidly, resulting in all pupils being within the middle and upper

levels against national information for similar pupils.

- The school provides an excellent foundation for the pupils' future lives. School information shows that all its pupils achieve excellent results in their high school and then move on to further education and/or take work-related courses.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding due to the highly effective monitoring of the senior leadership team, which has continually supported and developed teachers' skills and subject knowledge.
- 'Teachers' Standards' are being met and staff use a wide range of training to make sure they can and do provide the very best teaching for all their pupils. A number of staff have achieved higher degrees and/or are currently studying for them. Although the other adults who support learning are generally well trained and create a positive partnership with teachers, in a small number of cases they do not always know what is expected of them and/or have the skills to complete what they have been asked to do.
- Teachers' excellent questioning and discussion skills are used effectively to challenge pupils and make sure that they fully understand their learning. This was clearly shown in a very effective mathematics lesson where pupils were learning about money and how it related to shopping activities. The teacher and other adult who supported learning constantly questioned the pupils, explained learning points and created a highly imaginative and fun lesson, which pupils clearly enjoyed.
- Pupils who receive extra funding through the pupil premium are provided with one-to-one and small group support, with teachers targeting the teaching methods and resources very closely to the individual needs of each pupil. This has been especially so in developing pupils' reading skills, which has been a key focus for teachers this year. This has resulted in pupils' reading skills rapidly improvingly.
- Teachers and other adults who support learning constantly monitor the pupils' progress during lessons and use this effectively to plan future learning.
- Teachers provide constructive feedback to pupils, allowing them to move forward in their learning. Although this is mainly verbal, teachers do provide written comments for the most-able pupils and these comments allow pupils to know how to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour across the school is outstanding. Pupils are polite and considerate to each other and all adults. Pupils, staff and parents all feel that behaviour is excellent.
- As pupils stated there are times when some pupils have an issue due to their learning difficulties. However, these are dealt with very effectively by staff and no learning time is lost. They also stated that there was no bullying in school, as both pupils and staff do not tolerate it.
- Pupils clearly enjoy their learning and as one pupil stated, 'Our teachers do all they can to help us and make our lessons fun. So we really enjoy learning, it's great.'
- Attendance has risen and is high compared to similar schools nationally, even though a number

of pupils have severe medical conditions, which results in them not being able to attend school consistently.

- The school keeps the pupils safe and teaches them how to stay safe highly effectively. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe on the internet and were able to explain how to do so in depth. Pupils stated that their teachers teach them to be careful, not talk to strangers and explain how they can stay safe outside of school.
- The school's work in making sure the building and grounds are safe and secure and measures to protect the pupils are outstanding.
- Pupils are proud of their school and wear their school uniform with pride. As one pupil stated, 'We love our school it is great.'
- Excellent routines and highly positive learning attitudes result in pupils attending lessons promptly and moving from one activity to another quickly and without losing learning time.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted outstandingly well, as the school provides a wide range of learning opportunities to study a range of other religions and cultures both within the United Kingdom and around the world. Their personal and social skills are developed through a wide range of visits and visitors.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher has made sure that following the highly positive result in their previous inspection the school did not become complacent and has in fact continued to improve. The senior leadership team and governors have created a solid team resulting in outstanding leadership and management at all levels.
- The school's success has been down to robust monitoring of all aspects of the school, continual training for staff and rigorous performance management systems. All staff are held fully accountable for their areas of responsibility and the performance of teachers is closely linked to their pay and progression. These measures make sure that self-evaluation is accurate and leaders have a clear picture of what they need to do.
- Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding, which has resulted in children having an extremely positive start to their lives in school.
- The school uses its good links with the local authority and other schools to both moderate and improve the work it does. The local authority moderates the work of the school regularly and information provided by them confirms the school's view that teaching is outstanding, which results in outstanding achievement for all pupils.
- Teachers and parents rightly feel that leadership and management are excellent and that senior leaders listen to their views and where needed act upon them. Staff are very proud of their school and a number stated they felt the school was a happy place, where they were always encouraged to improve their skills and given every opportunity to do so. This is clear evidence that the school has a positive attitude to making sure that everyone in the school has equal opportunities.
- The school's sports funding is used effectively and has resulted in pupils thoroughly enjoying physical activity both in school and outside of school. The pupil premium funding has been

mainly used to improve reading and this has been highly effective with pupils making rapid progress in their reading skills.

- The senior leadership team and governors make sure the school is a safe and secure place in which to learn and work and all safeguarding aspects meet requirements.
- As the local authority is fully aware of how well the school is doing they offer a light-touch approach. The school also provides support for the local authority to a number of schools who are having difficulties.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have an accurate picture of the school through careful analysis of all information about the school, observations of teaching, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils. They carefully link how well teachers and their pupils succeed to the pay and professional development of all staff. Governors monitor financial aspects of the school effectively and all funding is closely linked to the performance of the pupils, especially in relation to pupil premium and sports funding. The governing body sets challenging targets for both the headteacher and the school as a whole and monitors the school's progress towards these targets. Like the staff of the school the governing body takes advantage of as much training as possible in order to make sure that it can carry out its roles effectively.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	131079
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	431571

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	121
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Scarborough
Select	Laura Clarke
Date of previous school inspection	16 March 2011
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