

# **REPORT**

**12 – 13 November  
2007**

## **School**

**Rossington All Saints  
Church of England  
School  
(Sports College)**

## **Headteacher:**

**Mr. D Rowsell**

## **Review Team**

Mr G Haney  
Ms P Flannery  
Mr A Pymm

## **Introduction**

Rossington All Saints School was evaluated at the school's request.

Three School Improvement Advisers undertook the monitoring visit on the 12 and 13 November 2007.

## **Purpose**

This review was intended to:

- evaluate the quality of provision with particular reference to the quality of care, guidance and support, pupil attitudes and behaviour and the effectiveness of leadership on the improvement process.
- include a particular focus on the science and technology departments, including the departments' own self-evaluation
- aid the school in identifying effective courses of action, or the appropriateness of their identified improvement strategies.

During the course of the two days in school the review team:

- observed lessons;
- provided brief feedback to teachers observed;
- scrutinised teachers' planning;
- scrutinised students' work in the context of the lessons in progress, completed work in books and displays in classrooms;
- scrutinised information provided by the school, including the latest school monitoring information;
- held discussions with departmental leaders and senior leaders;
- held discussions with two samples of students from Year 7, 9 and 10;
- held short conversations with individual students and teachers.

## Commentary

The school judges care, guidance and support for learners as good and evidence from the review supports this judgement. Improvement in the personal development of pupils, particularly the attitudes students are now showing to their learning, demonstrate that progress is still being achieved in this aspect. The school has undertaken a radical change to its structure and there is as yet limited evidence of sustained impact on academic outcomes. This evidence will determine whether the judgement is sustained or improved at the end of the year.

There has been a strong focus on raising the profile of learning in the school. The pastoral system has been re-shaped to ensure it is integral to pupils' success academically and in regard to social and emotional development. There are many strengths to the new systems for support and guidance for all pupils and these developments have been strongly led and well implemented. Students are very supportive of the school's care and support. The students interviewed were a credit to the school; they were pleasant and polite. If they have problems, all felt that they could approach the staff for help and were encouraged to do so. All said that they could go to staff outside of lesson time. They like the 'checks' that are given as rewards for good work and the house prizes for fewest referrals, highest attendance and most checks. The sanctions were clearly understood by all of the students, who felt that the system is fair and that it had improved behaviour, punctuality and attendance.

Vertical grouping and form learning time linked to the house system have required a great deal of planning and development by staff, but have paid dividends in the impact on behaviour and attitudes of pupils. As well as a strong reduction in reports of bullying and the level of exclusions, tutor groups demonstrated good relationships and focus. This is enabling older pupils to help younger ones and younger ones to feel part of the wider community of the school.

A good example of the improvements in behaviour and attitudes already secured was a house assembly. The students arrived in good time, listened closely and departed without a word from a member of staff being necessary regarding discipline; this was despite the seating being uncomfortable and the assembly lasting for more than fifteen minutes. Behaviour was exemplary throughout. The students' concentration was partly owing to the content of the assembly, which was engaging and well presented using the interactive whiteboard to add music and images. The theme (hope) was discussed using modern references complemented by quotations from a variety of cultures. A trophy for the tutor group with the fewest referrals was presented. Overall, a very successful assembly that provided students with an excellent start to the day.

Support for vulnerable groups is good. An example is the high quality work of the Student Support Unit, work that is recognised and appreciated by staff and pupils alike. The mentoring system enables older pupils to gain accreditation while strengthening the culture of learning in the school.

The house system has led to some healthy competition between pupils and supports those pupils who show commitment to the work their school and their community. House captains and other pupil leaders gave an articulate and incisive account of the improved ethos for learning in the school and aspects for further development. From their standpoint there is further to go in developing the self-confidence of the whole community in Rossington, including the adults, to aspire to the very best.

The school has the confidence to innovate, using the skills of non-teachers as: a member of the leadership team, an assistant head of house and as form teachers. There is a rigorous and systematic implementation of the rewards and sanctions system that was consistently implemented and effective in almost all of the lessons observed.

Over the past couple of years there has been a sea-change in the behaviour around the school as well as in classrooms, built on some of the systems described and the responsiveness of the school to pupils' opinions. Behaviour in and outside classrooms during the review was good. The great majority of pupils behave in a positive and polite manner to each other and to adults. Behaviour on the corridors was generally good, even in congested areas. Students moved to classes in an orderly manner, on time, and opened doors for visitors. In the dining hall behaviour was good; vigilant duty staff dealt with minor transgressions promptly and with good humour.

The quality of behaviour is now being matched by the attitudes pupils are showing to their learning. Attitudes to learning range from satisfactory to good, and in some instances outstanding. Pupils in the classes observed were well focused and prepared to work hard. They listen, respond to reminders when drifting off task, and engage well in discussion and group work tasks. Even in lessons where temporary teachers were employed, pupils showed willing and tried hard. In some practical lessons (D&T) there was a noticeable difference between attitudes to learning when the task was being introduced - these were satisfactory - compared to attitudes when the practical task (computer aided design or cookery) was underway when attitudes were good. Students are prepared to accept warnings given within the school's formal discipline system and this has a positive impact on behaviour. Students understand the system, are aware of the sanctions associated with it and most respect and respond to it. There were also examples of the praising of good behaviour and positive reinforcement being successful in gymnastics.

Knowledge of targets is more variable. In discussion, some pupils were far less aware of the precise targets they need to reach and how to get there. Some excellent work was observed in physical education and sports studies enabling pupils to make good progress. More consistency will help to bring further development. In the lessons where pupils' attitudes were judged to be outstanding, lesson objectives were linked clearly to learning outcomes and reached through a range of stimulating and challenging activities. In some lessons there was far less effective use of targets to inform planning and objectives described tasks rather than defined learning.

The challenge for the future is for the school to sustain and refine the systems it has worked so hard to develop. Self-confidence and aspiration was a theme both staff and pupils felt needed to be addressed, and this requires further development of the skills for independent learning. In some classes weak literacy hampered progress and limited pupils' capacity to describe their own learning. More opportunities for structured talk and a wider repertoire of questioning skills would be helpful in developing this.

The school has a well-constructed quality assurance programme. Although the system is constantly under review and has seen incremental development over the past few years, it is very clear and well understood by the different levels of leader. For example, the progress leader in science knows when evaluations of the different aspects are due and is able to ensure that her own work, such as collating lesson observation data, is programmed to provide evidence for the head of faculty. Discussions with senior leaders then allow an updating of the departmental SEF with clear judgements being made in all of the Ofsted framework aspects. The Design and Technology department, for instance, has

been rated as satisfactory for teaching and learning and inadequate for standards. These are accurate judgements given the under-attainment that has been present in the subject for at least three years and the lack of continuity in staffing that has been a problem in the past, but they also reflect the changing nature of teaching in the subject from lesson observations and work scrutinies. This process provides a very well organised and systematic procedure for the updating of the whole school SEF, enabling whole school data to be combined with departmental judgements.

There is some evidence that the rigour in the quality assurance process is starting to impact on the achievement of pupils. However, because the faculty structure is relatively new it is not yet clear whether it is the improvement in leadership, the quality assurance framework, or more likely a combination of both, that is raising achievement. The head of E&E was appointed around 18 months ago and is a Design and Technology specialist. He is having a positive impact on standards and learning. The original head of science now includes mathematics in his portfolio. There are improving results in science, but more modest improvement in mathematics. It is not clear yet whether leaders whose subject knowledge is in one of the subject disciplines in a faculty will be able to apply their leadership skills to raise standards in the other subjects. The early indications, however, are that leadership overall continues to improve.

There is a good process for devolved management. This includes a consistent programme of line management meetings determined by a whole-school programme. Minutes of meetings are recorded and kept in a good departmental file that is available to aid evaluation. Responsibilities are widely spread within the structure. The Enterprise and Employability (E&E) Faculty also includes Information Technology, Modern Foreign Languages and Vocational Subjects. Leadership in this faculty is judged to be good and, while this might be understandable as a judgement of potential and of the initiatives that are in train, the most recent attainment data remains stubbornly unmoved. An Assistant Head is the line manager for the faculty. All leaders are clear of their accountability within the structure.

The departmental files have evidence of systematic work scrutiny supported by notes of detailed follow up with teaching staff; improvements are expected within two weeks of the issue having been raised. Self-evaluation reports (against OFSTED criteria) for the 'Every Child Matters' section are on file. It will be important to ensure that the evaluation process remains active, effective and is key to development rather than a paper chase. The evidence at this point is that the quality of evaluation is good.

Staff within the two departments reviewed feel well supported by their department. Meetings are productive and staff feel that they can approach others in the department for advice. Data and wider information are readily available on the school system in a format that can easily be used.

It is too early to come to a judgement about the impact of leadership and management in the D&T department given the number of new and recent appointments that have been made. The Progress Leader joined the school in September 2007; he has a very clear agenda for improvement and feels well supported by the line management structure. The detailed department development plan is on file and there are interesting initiatives planned such as the introduction of an OCR course in Product Design and Food to be taught to Year 9 that will offer students an introduction to industrial processes prior to GCSE. The document makes clear the need to raise standards and some of the processes that will need to be carried out to bring this about. A review of the progress made on the department development plan is scheduled to be carried out this term and will

be reviewed again later in the year. All of the department members interviewed spoke about the helpfulness of informal daily contacts with other members of the team and how supportive these are.

In science there is evidence, within improving results, of the leadership team having a positive impact. The revision of schemes of work to promote a more investigative approach is improving the quality of learning. The better attitudes of pupils are also playing a part in enabling lessons to become more interesting. Leaders are aware of where teaching is not as effective, which aspects of the subject are positively affecting achievement and which are not. Pragmatic decisions to enable progress leaders to concentrate on their own subjects disciplines seem well founded in the initial faculty programme, though this does limit the quality of inter-departmental effectiveness.

Overall the review confirms the school judgement that it has a good capacity to improve.