

Rowena Academy

Gardens Lane, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN12 3JY

Inspection dates 6–7 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make an excellent start to their learning and are extremely well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils of all abilities make outstanding progress throughout the academy in reading, writing, mathematics and many other subjects. They are eager to learn and reach above-average standards.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is also outstanding. They work with high levels of confidence and independence due to the excellent support and guidance they receive.
- Pupils read fluently and accurately. They write imaginatively and make increasingly effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) for many purposes. The school is exploring ways to make even further use of ICT in pupils' learning.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers and highly skilled teaching assistants make learning exciting and memorable. They inspire pupils to try hard and to think for themselves.
- Parents are fully involved in the life of the academy and make an excellent contribution to their children's learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They feel safe and are polite and friendly throughout the day.
- The principal's rigorous drive for excellence is fully complemented by the highly committed staff and very effective governing body. The leadership is rapidly moving all aspects of the academy forward and has an outstanding capacity to continue to improve.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 13 lessons, including three joint observations with the principal and deputy principal. The inspectors also made a number of shorter visits to classrooms.
- Discussions were held with a group of pupils, the Chair and other members of the governing body, a representative of the academy chain, and members of staff including senior leaders and other leaders with particular responsibilities. An inspector also heard pupils read from Year 1 and Year 2.
- Inspectors took account of 16 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the outcomes from the academy's consultations with parents. Inspectors spoke to many more parents at the 'Breakfast Morning' and during the day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including data on pupils' current progress, the academy development plan, performance management documentation and records relating to pupils' behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

Andrew Clark, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Mujahid Ali

Additional Inspector

Jane Alexander

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is similar in size to the average primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are from White British families.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and receive the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also average.
- Rowena Academy converted to an academy on 1 November 2011. Its predecessor school, Rowena Nursery and Infant School, was last inspected by Ofsted and was judged to be outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on pupils' already very good skills in the use of all aspects of ICT to further extend and deepen their learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children start the academy with skills and understanding generally well below those typical for their age. They make outstanding progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage in all areas of learning. Children concentrate extremely well and are very inquisitive and eager to learn. Their early reading, writing and number skills are especially well developed and they make excellent use of them in all activities.
- Pupils' progress through the rest of the school is outstanding. There is a rising trend of achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards are at least average and currently above average for pupils in Year 2. Pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and excellent skills for improving their own work; this contributes extremely well to their progress. For example, children in the Reception class measure extremely accurately in centimetres and discuss when it is appropriate to use metres or centimetres as a unit of measure.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress from their starting points. In particular, they acquire mastery of reading and writing skills that enable them to tackle a wide range of subjects and succeed well.
- Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make outstanding progress and the gap between their achievement and that of other pupils is quickly reducing. They are very keen to succeed and reach at least average standards.
- Pupils read very fluently and widely. Pupils of all abilities tackle new and unfamiliar words very well because they develop a thorough understanding of letters and their sounds. They read with confidence, expression and enthusiasm.
- Pupils' writing skills are outstanding. There is a strong focus on ensuring accuracy in basic skills such as spelling and grammar and using them in strikingly imaginative ways. For example, pupils in Year 2 use bullet points, paragraphs and exciting punctuation to write highly enjoyable historical accounts. 'Come and read my fantastic report on the life of Florence Nightingale. You will be amazed!' is typical of their well-chosen phrases and rich vocabulary.
- Pupils' mathematical skills are exceedingly well developed. They rapidly and very securely develop good recall of number and mental calculation facts to a high degree of accuracy. They use their skills well to solve problems in role play situations such as shops and travel agents, in every classroom.
- Children demonstrate very high levels of independent learning. There is no 'glass ceiling' for children at this school.
- Pupils develop very good ICT skills and increasingly applying these to other subjects. For example, they effectively use tablet computers independently for research and art and design projects in their Victorian history topic. The academy is currently extending its ICT resources and investigating ways to extend and deepen pupils' learning further by the use of all aspects of modern technology.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teachers measure pupils' progress very accurately. They make excellent use of the information to set challenging work for all groups of learners. They frequently involve pupils fully in assessing their own success and working rapidly towards higher levels and constantly improving their own work.
- The classrooms, corridors and outdoor spaces are alive with vibrant displays of pupils' work and highly engaging learning activities. Teachers use puppets, drama, games, ICT and quick-fire quizzes very effectively to consistently hold pupils' attention and lead them into new skills and concepts. For example, the use of high quality large and small-scale maps and globes in the

travel agents stimulated animated discussion on the distance from Turkey to Madagascar and the best ways to get there. All resources are of excellent quality and inviting to use.

- Teachers make excellent links between subjects to make learning relevant and exciting. For example, the Year 1 and 2 investigations into the work of the Victorian designer William Morris led to high quality work on symmetry and design. Pupils made thoughtful decisions about the most appropriate media to use and produced intricate and carefully observed artwork.
- Teachers' expectations are very high; as a result, pupils are very independent, hard working and take pride in presenting their work well.
- Teachers and teaching assistants ask very probing and open questions to deepen pupils' understanding and develop their thinking skills. Teaching assistants are extremely well deployed to provide support and challenge where it is most needed whatever the pupils' ability may be.
- Reading skills are taught extremely well because teachers increasingly promote pupils' understanding of letters and sounds through fast-paced work closely matched to pupils' ability, regardless of age. Pupils have many opportunities to read to others during the day.
- Teachers make outstanding use of the extensive outdoor areas for learning in many subject areas. For example, the 'Sculpture Park' provides excellent opportunities for pupils to build imaginative, large-scale models from logs, tyres, crates and other substances to explore scientific concepts and solve mathematical problems.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are polite, cooperative and confident. They take excellent care of each other. 'If someone falls down we help them get up again,' is typical of their views.
- Relationships are excellent. Classrooms are extremely well organised to ensure a calm but exciting environment.
- Pupils feel safe and very well cared for. There is no evidence of bullying and have been no exclusions. Pupils understand the possible dangers of the internet and other forms of bullying. They know how to behave towards each other because they are involved in making the academy's 'Golden Rules'.
- The very popular 'Breakfast Morning' sessions involving pupils and their parents, contribute well to increasing above-average attendance and a prompt start to the day.
- The academy makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the extensive charity work for children in Africa, regular 'Praising Assemblies', the role of the academy, Eco Council and learning in religious and personal and social education, are just some of the ways in which the school achieves this.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The principal has an outstanding vision for academy improvement. Nothing less than the best will do in any aspect of the academy's work and all staff work together to achieve this aim. This is very evident in the excellent environment for learning and exemplary policies and procedures to guide the academy's work.
- The systems to help teachers and leaders to be even better at their jobs are very challenging and consistently applied. The senior leadership team provide outstanding role models and are highly skilled in observing and demonstrating excellence in teaching. Staff are held accountable for the progress their pupils make and are subject to fulfilling stringent criteria in order to achieve the next salary level.
- The academy receives appropriate, but challenging, 'light-touch' support from representatives of the academy provider. The principal and several members of staff take leading roles in developing education within the academy chain and the local authority; for example, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, mathematics, assessment and moderation.
- Central to the academy's success is the commitment to providing rich and exciting learning

opportunities. Subjects are interwoven through themes and supported by a wide range of visits and visitors. All activities involve the pupils in developing excellent learning skills such as thinking for themselves, making decisions and using their literacy and numeracy skills independently.

- The academy has a very close and successful working relationship with parents. It involves them in all aspects of children's learning through, for example, the 'Achievement for All' projects and weekly 'Breakfast Morning.' As a result, all parents regularly attend meetings to discuss their child's progress and share ideas for helping them at home. They rightly hold the academy in high regard.
- The academy tackles any issues of discrimination well; it promotes equality of opportunity very successfully and this contributes to the harmony within the academy's community.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is extremely well led and organised. It is very well informed through high-quality reports from the principal and other staff members. The governors systematically check on all aspects of the academy's work. Policies for safeguarding pupils meet legal requirements and are supported by excellent record keeping. The governing body makes extremely good use of training opportunities through the local authority and academy chain. They provide strong support to other schools. They check the quality of teaching by asking questions about data which shows how much progress is made by different groups of pupils. They make sure that decisions about how to use the funds available are rational and in the best interest of the pupils. The governing body also decide whether teachers and staff should be rewarded with salary increases and review targets for the principal.

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	137629
Local authority	Not applicable
Inspection number	412631

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	278
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Mills
Principal	Michelle Benton
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01709 863109
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