

Ravenshall School

Ravensthorpe Road, Thornhill Lees, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, WF12 9EE

Inspection dates

16–17 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Pupils' achievement is outstanding. This is because senior leaders have built upon the good standards identified in the last inspection report.
- Pupils join the school at a variety of different points in their school career. A very small number of children join the school's Reception class. At the time of the inspection no children of reception age were attending. However, school data show that previous groups had made excellent progress.
- This year the school is piloting a post-16 provision for 21 Year 12 and 13 students. Twelve of this group are on the roll of the school. Analysis of school data and lesson observations undertaken show this group are also making excellent progress.
- Teaching is outstanding because teachers have exceptionally high expectations of what pupils can achieve and are very effective at ensuring work set matches pupils' needs.
- However, this year the school has more pupils with very high levels of need. While this group is making very good progress overall, school leaders recognise that more work needs to be undertaken to ensure their progress in literacy is as good as that of others.
- Despite the behavioural needs of many pupils, behaviour is excellent inside and outside the classroom. This is because pupils recognise that they are responsible for their own behaviour. A comment made by one summed up the feelings of others: 'Other people can't make my behaviour better, only I can do it'. Other pupils spoken to feel school is a very safe place to which they all enjoy coming. These positive attitudes are reflected in pupils' good levels of attendance.
- The outstanding leadership skills of the headteacher and the leadership team have moved the school forward. Their relentless focus has brought about continuous improvement in many aspects of the school's work since the last inspection. For example, pupils' progress has accelerated in mathematics and English thanks to senior leaders' continued focus on improving the quality of teaching.
- Governors offer school leaders excellent levels of support and challenge in all areas. Their increased knowledge and understanding of school data and their close links with individual classes within school have enabled them to offer school leaders exceptional levels of advice and support which have contributed to the school's improved performance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons and parts of lessons taught by 19 teachers. Joint lesson observations were undertaken with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The inspection team also listened to pupils from Key Stage 1 and 2 read and examined the quality of work in the books of pupils from across the school.
- The inspection team held meetings and had discussions with pupils, senior leaders, members of the school staff, two members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team took into account the views of 14 parents who made their views known through the on-line questionnaire (Parents' View).
- Thirty-five members of staff also made their views known to the inspection team.
- The inspection team studied health and safety documentation and teachers' curriculum planning documents as well as documents relating to the procedures to check the performance of staff, the quality of teaching and the school's systems for checking pupils' progress.

Inspection team

Marian Thomas, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Marilyn Massey

Additional Inspector

Christine Potter

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ravenshall School provides for the needs of 171 pupils all of whom have a statement of special educational needs who live within the Kirklees local authority.
- This year, the school, in partnership with Kirklees College, is piloting a post-16 provision with 21 Year 12 and 13 students currently attending. The 11 students who are in Year 12 are on the roll of the school. The 10 students who are in Year 13 are on the roll of the college. All students are based at the school.
- The majority of pupils who attend the school have moderate or severe learning difficulties. However, there has been a recent increase in the numbers who have more complex learning and behavioural difficulties including a number of pupils who have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder (ASD).
- Due to the complex needs of many of the pupils, classes are often made up of differently aged pupils.
- Boys outnumber girls and just under 50% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Approximately 30% of pupils' home language is not English.
- Approximately 57% of pupils who attend are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. This provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in the care of the local authority and those from service families.
- The school has a wide range of awards and accreditations including a gold standard for Investors in People.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the pace of learning in English for pupils with the greatest levels of need in Key Stage 3 and 4 by ensuring that they are offered more opportunities to spend time exploring and learning through using different senses.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Many pupils arrive in school at times other than at the beginning of a school year or a key stage with a wide variety of different levels of need. Because school staff work closely together and are skilled at meeting their needs they quickly settle into the routine of school and make good and frequently accelerated progress from a wide variety of different starting points.
- Few children of reception age join the school; however, pupils in Key Stage 1 and sometimes Key Stage 2 are often educated using an Early Years Foundation Stage approach. This focus on developing learning through play ensures they make a very good start and exceptional progress despite their often profound level of need.
- The greatest numbers of pupils are in Key Stages 3 and 4. As a result of excellent teaching, the vast majority make excellent progress in English and mathematics. Work for more-able pupils is challenging, with links with mainstream schools used effectively to support the needs of this group.
- However, this year a small group of pupils with more complex needs have joined the school. While lower down the school their needs are very well catered for with opportunities for a less formal and more play-based exploratory curriculum, this small group of older pupils are less well provided for in the older classes. School leaders are aware of this and have already started to address this issue. However, new systems recently put in place have yet to impact.
- School leaders recognise the importance of preparing pupils for further education or the world of work so they ensure that by the end of Key Stage 4 the vast majority of pupils leave with qualifications and accreditations in mathematics, English, information and communication technology, science, and art as well as vocational qualifications in a range of subjects including cookery and horticulture. This represents exceptional progress and ensured that all pupils who left last year successfully transferred to further education or the world of work.
- Students who attend the school's pilot post-16 provision enjoy coming to school immensely. For example, they feel that the courses which improve their life-skills help prepare them for the transition to a full-time college place.
- Pupils say they love to read. Many read regularly to parents and other family members. Older pupils read a varied choice of books and enjoy choosing from the wide range within the school library. As one commented: 'Although I find reading really hard, I enjoy reading stories and the more I read the easier it gets'.
- Pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium make excellent progress. This is because school leaders have been very effective in their use of pupil premium monies to provide additional support for this group. School tracks the progress of different groups of pupils. The needs of this group are clearly identified and a range of individual support has been put in place to improve both their academic and social outcomes. For example, pupils have individual support in reading from trained teaching assistants which has accelerated progress.
- Progress for the large proportion of pupils who come from different ethnic backgrounds is outstanding. This is because of school's very clear commitment to equality for all its pupils.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Progress in lessons observed during the inspection and in pupils' work confirmed that teaching is outstanding in all areas of the school.
- 'This school is brilliant because teachers make learning fun and every day is different', commented a pupil. Teaching staff are exceptionally good at planning opportunities for pupils to learn in a variety of different ways. They also offer pupils a diverse range of experiences, for example, through regular 'drop down days' when the timetable is suspended across school and everyone studies a theme. In a much anticipated 'drop down day' planned for the day after the

inspection pupils were looking forward to celebrating Eid ul Adha with visits from South Asian musicians and dancers as well as samples of celebratory food. These experiences develop pupils' imagination and curiosity as well as their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- Pupils in the Key Stage 1 and 2 classes benefit from a wide range of activities both in the outdoor area and in the classroom. Teaching is also lively and interesting and offers pupils a wide range of experiences. As a result, they make exceptional progress across the curriculum.
- Further up the school, teachers' high expectations are also clearly evident as could be seen in a Key Stage 4 art lesson in which Year 10 pupils were starting to compile a portfolio of art work in preparation for art GCSE. Despite the wide range of abilities within the class, the teacher made her high expectations for all pupils crystal clear. Her conviction that all could succeed empowered pupils and her skilful use of examples of previous pupils' work motivated all to try. The excellent work which was achieved was impressive and supported well the school's key message of 'I can'.
- Excellent working partnerships between teachers and support staff are evident across the school and support the learning and social and emotional needs of pupils exceptionally well. This leads to an excellent quality of provision for all pupils, including those students who attend the post-16 unit.
- Teaching in the post-16 provision is outstanding as students' needs are clearly identified and met through an exciting and innovative curriculum.
- Teachers are skilful at using information about pupils' previous achievement to plan further learning. They also always provide feedback to pupils on the quality of their work both orally and where appropriate in written form. As a result, pupils are very clear about the next steps required to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Despite the high level of needs of some pupils, learning is almost never interrupted by incidents of pupils demonstrating difficult behaviour. This is because pupils manage their own behaviour exceptionally well both inside and outside the classroom.
- The school's very clear determination of not excluding pupils coupled with the very consistent use of the behaviour management policy has improved behaviour significantly since the previous inspection. The majority of pupils now take responsibility for their own behaviour and often self-refer to the quiet room in order to take stock and manage their behaviour. As a result, serious incidents are now rare and school corridors and classrooms are calm. A comment made by one young pupil summed up well the views of others: 'No one can make me be good, only myself'.
- All pupils spoken to feel the school is a very safe and happy place where everyone gets along with each other. Parents echo this view and feel staff care for their children exceptionally well.
- Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and feel everyone is a valued member of the school community. They said that the school could do very little to improve further and that they felt their views were respected and taken into account by school leaders.
- Pupils are very clear about how to stay safe. Incidents of bullying are exceptionally rare in school. Pupils are made aware of the different forms that bullying can take through the school curriculum and policies. For example, internet safety is well understood because of the excellent quality of the school's 'E safety policy'.
- Attendance has continued to rise since the last inspection and is indicative of the consistent approach taken by the headteacher on discouraging holidays taken during term time. Class attendance is celebrated regularly in assembly and possession of the class attendance trophy is fiercely contended. This competitive approach has also contributed to an increase in attendance which is now above average for similar schools.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher and leadership team have a very clear understanding of what makes the school successful. Supported by the governing body, they have successfully built upon the school's good performance in the previous inspection. As a result, the school's overall effectiveness has now reached an outstanding level.
- Teaching is monitored frequently and the headteacher is highly effective in taking action through the management of staff performance to improve any areas of weakness. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved from good to outstanding since the previous inspection.
- Performance targets set for staff by the headteacher link directly to pupils' achievement and the school's improvement plan. Checks on the performance of all staff are undertaken rigorously and the headteacher uses this information to make decisions on teachers' pay.
- The curriculum is outstanding and offers pupils an exceptionally wide and very rich variety of opportunities and experiences. Pupils clearly enjoy undertaking the many different activities on offer. For example, a recent visit to the Humber bridge was described by one pupil as: 'Brilliant, because it was so big and a bit scary because it was so high in the air'. The breadth of these experiences develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding exceptionally well.
- The newly introduced pilot sixth form illustrates the excellent working partnership between school and college. Students have settled well and the curriculum is offering excellent opportunities for students to develop self-confidence and self-esteem making their transition to college smoother.
- School leaders have devised an action plan which focuses on improving outcomes in physical education for younger pupils. Their planned spending of extra funding received this year includes the purchase of further outdoor physical education equipment and improvement of the training opportunities for teachers who are not physical education specialists.
- The majority of parents have a high regard for the work of the school as evidenced by the views of 14 parents who made their views known through the online questionnaire.
- The local authority has a high regard for the abilities of the school's leadership team and has, since the last inspection, offered light-touch support to the school when invited.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - School governors have a broad range of relevant skills and experience which enables them to offer an excellent level of support and challenge to senior leaders in all areas of the work of the school. They are committed to continuous training, and have excellent levels of understanding of the analysis of school achievement data. As a result, they can offer excellent levels of challenge to the headteacher and have made a significant contribution to improving pupils' achievement. In partnership with the headteacher, governors have developed an effective system for checking the performance of teachers which rewards good teaching and addresses underperformance. Their very careful and measured approach to the management of pupil premium funding has enabled them to give valuable support to eligible pupils and increase levels of progress. The health and safety committee carries out regular inspections and has ensured that safeguarding procedures meet current requirements.

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	107799
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	425897

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	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	171
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	21
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Metcalfe
Headteacher	Jeanette Tate
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2011
Telephone number	01924 325234
Fax number	01924 325235
Email address	office.ravenshall@edukirklees.net

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