

The Radclyffe School

Hunt Lane, Chadderton, Oldham OL9 0LS

Inspection dates	19–20 November 2015
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The tangible culture of self-improvement, instilled by the inspirational headteacher, motivates both staff and pupils to achieve their very best. The promotion of excellent personal development has as high a priority as the insistence on outstanding achievement.
- Governors, leaders and managers at all levels find the right balance between motivating, supporting and challenging staff. This ensures a positive culture for school improvement.
- This school has improved significantly since its last inspection. All areas for improvement detailed in the last inspection report have been addressed and are now strengths of the school.
- Pupils in all year groups make rapid progress, including in English and mathematics. There is a little inconsistency in achievement within a few subjects that pupils opt into at Key Stage 4.
- By the time pupils reach Year 11, any relative underachievement between different groups of pupils is virtually eliminated.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and this contributes to the pupils having excellent attitudes to their learning and high ambitions for their futures.
- The behaviour of pupils is excellent. They attend very well and take great pride in their work and in their school. Most show enthusiasm in classes and make valuable contributions to discussions.
- The culture of learning and improvement is not restricted to pupils. All staff take an active part in improving their skills, including their teaching skills. Leaders and managers of teaching and learning evaluate the performance of teachers rigorously and provide high-quality training. The quality of teaching is improving quickly across the whole school.
- The school has taken rapid and effective action to improve pupils' literacy levels. All subjects make valuable contributions to improving pupils' reading, writing and speaking skills.
- The curriculum is designed very well to develop pupils academically, socially and culturally. It is diverse and is very well adapted to meet the needs of different pupils.
- Homework is most effectively used where pupils are required to think deeply about topics and develop skills that will help them learn more independently in their future lives; however, homework is not used consistently across all subjects.
- The school works very well with a wide range of external agencies to ensure pupils are safe and well looked after. The well-being of pupils is a high priority for all staff and they work hard to ensure pupils are happy and confident.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise pupil achievement by ensuring:
 - all pupils become as confident as the majority in explaining and justifying their ideas
 - pupils who study product design, business studies or media studies progress as quickly in these subjects as they do in their other subjects.

- Building on the best practice within the school, ensure that all teachers set high-quality homework that will further develop pupils' skills in learning independently.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- Governors and senior leaders are principled in their decision making. The actions they take are firmly based on what is right for their pupils. Their vision is highly aspirational and crystal clear. Throughout the school, there is an extremely positive culture of improvement through challenge and celebration.
- The headteacher's ambition for every child to fulfil their potential and go on to take a rewarding role in British society is adopted by all staff and every pupil. Consequently, this very large school works in harmony to a common purpose, with excellent effect.
- The headteacher and governors are determined that every pupil should gain the best possible examination results to enable them to have excellent life chances. The school's conspicuously successful strategy to maximise achievement includes early entry for GCSE examinations for all pupils in English and mathematics. This strategy is kept under constant and thorough review. Teachers analyse and build on the results that pupils secure at GCSE in Year 10. The pupils are motivated to improve upon their performance when they resit their examinations in Year 11.
- The performance of all staff, including the headteacher, is evaluated rigorously. Lines of accountability are clear. Subject leaders evaluate the progress of pupils and the quality of teaching within their departments. They carry out this work diligently. Senior leaders are meticulous in evaluating the aspects for which they are responsible. This leads to a constant cycle of review and improvement. Professional training is extensive and includes excellent training for leaders at all levels.
- Evaluations of pupils' progress and well-being are regular and frequent. Consequently, the smallest of problems are addressed before they become big issues.
- Pupils and parents say that the use of personal learning guides (PLGs) is critical in ensuring pupils feel safe, are well looked after and maintain a constant focus on their studies. PLGs are members of staff from all roles within the school who have pastoral responsibility for small groups of pupils; they help to bring a sense of 'family' to the school.
- Parents say communication between home and school is very good. They know in detail how well their child is progressing and feel confident that pupil welfare is paramount in the minds of all staff. Reports to parents on their children's progress are clear and helpful.
- Links with external agencies, including the police, are excellent. These strong lines of communication, high-quality staff training and high levels of expertise, ensure that safeguarding procedures, in all forms, are very effective.
- The school's highly professional approach is reflected in the work it has done to replace the National Curriculum system of attainment levels. The school has produced excellent guidance for parents. All pupils know what is expected of them in terms of progress and are given highly aspirational targets. Pupils respond very positively to these and believe that, with the support of their teachers, they can achieve them.
- The curriculum is constantly under review and the school makes adaptations to ensure that all pupils have the best possible chances to succeed. This happens, where necessary, at a personal level, where individual learning programmes are developed to meet individual needs. Together with an excellent range of enrichment activities, the curriculum is diverse and provides pupils with the best possible experience to prepare them for their future in modern Britain. The school has fully embraced the importance of providing effective careers guidance for pupils in all year groups.
- Off-site provision which is run by the school is exemplary because it ensures pupils placed there are safe and make rapid progress. Pupils are generally quickly and easily reintegrated into mainstream schooling.
- **The governance of the school**
 - School governors make an excellent contribution to the aspiration, vision and success of this outstanding school. They find the perfect balance between supporting and encouraging staff and taking decisive action when an adult does not match their highly professional expectations.
 - There is no discrimination in this diverse school community. Pupils have equality of opportunity to succeed and they do; any gaps in achievement that exist when pupils join the school are virtually eliminated by Year 11. This is particularly evident in English, where there is currently no difference in performance between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school. Nor are there any gaps in achievement between those pupils for whom English is not their first language and others. Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used to very good effect.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- Leaders and managers with the responsibility for quality of teaching, learning and assessment have been relentless in the drive for excellence. Huge strides have been taken since the last inspection.
- Morale is high throughout the school. Everyone is respected, valued and appreciated. Consequently, excellent relationships are fostered between staff and pupils. These contribute to pupils' outstanding attitudes to their learning.
- Teachers' extremely high expectations of what their pupils can achieve are infectious. Through well-chosen topics and activities, teachers routinely stimulate and interest pupils, giving them a passion and verve for learning. Pupils flourish in a culture of enthusiasm for learning and desire to succeed.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge and are very well trained to evaluate precisely the progress that pupils make. This enables them to plan learning activities which match accurately the needs and abilities of all pupils. In addition, teachers identify quickly when a pupil is not progressing as well as they should. Any subsequent support is implemented rapidly and pupils catch up quickly.
- Since the last inspection, improvements in pupils' literacy skills have been considerable. Literacy development is the responsibility of all, and the school can take pride in the fact that their significant efforts are paying off. The library is a vibrant hub of the school that is used successfully by staff and pupils to enrich learning.
- A very small minority of pupils are reticent about expressing their ideas in class. This prevents them from having to explain their point of view. These pupils miss out on the opportunity to think more deeply about an idea before justifying their ideas to others and developing their communication skills.
- Significant work has been undertaken to improve the quality of teachers' marking and feedback. There is exemplary practice in the school, which is particularly effective when pupils respond to their teachers' comments and assimilate and act upon the advice that they receive.
- Adults who assist teaching and learning are very well trained and make a considerable contribution to the improvement in pupils' achievement throughout the school. Programmes to support weaker readers are highly effective. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported very well by both teachers and well-trained and highly motivated support staff.
- Within the school there is some excellent practice in setting homework that will develop pupils' skills in thinking for themselves and learning independently. However, this aspect of teaching is not consistently well developed across all subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Personal development and pupil welfare are central to the school's vision of high achievement and personal fulfilment.
- There is an extensive range of opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills. These include pupil ambassadors, sports leaders, peer support and through the peer mentoring groups, where older pupils act as 'brothers and sisters' to younger ones. Pupils are consulted about the effectiveness of many elements of teaching. They play a crucial role in determining the school's direction: there is a pupil representative on the governing body and pupils take part in the selection process for the appointment of new staff.
- Numerous strategies are in place to promote British values and discussions with pupils confirm that this is integral to the school's ethos. Citizenship and values education underpin many aspects of both the formal curriculum and enrichment activities.
- The school's work to promote pupils' understanding of different cultures and world issues is excellent, as shown through its moving commemoration of events such as Holocaust Memorial Day. The school takes the opportunity to reflect not only on the Jewish Holocaust, but also more recent examples of genocide in Rwanda, Bosnia, Cambodia and Darfur. The school's superb display of recent Remembrance Day activities, in which all pupils took part, through art, history and drama, is truly remarkable.
- Pupils eagerly take part in an extensive range of opportunities that enrich their experience. The school has notable success in sport. Cultural, artistic and musical events are very popular. There are many educational visits, including visits to the country's top universities.

- There is much in place to support pupils' mental health and emotional well-being. Pupils are taught most effectively about keeping safe, including internet safety, and of potential risks of radicalisation and extremism.
- It is difficult to find any pupil who has experienced any form of prejudice- based bullying, including homophobic or racist bullying. There are many parts of the curriculum where bullying and personal safety are explored to excellent effect. Both pupils and their parents say that this school provides a very safe environment.
- Leadership of this aspect of the school's work is outstanding. It is based on celebrating success, achievement, aspirations, ambition, perseverance and the drive for excellence.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Attendance has risen consistently since 2008, and for the last three years it has been above average. The school rigorously checks and monitors attendance, analyses this by different groups and ensures that pupils who attend its outreach centre are monitored with equal rigour. Pupils fully understand that the main reward for very regular attendance is high achievement.
- Despite the vast site, pupils are punctual to school and to lessons. Pupils say with confidence that behaviour is very good around the school. They move between classes calmly and efficiently. At break- and lunchtimes, pupils are so well behaved and self-disciplined, low numbers of staff are required to act as supervisors. Relationships between pupils and staff are respectful, warm and appreciative.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent; they take pride in their work. Low level disruption exists, but is extremely rare. School records shows that behaviour over time is excellent. The incidence of exclusion either from school or from lessons has reduced rapidly. Pupils are proud of their school. They embrace their rights and responsibilities and value the rewards these bring.
- The behaviour of pupils who attend The ROC is impeccable because staff have extremely high expectations and act as excellent role models.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- Since the last inspection, rates of progress have improved rapidly.
- A large proportion of pupils made greater progress than that which is expected of them in English and in mathematics.
- Rates of progress are particularly strong in science, history, religious education, hospitality, textiles, art, photography and physical education.
- Pupils do not progress quite as quickly in product design, business studies or media studies as they do in other subjects.
- Many pupils join this school with very low levels of literacy and numeracy. At that stage, their overall attainment is significantly below the average levels seen nationally. Due to the rapid progress that pupils make in this school, they leave having at least caught up with their peers nationally and, in many cases, have exceeded their peers.
- Pupils from all starting points make excellent progress, including the most able. The number of GCSE passes at A* or A grade has doubled over the last three years.
- The school's policy of entering pupils early for GCSE examinations means that comparison with national results does not give an accurate picture of pupils' achievement from their starting points to their finishing points in school. In 2015, almost two-thirds of pupils improved their grades from their first sitting, and a large proportion of these improved their results by two grades or more. They left school having secured grades that showed excellent progress from their starting points.
- There are gaps in pupils' performance when they join the school in Year 7. Girls outperform boys, pupils from White British backgrounds do not perform as well as others and disadvantaged pupils make less progress than their peers. Due to excellent teaching, guidance and encouragement, these gaps in performance are almost eliminated by the end of Year 11.
- High quality teaching and care also ensure pupils who are disabled or who have a special educational need make similar progress to other pupils in the school. Pupils who have barriers to their learning or personal development are extremely well supported. Their curriculum is often modified and they receive expert guidance. Consequently, their achievement continues to improve.
- Pupils who attended the school's alternative provision make better progress there than they do in the main

school. This ensures that they can catch up quickly and return to their main school classes after only a short period of intensive and high-quality support.

- The school evaluates frequently and accurately how well pupils read. All pupils whose reading age is not high enough are given intensive and highly effective tuition to rapidly improve their skills. Throughout the school, reading is valued and high-quality writing celebrated.
- When pupils leave The Radclyffe School they are fully prepared for their next steps. They are socially aware, principled, confident and full of enthusiasm.

School details

Unique reference number	105738
Local authority	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10002215

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation Trust School
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1485
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jim Greenwood
Headteacher	Hardial Hayer
Telephone number	0161 622 3200
Website	www.theradclyffeschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@theradclyffeschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–4 October 2013

Information about this school

- The Radclyffe School is much larger than the average secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is well above average. Pupil premium funding is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and looked after children.
- Over 70% of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds, most of whom are of Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards that set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The Radclyffe School is a cooperative trust school. The governing body of the school has direct responsibility for the running of the school, its finances and the outcomes it achieves. The trust is represented on the governing body.
- The school runs an off-site support unit called The Radclyffe Outreach Centre, known as 'The ROC'. It caters for up to six pupils at any one time. Pupils attend full-time for short periods and catch up with learning that they have missed.
- The school uses alternative provision very rarely and when it does, it is normally for individual pupils who need specialist support, for short periods of time.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a wide range of evidence during the inspection, including through observations of teaching, some of which were undertaken jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work during lessons and at a further sample of pupils' written work, including English, science and mathematics.
- Inspectors visited an assembly.
- Meetings were held with school staff, including the headteacher, other senior leaders and staff in charge of aspects of the school's work. Inspectors met members of the governing body, including a representative of the cooperative trust. They also spoke to the school's improvement partner.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils in formal interviews, during lessons and informally at lunch and break times.
- Inspectors considered a large variety of documentation related to the school's work: improvement plans, the school's view of its performance and information concerning pupils' attainment, progress and attendance.
- Inspectors scrutinised records concerning safeguarding, pupils' behaviour and the quality of teaching and learning.
- Inspectors analysed 35 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also took into account 17 written responses from parents.
- Inspectors also took into account surveys recently undertaken by school pupils and by staff.

Inspection team

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