

# Revoe Learning Academy

Grasmere Road, Blackpool, Lancashire FY1 5HP

## Inspection dates

25–26 October 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils do not make enough progress in reading and writing. Pupils struggle to understand what they read and find it hard to write at length. Handwriting and presentation are untidy.
- The quality of teaching in reading, writing and mathematics, including from support staff, is not consistently good across the school.
- In some classes there is still too much low-level misbehaviour, particularly from boys. Some pupils do not routinely arrive at school on time.
- Leaders do not make enough use of the extensive information they collect about pupils' behaviour to help them further improve this aspect of the school's work.
- Leaders and governors have not made rigorous enough checks on how well the additional money the school receives to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils has made a difference.

### The school has the following strengths

- Since the school opened, leaders have worked very effectively to improve pupils' behaviour and safety. Pupils report that they are happier in school and feel safe.
- The quality of teaching is better than it was when the school opened. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good.
- The work of the school's engagement team ensures good working relationships and support for pupils and their families.
- Improvements to attendance have ensured that pupils are in school and ready to learn.
- Children in the early years get a good start to their education. They develop positive attitudes to school, a love of learning and make good progress.
- Pupils are well mannered and friendly to visitors. They enjoy and appreciate the good range of activities provided for them at lunchtime.
- The curriculum enables pupils to gain a good understanding of British values. It teaches them life skills and provides many clubs, activities and visits that enrich pupils' learning.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management, by:
  - ensuring that the strategic leadership of behaviour is more effective and pupils' concerns about the prevalence of bullying are investigated
  - ensuring that more rigorous evaluations of the impact of the pupil premium funding are undertaken, governors challenge leaders more robustly about the impact of the pupil premium and that the school meets the requirements on the publication of information about its pupil premium strategy.
- Improve teaching so that it is at least good across the school. In particular, ensure that:
  - all teachers have secure subject knowledge, particularly of how to teach reading
  - all teachers have high expectations for pupils' achievement, behaviour and presentation of work
  - the impact of the large number of teaching assistants is more consistently good.
- Improve outcomes for pupils across the school, especially in reading and writing, by ensuring that:
  - all groups of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and White British boys, make consistently strong progress from their starting points towards attaining the expected standards for their age.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, by:
  - eradicating low-level disruptive behaviour in lessons, particularly from White British boys
  - improving pupils' presentation of work
  - improving the punctuality of a minority of pupils.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The Revoe Learning Academy of 2016 is a far more effective school than that which opened its doors on 1 April 2014. In no small part this is due to the unwavering commitment and strong leadership of the headteacher.
- Leaders and governors have successfully improved many aspects of the school's work, including the inadequate behaviour that existed when the school opened and which put pupils' safety at risk. However, behaviour is not yet good. The high profile and active involvement of senior and middle leaders in the day-to-day management of behaviour is very effective, but there are weaknesses in the strategic leadership of behaviour.
- A considerable amount of information about behaviour incidents is recorded daily. However, the analysis and use of this information is not rigorous enough. There are inconsistencies in the information about different types of behaviour over time and causal patterns. Some marked differences between leaders' and pupils' views about the frequency of bullying have not been adequately resolved.
- These weaknesses mean that planning to improve behaviour is not built upon a sufficiently well-informed insight and limit the extent to which governors can challenge leaders about this aspect of the school's work.
- Since the school opened, a priority has been to ensure consistently good-quality teaching. Senior leaders have high expectations of teachers. Their checks on teaching enable accurate identification of strengths and areas for development and link to the performance management of teachers. Together with coaching programmes and ongoing staff training, this process has led to improvements. It has also unavoidably resulted in a high staff turnover that has slowed the course of improvement. A more stable staffing situation has only been achieved recently.
- Leaders are working diligently to improve teaching. To this end, they make effective use of assessment information about pupils' achievements in reading, writing and mathematics to focus their checks on measuring the impact of teaching on learning.
- In this large school there is an extensive leadership team, the effectiveness of which is regularly reviewed. Changes and restructure occur in response to leaders' impact on improving provision and pupils' outcomes.
- Senior leaders support the headteacher effectively. However, while the school can demonstrate some positive use of the additional pupil premium funding to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, evaluations of the impact of all spending of this funding are not rigorous enough.
- The restructured leadership team for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is working well. Leaders know where improvements are needed and have clear lines of accountability for improving pupils' outcomes and provision.
- There is strong leadership of the early years provision and the work of the team responsible for safeguarding, including attendance, is very effective. Some phase leaders are having a very positive impact on improving teaching, pupils' outcomes and organisation within the year groups for which they are responsible. However, senior leaders know that the impact of these leaders is not yet consistent across the school.
- The leaders of English and mathematics have supported improvements to teaching and

pupils' outcomes in their subjects. They are acutely aware of the weaknesses that still need to be addressed to eliminate the legacy of underachievement and enable pupils to achieve good outcomes. The leadership of most other subjects, including science, is still at a relatively early stage of development.

- Curriculum organisation places considerable emphasis on the development of basic reading, writing and mathematics skills. Work each morning focuses strongly on these subjects. Afternoon sessions focus on topic work that links science, humanities and creative arts. Computing and physical education (PE) are organised throughout the week. For the most part, this approach enables pupils to receive a broad curriculum and supports their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- While the planned topics have significant potential to interest pupils and extend pupils' learning across the curriculum, their implementation is not achieving this in all classes. However, there are strengths within the curriculum that do much to raise pupils' aspirations, develop them personally and prepare them for life in modern Britain. This includes good promotion of British values, through which important messages about equality and respect for people's differences are continually given.
- Enterprise activities are other features that promote life skills. Year group 'companies' are established and pupils use their English and mathematics skills to prepare business plans, loan applications and plan fundraising projects, such as Year 6 pupils' Halloween disco and Year 2 pupils' retailing of 'chocolate surprises'.
- The school provides a varied range of regularly changing extra-curricular activities, including for homework, that suit all interests. Work with the Children's University is part of this and resulted in a high number of graduates this year. A good range of visitors and school-funded visits to places of interest also enrich the curriculum.
- The additional funding for PE and sports has been used effectively. Specialised sports coaches have supported teachers to improve their skills. The recruitment of a specialist PE teacher will be used to ensure sustainability of quality provision by working alongside class teachers in the delivery of PE lessons.

## **Governance of the school**

- There is a good range of expertise on the governing body, including three directors of the multi-academy trust who are serving headteachers. These strong links have supported the school's improvement, for example in relation to staff development and more accurate assessment of pupils. They have also enabled governors to be well involved in the self-evaluation process and in determining the school's strategic direction.
- The detailed headteacher's reports to governors reflect the range and extent of questions which governors have previously asked about many aspects of the school's work. However, governors have not probed deeply enough about the impact of the school's spending of the pupil premium.
- Governors regularly survey the views of staff and parents and have responded well to issues or concerns that have been raised. While pupils' views are regularly sought, governors have not pursued a notable inconsistency between pupils' and the school's views about the frequency of bullying.
- While aspects of leadership and management require improvement, leaders and governors are undeniably committed to the school's improvement. High aspirations for pupils and their families are central to leaders' and governors' work and all give

generously of their time and expertise to this end. The resounding support of parents and staff in the respective surveys are testament to this, as are pupils' views about the improvements that have occurred and their enjoyment of school.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Regular training ensures that all staff are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. Policies for safeguarding, child protection and attendance are up to date and evident in the school's day-to-day safeguarding processes.
- Rigorous record-keeping and frequent monitoring of the many vulnerable pupils in the school do much to ensure pupils' safety. Similarly, so do the extensive and productive working relationships with specialist support agencies.
- The school works very effectively with parents, including those who are new to the country. The school's engagement team play a crucial and effective role in keeping pupils safe. They daily work closely with pupils and their families, providing many levels of support to ensure pupils' physical, emotional and mental well-being.
- The school provides parents with comprehensive and very useful information about how to keep their children safe, including when using various technologies.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Although there have been improvements to teaching, the overall quality remains variable. Consequently, pupils are not learning consistently well, including in reading, writing and mathematics. Good teaching is enabling some pupils to overcome a legacy of underachievement but for other pupils the effects of this legacy are not diminishing swiftly enough.
- Teachers are committed to improving their skills and effectiveness and welcome the support that leaders provide, including the management of pupils' behaviour. In this school teachers have to work particularly hard to gain pupils' interest, maintain their attention and help them to sustain concentration when completing work.
- However, at times, teachers' expectations are not high enough. There are weaknesses in explanations, questioning, organisation of work, and the level of challenge and support they build into tasks. In some classes, the management of pupils' behaviour is not consistently effective. These weaknesses limit pupils' learning.
- At other times, all of the elements of teaching that should promote good learning are present, but learning is slow because pupils' behaviour still falls short of good. Pupils are not resilient learners. This is especially so for many White British boys. Some find it very difficult to work without adult support and a minority actively resist learning. Sometimes this is through lack of confidence or because of behavioural and emotional issues that pupils are unable to manage; for other pupils, limited interest and application is due to long-standing disaffection.
- Building pupils' independence and stamina to concentrate and complete tasks is an ongoing school priority to support improvements in pupils' learning. While this is being established, phase leaders and additional teaching assistants are being deployed to support teaching and learning in lessons. Where these additional staff have strong subject knowledge and are skilled in supporting and challenging pupils to extend and deepen their learning, the strategy works well. This was evident in the teaching of

phonics in key stage 1 and writing in Year 6.

- The quality and impact of the large number of teaching support staff are more variable than those of teachers. At times, the work of support staff is not sufficiently effective. For example, when their explanations are unclear or their questions do not enable pupils to explore new ideas or explain their understanding.
- Some support staff are effective in developing the language skills of pupils who are at an early stage of learning to speak English.
- There have been good improvements in the teaching of phonics, but the teaching of reading for understanding is not as effective. Reading homework is provided as a non-negotiable element of pupils' learning, but too often pupils do not complete this.
- Teachers' subject knowledge in relation to the teaching of writing is secure and they try hard to exploit opportunities to get pupils writing across the curriculum. However, this does not always work well. By the afternoon, many pupils' concentration has deteriorated so they do not apply themselves to recording tasks.
- Teaching and learning in mathematics is stronger than in reading and writing, but is not yet consistently good across the school.
- The teaching of reasoning through which pupils can deepen their understanding of mathematical ideas is variable and affects learning for all groups, including the most able. Successful learning occurs when pupils have opportunities to talk about their strategies to solve calculations and problems.
- Feedback to pupils about their work and how to improve it is becoming more effective as a result of the school's focus on improving this aspect of teaching.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Requires improvement

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. The main reason for this is that leaders and pupils hold opposing views about the prevalence of bullying.
- Leaders have worked hard and with some significant success to improve pupils' behaviour and pupils acknowledge that behaviour is better. They say that they feel safe in school and that the school deals effectively with any issues of bullying that occur. However, while school leaders consider that there are very few substantiated incidents of bullying, pupils believe that this is still a feature of the school. Pupils' views on this matter were reflected in their discussions with inspectors, the survey pupils undertook for the inspection and the school's own survey. While both surveys and inspectors' discussions with pupils also reflected many positive views from pupils, the school survey also indicated that a high proportion felt that the school did not always listen to or act upon their concerns.
- In discussions with inspectors, most pupils said that they liked school and got on well with their teachers. They considered that their learning was improving, particularly in mathematics, which was a favourite subject of many pupils. A group of the most able pupils said that the work they were given was often 'just right', but at times it was 'well easy'. Some said that they got 'fed up' if they had to do things they already knew.
- Other favourite subjects included PE, computing and art. Pupils recognised the importance of reading and writing but few, especially boys, said they enjoyed these

aspects of school work. 'Too much writing' was one of the reasons boys gave for disliking science and some topic work.

- The pupils are well aware of how to keep healthy. They cite eating lots of fruit and vegetables, drinking water, keeping fit, brushing their teeth and getting plenty of sleep.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe, including when using the internet. Pupils illustrated their examples of how to use technology safely with references to child trafficking and modern-day slavery.
- Pupils have a good understanding of British values. They know about different types of prejudicial behaviour, understand why this is wrong and how it can hurt people. The school's strong messages about respecting people's differences, respecting property and understanding the need for rules and laws are all well understood.
- Pupils learn about different religions, cultures and customs. They experience democracy in action when electing school parliament members and when making democratic decisions about how profits from their enterprise projects will be spent. In all, the school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils are clear that behaviour in the school has improved and that this has increased their enjoyment of school. However, they are realistic in stating that behaviour could be better. They explain that some pupils struggle to manage their behaviour and 'blow up'. They also admit that not all pupils behave as well as they should in lessons. Some pupils said that they occasionally 'switch off' in lessons that they find boring.
- A number of the most able pupils could recall pieces of work they were proud of. In discussing presentation of work, pupils were aware that this is something they need to improve and a number said that this is one of their targets.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the school's behaviour system. They think that the rules and sanctions are fair and are keen to earn the rewards for good behaviour, attendance and effort with their work.
- Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors and chat readily about their work and school life. Most move around the school sensibly. Pupils value the wide range of equipment and organised activities provided at lunchtime. These keep pupils engaged and ensure good behaviour from most pupils.
- The school's strong focus on attendance has ensured good improvement, including reductions in persistent absence. Punctuality has improved, but remains an issue for a minority of pupils. Improved behaviour systems have reduced the number or fixed-term exclusions.
- The vast majority of parents consider that the school makes sure pupils are well behaved.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Standards are improving and the school's moderated assessment information shows that from their starting points, many pupils are making expected progress. However, not enough pupils are making the rapid progress necessary to attain the standards expected for their age and be ready for secondary education when they leave Year 6.

- Overall, pupils' standards and progress in reading are weaker than in writing and mathematics. This year, almost three quarters of Year 2 pupils attained the standard expected for their age. However, less than half of Year 6 pupils attained the expected standard and this was also the case for disadvantaged pupils.
- The increased focus on teaching phonics has improved pupils' skills in this aspect of reading. Pupils are increasingly using these skills to help read unknown words and to write independently. However, pupils' understanding of what they read is not well developed.
- Pupils' understanding of vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and spelling is improving well in some year groups. Pupils of different abilities in Year 6 produced some quality writing in relation to their study of the lost Mayan civilization. This included interesting openers, such as 'Rising majestically the Mayan temple...', relative clauses, similes and personification.
- In key stage 1, pupils' books also showed some good progress in writing for pupils of all abilities. However, this is not consistent across the school. In some year groups, pupils' books reflected little writing of any substance or complexity relative to pupils' ages. Overall, the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation is poor.
- Outcomes in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 have shown the greatest improvement. However, the much improved standards and strong progress reflected in this subject over the last two years are not securely embedded in all year groups.
- Across the school, pupils' variable progress in reading, writing and mathematics is linked to the quality of teaching they receive. However, another factor is the less than good behaviour, concentration and application of a significant number of pupils, principally White British boys. This group of pupils has underachieved over time and is currently underachieving. These pupils are significantly represented in other groups, such as disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders recognise that differences exist between White British boys and other groups of boys in the school. However, this is not represented clearly in the school's analyses of pupils' assessments and therefore does not sharply inform plans to improve the achievement of White British boys.
- The school's in-year assessment information shows that from their various starting points, the progress of disadvantaged pupils is as variable as that of other pupils in the school. However, with the exception of reading at the end of key stage 2 and writing at the end of key stage 1, considerably more disadvantaged pupils attained the expected standards in the most recent phonics and end of key stage tests and assessments. Attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils nationally diminished in all but the key stage 2 reading test and key stage 1 writing assessment.
- Assessments of pupils' standards in science indicate that the majority reach the expected standard. However, pupils' books do not reflect good progress in this subject. Assessments of pupils' standards and progress in other subjects are not yet in place because the focus has been on improving outcomes in the core subjects.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving in response to amendments that have been made to the provision for this group of pupils and closer monitoring of their progress.
- The most able pupils have also been identified as a focus group by the school. While



the variability in teaching means that these pupils are not always challenged as well as they might be, there is no evidence of significant underachievement.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Children join and leave the early years provision at different points. While most children in the Nursery Year transfer to the school's Reception classes, children from a range of other early years provisions also start in Reception at this time. In the last two years, a notable number of children who had no prior schooling or pre-school experience joined the Reception Year part way through the year.
- On entry to the early years, many children's skills are below those typical for their age and for some children they are significantly below. Children's spoken language and understanding is often particularly low. Their personal, social and emotional skills are also frequently very underdeveloped.
- Practitioners ensure that there are strong links with the children's parents who are viewed as important partners in children's education. To ensure a smooth transition there are also very effective working relationships with the children's centre and other pre-school provisions from which the children transfer.
- When the children begin in the early years, the well-trained staff are quick to identify signs that children might need additional specialist support. Effective communication with a range of professionals ensures that this is provided where necessary.
- Staff have received good training for their roles. They are skilled in promoting children's language, personal and social skills. As a result, the children become confident, develop good attitudes to school and are ready to learn.
- The youngest children are settled and clearly feel secure with the adults. They love exploring the interesting outdoor area. They learn to balance on a structure they have built with large wooden blocks and delighted in pretending to eat a dinner of soil with one of the staff. Through songs and games they learn about numbers and sounds. At snack time they learn that it is important to wash their hands before touching their food. They learn to say please and thank you and to consider the needs of others when sharing the snack. The adults interact well with the children, supporting their confidence and independence.
- The children's learning progresses well in the Nursery and Reception Years. The strong emphasis on developing children's language continues, with good opportunities for children to develop reading, writing and mathematical skills through purposeful play and planned activities, both indoors and outside.
- The outdoor environment has been extensively developed and is an exciting hive of activity. The children are enthralled by the range of resources and activities on offer and sustain concentration in these for lengthy periods.
- During the inspection, practitioners were skilfully developing boys' reading and writing skills outdoors in a construction activity. The boys were fully engrossed in drawing plans on large paper and adding marks and letters to explain their decisions after consulting construction books. Good questioning, such as 'How are you planning to do this?' and 'Tell me what this says', promoted their speaking skills and vocabulary well.
- The good progress that children make across the curriculum is evident in their comprehensive online learning journals, which parents value and contribute to. These reflect teachers' ongoing assessments of the children's achievements and the children's

next steps in learning.

- In 2016, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year remained well below average at 52%, but reflected an improvement of 6% from the previous year. Of the children who had attended the school's Nursery, 63% attained a good level of development.
- Although boys attained better than the previous year, only a third were ready for work in Year 1 and their attainment remained significantly below that of girls'. The proportion of disadvantaged children who attained a good level of development rose by 20% to 65%, reflecting the good impact of the pupil premium funding.
- While all of these pupils are now in Year 1, checks of their books showed the good progress they made during their time in the Reception Year, including the most able children.
- Safeguarding and welfare requirements are effective, with rigorous procedures and risk assessments in place to ensure that children are safe and happy.

## School details

Unique reference number	140673
Local authority	Blackpool
Inspection number	10022814

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	458
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alana Frith
Headteacher	Dayle Harrison
Telephone number	01253 763414
Website	<a href="http://www.revoelearningacademy.co.uk">www.revoelearningacademy.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@revoe.blackpool.sch.uk">admin@revoe.blackpool.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school does not comply with the Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about their pupil premium strategy.
- The school is larger than the average primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is broadly average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support is high.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils join and leave the school other than at the usual admission and transfer times.

- The school provides part-time places for two-year-olds and children in the Nursery Year. Children in the Reception Year attend full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school provides a free breakfast club for all pupils who wish to attend.
- The school opened as a sponsored academy on 1 April 2014 and is part of the Blackpool Multi-Academy Trust. When its predecessor school was last inspected in 2013, it was judged to require special measures.
- The school has experienced significant staff turnover. Just under half of the current staff were not at the school when it opened.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in each class. They checked pupils' work, listened to them read and reviewed the school's assessment information about their attainment and progress.
- Inspectors held three formal discussions with pupils and spoke to others informally in lessons and at playtime and lunchtime.
- A range of school documentation was reviewed. This included the school's evaluation of its effectiveness, school improvement plans and information about teachers' performance. Safeguarding information and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance were also scrutinised.
- Inspectors held discussions with senior and middle leaders. A discussion was held with governors and representatives from the multi-academy trust board.
- One hundred and eight responses to the online survey (Parent View) were considered, including written comments from 10 parents. Inspectors also spoke to parents as they brought their children to school.
- Inspectors considered 34 responses to the online pupil survey and 55 responses to the online staff survey.

## Inspection team

Margot D'Arcy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Moira Atkins	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Lanovy-Taylor	Ofsted Inspector

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