

Ryde Academy

Pell Lane, Ryde, Isle of Wight PO33 3LN

Inspection dates

22–23 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This is a rapidly improving school.
- The strong moral purpose and inspirational leadership of the principal have successfully embedded an ambitious culture. All the community now have high expectations for the pupils.
- There is a strong culture of learning and an eagerness to be even better across the school. Pupils are keen to improve their learning and teachers are very willing to refine and improve their skills.
- Pupils' attainment and progress are rising rapidly, especially in English and mathematics. Senior and middle leadership is strong. All leaders effectively challenge and support staff to provide good experiences for the pupils. Leaders learn from each other and have a common purpose to quickly drive up standards.
- Leaders' close monitoring and work with individuals have ensured that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. The progress of disadvantaged pupils has also improved rapidly.
- Teachers have successfully improved the quality of writing across the curriculum. This is a strength.
- Teachers know their pupils well. They plan learning activities to meet their needs. Teachers provide helpful and incisive feedback that pupils readily engage with to improve their work. This is a real strength of the school.
- Pupils are extremely proud to belong to Ryde Academy. They recognise the better progress they are making and are appreciative of their teachers and the leaders of the school.
- Pupils' behaviour has significantly improved and they are happy to be at school. Positive relationships underpin a strong community ethos.
- Governors understand their strategic monitoring role and provide effective challenge and support to school leaders.
- The sixth form requires improvement. Students in the sixth form achieve less well in academic subjects than they do in work-related courses, and are not always on suitable courses.
- There is a small amount of inconsistent teaching that does not routinely challenge pupils to think deeply, particularly the most able pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Reduce the remaining inconsistency in the quality of teaching by ensuring that all teachers challenge pupils to think deeply, particularly in mathematics.
- Further raise achievement across the school, particularly that of the most able pupils and boys.
- Develop a clear strategy that strengthens students' performance in academic subjects in the sixth form, and the advice offered about course suitability before they start.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal joined the school in 2015 and has initiated rapid improvement in all aspects of school life. She is an inspirational leader and pupils, staff and parents are unanimous in their appreciation and share her ambitious vision. They now all work together as a team to improve provision and outcomes for all pupils.
- The principal has successfully created a leadership team, including middle leaders, who have grown under her guidance to become strategic and determined in their mission to improve the school. The senior leaders have successfully identified talented individuals and coached them to become capable leaders, thereby increasing capacity to lead further improvements.
- Leaders at all levels have successfully motivated the staff, from a previously low ebb, to become engaged and excited about improving learning outcomes for their pupils. Staff training is regular and well received. The impact has been considerable in a short space of time as pupils' achievement is rapidly improving.
- Leaders have strengthened recruitment and retention and the turnover of staff has reduced considerably. The school is fully staffed.
- Leaders have strengthened accountability in the school through ensuring an effective performance management system, which is based on a robust evaluation of teachers' performance. All staff are clear about the expectations required of them to improve outcomes for pupils. Leaders inspire teachers to meet the pupils' learning needs by planning lessons which build on pupils' starting points well. There is high degree of confidence in the leaders of the school and staff feel supported.
- The school is inclusive and all staff understand the importance of providing extra support for pupils who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, the additional funding provided for these pupils is allocated carefully and is having clear impact, as the standards are rising for these key groups.
- The curriculum has been developed to meet the needs of the pupils better. The strong emphasis on literacy throughout the curriculum has had a positive impact on pupils' progress in all subjects. The emphasis on improving both English and mathematics has raised standards at key stage 4, which better prepares pupils for the next stages of their education. Leaders have reviewed the key stage 4 curriculum to ensure that the subjects chosen are best suited to the pupils' abilities.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities and trips enhance the curriculum and are well received by the pupils. Almost all pupils participate in some form of enrichment, including breakfast club, the school production 'Grease', dance, a variety of sports, extra help in subjects and clubs focused on speciality activities such as coding. Leaders analyse attendance by pupil group and ensure that they cater for all interests.
- The school effectively uses outside agencies to support the welfare of pupils, especially children who are looked after and disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders have good relationships with partner schools and other networks. For example, middle leaders are working with colleagues in successful schools, both locally and on

the mainland, to check the accuracy of their assessments. Senior leaders share their strategies for improvement with other improving schools. The academy trust, AET, to which the school belongs, also provides well-received training and support to staff and governors. All these networking opportunities have provided increased confidence among the school community and raised expectations.

- While the leadership of this school is strong, there has not been enough time to embed the improvements to consistently improve weaker areas, such as the sixth form.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a wide range of skills and have allocated roles according to their expertise. Challenge and support from AET are well received and aid governor development.
- Governors understand their role in providing effective support and challenge to school leaders to rapidly improve the school. They are actively involved in the school, visiting frequently to ensure that they fully understand leaders' actions and to witness the impact at first hand. Governors ask incisive questions of school leaders based on information about pupils' progress. Leaders respond well to governor challenge and adjust their plans accordingly, if appropriate.
- Governors have effectively monitored the spending of extra funding provided for disadvantaged pupils closely and recently commissioned a review of this spending by an independent consultancy to check their judgments.
- The spending of funds specifically allocated to ensure that Year 7 pupils catch up by improving their literacy and numeracy skills has been less well evaluated.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders' emphasis on pupils' well-being has ensured a culture of safeguarding which pervades the school community. Safeguarding systems and practices are secure. Statutory procedures for checking staff suitability to work with children are efficiently managed. Staff have good communication with parents should they be worried about a pupil. Parents commented positively about the support their children received and the school's level of communication. Pupils reported school staff deal effectively with any concern raised.
- Teachers foster pupils' understanding of keeping safe and discuss relevant issues such as online safety, extremism and radicalisation and child sexual exploitation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment have improved significantly, across the curriculum, since the last inspection. Leaders prioritised improvement in the quality of teaching and ensured that the best teaching was strengthened further. Weaker practice has almost been eradicated through effective performance management and training. Pupils recognise the improvement in the quality of teaching and reported that 'teaching is more thorough and clear'. Pupils also explained that teachers are consistent in following policies, which helps them learn well.

- Teachers know their pupils thoroughly. They strategically plan their lessons with their pupils' needs and starting points in mind. The activities they plan for all abilities generally provide suitable challenge and support to enable pupils to learn well and make good progress.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong. The environment is safe and supportive and pupils are encouraged to discuss to explore their ideas. Pupils enjoy their lessons and speak positively about their experiences.
- Teachers understand the requirements of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, they plan carefully for these pupils, often liaising with teaching assistants. Teaching assistants are clear about their role and consequently provide bespoke support for pupils.
- Teachers regularly check their pupils' learning and progress. Their planning enables regular review of learning through activities, including formal tests, which identify any learning gaps and address them effectively.
- Scrutiny of work showed that teachers' feedback to pupils about their learning is a strength of teaching practice. The new feedback policy is embedded across all subjects and years.
- Teachers have focused on strengthening pupils' literacy skills. Across all subjects and years, teachers have high expectations of standards of writing and provide guidance for pupils to improve if needed. For example, in GCSE preparation, pupils are helped to understand the requirements of exam questions and practise writing accurately and with depth about a topic. For younger pupils there are many examples of pupils developing and securing accuracy in their spelling and grammar.
- Pupils' reading skills are improving and in Years 7, 8 and 9 there is a daily programme of reading activities. Pupils' confidence in reading has improved and impacted on pupils' engagement with books positively, developing a rich culture of reading across the school.
- Homework has been strengthened this academic year. A variety of tasks are set, including questions from an online resource. Pupils use the before- and after-school club to provide opportunity for collaborative discussion about homework.
- In a minority of cases across the school, pupils are not provided with sufficiently challenging tasks. In particular, most-able pupils are not consistently challenged. In mathematics, pupils are not always required to think deeply enough about how to use and apply their previous knowledge.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders have ensured that there is an ethos of care and mutual respect, fostering a high degree of trust and honesty in the school. Pupils report a real sense of community and improved relationships. The adults are good role models.
- Pupils are supported well by their tutor and pastoral staff. They are confident that any

concerns they may have would be dealt with sensitively and effectively. The school ethos is caring and supportive.

- The responses to online questionnaires from staff and pupils, and those from parents who responded to Parent View, confirmed that a very large majority believe that pupils feel safe in the school.
- There is a strong emphasis on positive pupil relationships, and anti-bullying procedures are strong. The curriculum addresses tolerance and understanding of protected characteristics. Pupils show understanding and empathy towards others. Pupils report that very little bullying occurs, and this is supported by the school's records of bullying incidents.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural needs are met well and the curriculum strengthens their understanding of welfare. Curriculum subjects, 'My community', tutor time and assemblies provide a rich programme of personal development, citizenship and religious education. The school enables pupils to understand British values and consequently they are prepared well for life after school.
- A small number of pupils attend off-site provision including Island Learning College, WISE and Isle of Wight College. All providers reported very good liaison with the school, which supports these pupils well and enables them to make good progress.
- Pupils receive impartial and useful careers, information and guidance to support their next stage of development. Leaders have identified this is an area to strengthen further.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders have developed a clear policy to support high expectations for pupils' behaviour and provide guidance on rewards and sanctions. Pupils report that the policy is consistently applied and that behaviour has improved considerably in the last year. Staff and parents confirm that the management of behaviour has improved. The school is orderly and calm. Pupils behave well as they move about the school building.
- Pupils are proud of their school, are self-disciplined and have a good work ethic. They are keen to do well and show a respect for their learning. For example, most books are well cared for. Pupils have a smart appearance and a polite, courteous manner towards visitors.
- Pupils actively participate in lessons and readily engage with activities provided for them. Mostly they are conscientious and respond well to praise and any feedback for improvement. Pupils report that there is little disruption in lessons, and this was confirmed by lesson observation.
- The active school council has developed a strong student voice, which is used to accelerate improvements in the school. Pupils are appreciative of the opportunity to give their views and the way that the school's leaders listen to suggestions and take action, for example by improving provision for girls' sports.
- Through strategic actions and support of pupils, leaders have successfully improved attendance, which has risen rapidly from a low base. In 2015 to 2016 it rose

significantly and is now broadly average. Monitoring since September has shown a further improvement in attendance. Persistently absent pupil numbers have also decreased, but their attendance still remains below national average. The school is working effectively to ensure that pupils and parents have a clear understanding of the negative impact of absence on their progress.

- In a very small number of lessons there are some instances of low-level, off-task behaviour, usually related to work being less well matched to pupils' needs. Teachers usually quickly rectify any issues of poor behaviour, if it occurs.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders successfully raised standards in GCSE examinations in 2016 following a dip in results in 2015. In particular, the school successfully focused on improving the progress of pupils in English and mathematics, and provisional 2016 GCSE results indicate that the performance in these key subjects is in line with the national average. Most other subjects showed improvement, with particular strengths in physics, chemistry and biology, French and Spanish compared to national averages.
- While the GCSE performance of pupils has improved, boys achieved less well than girls. The school is focusing on diminishing this difference for current Year 11 and across other year groups. Evidence gained during this inspection shows improved performance from boys.
- Teachers track the progress of pupils rigorously and effectively. This enables any stall in learning to be rectified quickly. As a result, across most subjects and year groups pupils currently in the school are making consistently strong progress. Scrutiny of pupils' work, lesson observations and the school's information about pupils' progress confirmed this improving trend.
- Teachers plan carefully to meet pupils' needs. As a result, the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is close to that of their peers. Specific action is taken to support pupils with extra tuition closely matched to their learning needs. For example, when pupils join in Year 7 who have gaps in their literacy skills, the scheme designed to improve reading enables them to catch up quickly.
- Provisional results in 2016 showed that differences between the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and others pupils nationally from the same starting points are diminishing. Leaders have very clearly identified the need to rapidly increase the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Current pupils in the school who are identified as disadvantaged, including those who are most able, showed accelerated progress. This is because teachers closely monitor pupils' work and they provide focused, helpful feedback to improve their understanding.
- Pupils' improved performance in 2016 was not consistent across all subjects. For example, business, geography, history, information and communication technology and Italian were all below national averages. The overall progress measure in 2016 was below the national average. Evidence for pupils currently in the school shows that progress is now improving rapidly.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- In 2015, the 16 to 19 minimum standards were not met for academic qualifications. Students made better progress in vocational subjects. Provisional 2016 results show that progress in academic subjects is still well below progress in vocational subjects. However, the majority of students achieved the equivalent of three passes in their courses. Nearly two thirds of these grades were at A to C grades.
- The 16 to 19 study programme offers students the opportunity to choose from an increasingly wide choice of academic and vocational courses. This is possible because Ryde Academy shares its sixth form with its AET partner, Sandown Bay Academy. Students can follow courses based in both schools. During the first year of this arrangement, from September 2014 to August 2015, some students did not achieve as well as they could as they followed courses which were not well matched to their needs. As a result, progress in academic subjects was low and a significant number of students changed courses or left the sixth form at the end of Year 12.
- Leaders of the school and the shared sixth form have made some progress in providing better guidance to students when they chose subjects to study in the sixth form. However, the study programmes followed by current Year 12 students are not consistently well matched to the new qualifications framework.
- Leaders have yet to develop strategic monitoring of progress across the sixth form courses, which are less well developed than those in the main school. As a consequence, leaders are not clear on the progress of the current students and differences between groups of students. For example, leaders are not able to demonstrate the progress of disadvantaged students as a group.
- A local head of sixth form leads the day-to-day running of the Ryde sixth form. Leaders meet the pastoral needs of the students well. Students show a mature approach to their studies and have high expectations of themselves and each other. They are supported well by a core programme of personal development that develops students' employability skills.
- Students now benefit from stronger teaching, enabling them to make better progress, including in academic subjects. Teachers provide helpful feedback to students about their work, enabling them to ensure that their understanding matches the requirements of examination boards.
- Retention rates have been low in the past, due to students being provided with careers information, advice and guidance that were not well matched to their needs. There is now a greater focus on providing high-quality impartial careers advice and current students report they are happy with the courses they follow.
- Work experience forms an integral part of study programme for all Year 12 students, and is optional for Year 13 students. Staff and students report that this improves their employability skills. All students who left the school's sixth form in 2016 went on to further education or training. All who went on to university achieved places at their first choice.
- Pupils are choosing to stay at the sixth form in greater numbers, as their confidence in their school has increased. Leaders work in partnership with students to build the reputation of the Ryde Academy sixth form. Students are happy with their experience

and would like to celebrate their success and encourage more to join the sixth form.

- Students who have not yet achieved GCSE mathematics at grade C or above are supported effectively to improve their GCSE grades.

School details

Unique reference number	136753
Local authority	Isle of Wight
Inspection number	10019908

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	977
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	82
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Lesley Holmes
Principal	Joy Ballard
Telephone number	01983 567331
Website	www.rydeacademy.org
Email address	contactus@rydeacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	23–24 October 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The principal joined the school in September 2015, almost a year after the previous section 5 inspection.
- The academy is sponsored by the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET).
- This is an 11 to 18, average-sized, mixed comprehensive school. It has below average

numbers of minority ethnic groups and low numbers of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

- There are higher numbers of disadvantaged pupils compared to national averages.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative learning provisions including the Island Learning College, WISE and Isle of Wight College.
- Provisional results in 2016 show that the school meets the current government floor standards that set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 33 lessons across a range of year groups and subjects. Around a third of these lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' work in lessons and a further selection of pupils' books was chosen to scrutinise. Pupils' behaviour was observed in lessons, around the school and during breaks.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal and senior leaders, groups of middle leaders, teachers, governors and a member of AET. Inspectors took account of 109 responses to the confidential questionnaires received from staff. They also telephoned leaders of alternative provision.
- The views of pupils were taken into account and inspectors met with three groups of pupils, including sixth form students, and considered 28 responses to the pupil online questionnaire.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents, taking into account 95 responses to the online Ofsted parent questionnaire, Parent View, including 39 free-text responses.
- Inspectors evaluated key documents, including the school's strategic planning documents, minutes of meetings including governor discussions, reports of attendance and behaviour, and records related to pupils' safety and academic progress.

Inspection team

Sue Child, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Paul McKeown	Ofsted Inspector
Colin Lankester	Ofsted Inspector
Theresa Phillips	Her Majesty's Inspector

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