

# Ryecroft Primary Academy

Kesteven Close, Holmewood, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD4 0LS

## Inspection dates

28–29 November 2016

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Inadequate</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Inadequate</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Inadequate</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Inadequate</b>
Early years provision	<b>Inadequate</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Leaders, governors and the academy trust have failed to halt the significant decline in the school's overall effectiveness since its last inspection.
- Leaders and governors have failed to ensure that all staff are suitable to work in the school. This has placed pupils at an unacceptable level of risk.
- Similarly, leaders and governors have not made sure that all staff are knowledgeable about how to protect and help pupils and, crucially, how to report concerns about their safety or welfare.
- Over time, leaders and governors have not kept a close enough eye on important areas of the school's performance. Improvement work has had too little impact on the quality of teaching and the outcomes pupils achieve.
- Governors have failed to challenge leaders or hold them robustly to account.
- Leaders and governors have not made effective use of the pupil premium to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils in English and mathematics. As a result, this key group of pupils underachieve.
- Teachers have low expectations of what their pupils can achieve, especially the most able pupils. Too often, teachers set work which does not challenge pupils. As a result, the progress they make is inadequate.
- Pupils are not developing the skills, qualities or consistently positive attitudes they need to learn well and make fast progress. This is because, too often, the work they are set is either too easy, too hard or uninteresting.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not consistently well promoted.
- Early years provision is inadequate because safeguarding arrangements are ineffective.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are polite and respectful. They are proud of their school and they want to do well.
- Attendance is improving as a result of effective support for some pupils and their families.
- The most vulnerable pupils are well-supported through effective multidisciplinary working.
- In 2016, key stage 1 pupils achieved better outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

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

- As a matter of urgency, ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective by:
  - implementing systems for checking the suitability of staff to work in the school in line with Department for Education (DfE) requirements
  - implementing a robust monitoring system to guarantee that all required checks on staff are in place and the school's record of checks is complete and up to date
  - making sure that the school's safeguarding policies and procedures are up to date and all staff are knowledgeable about how to promote pupils' safety and welfare.
- Rapidly improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - leaders and governors have an accurate and comprehensive understanding of all aspects of the school's performance
  - improvement plans are sharply focused on the school's key weaknesses and are regularly and robustly reviewed and updated
  - performance management is used to drive improvement in teaching, accelerate pupils' progress, especially for disadvantaged pupils, and hold teachers and leaders more rigorously to account
  - additional funding, including the pupil premium, is used effectively and the impact of this funding on outcomes for pupils is closely monitored by senior leaders
  - pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced, especially their knowledge of the faiths and cultures of people living in modern Britain.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and increase the progress pupils make, especially disadvantaged pupils and the most able, by ensuring that:
  - all teachers have the strong subject knowledge needed to teach pupils well and assess their progress accurately
  - assessment information is used effectively by teachers to plan learning activities which are closely matched to pupils' interests and levels of ability.

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

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

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- The school's overall effectiveness has declined considerably since it was last inspected in April 2014. Over time, leaders, governors and the academy trust have not done enough to halt this decline. Despite recent improvements, many of which have been led by the executive headteacher, the school's overall effectiveness is inadequate.
- The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are inadequate. Checks on the suitability of staff to work in the school were incomplete at the start of the inspection. While this was remedied during the inspection, oversight of these crucially important checks by leaders and governors is weak. Their actions have placed pupils at an unacceptable level of risk.
- Importantly, leaders and governors have not ensured that the school's safeguarding policies and procedures are up to date or that all staff have the knowledge and skills they need to protect pupils from harm and promote their safety and welfare effectively. Some staff, for example, are unsure about how to report a concern about a member of staff. Equally, records of the use of physical restraint do not show that leaders and governors are assuring themselves that pupils' behaviour is always managed safely.
- In contrast, leaders and staff work effectively with other professionals and services to protect and help the school's most vulnerable pupils. Records show that timely and effective action is taken to secure help and support for pupils and their families in times of need.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that teachers have consistently high expectations of their pupils. While some teachers are ambitious for the pupils in their class and are determined for them to do well, leaders have not ensured that high expectations and high standards are the norm at Ryecroft Primary Academy. As a result, many pupils, especially the most able pupils and those who are disadvantaged, underachieve considerably.
- The executive headteacher has developed and implemented many new systems and ways of working. For example, leaders are now examining the impact of teachers' work more closely by looking at the work in pupils' books, checking teachers' assessments and observing their practice. This is helping leaders to build up a more accurate picture of this aspect of the school's work. However, there is little evidence of impact, at this stage, on the significant weaknesses and inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Similarly, the executive headteacher has introduced a new performance management system which has a sharper focus on improving teaching and securing better outcomes for pupils. Although it is promising, this recent improvement does not compensate for the historic failure of senior leaders and governors to hold their colleagues robustly to account.
- The school's improvement plans do not provide a strong starting point for securing further improvement. This is because they do not have measurable targets and clear timescales. This limits the ability of leaders and governors to check whether their actions are making the intended difference to the quality of education.

- Additional funding, including the pupil premium and the physical education (PE) and sports premium for primary schools, has not been used well enough to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils or to increase pupils' participation and attainment in PE and sport. Leaders and governors have had poor oversight of the school's use of this funding and, crucially, its impact on outcomes for pupils.
- Similarly, although special educational needs funding is used for a range of support and intervention programmes, leaders do not check whether pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making fast enough progress from their different starting points.
- Much has been done to improve the curriculum, to widen pupils' experiences and enrich their learning. This is, however, at an early stage. The development of pupils' reading skills and their interest in reading is at the heart of the school's new approach. Other aspects of the curriculum, including the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are, at this stage, less effective.
- Pupils, parents and staff told inspectors that instability in the school's leadership and management and inconsistency in the quality of teaching resulted in a significant decline in standards of behaviour and pupils' attitudes to learning. Some inconsistency in pupils' behaviour remains, and pupils do not always have the necessary positive attitudes to learning. Pupils and parents said that there has been a marked recent improvement in pupils' behaviour and inspectors agree. Understandably, many parents are less confident that their children are making up the ground they have lost in the last two years.
- It is recommended that the school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

### **Governance of the school**

- The governance of the school is not effective.
- Governors and the academy trust have not ensured that the school's safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.
- Governors have a weak understanding of many important areas of the school's work. Over time, governors and the academy trust have not challenged senior leaders robustly or effectively enough. As a result, improvement in the quality of education has either been too fragile or, crucially, too slow.
- Governors have not kept a close enough eye on the school's use of additional funding. Importantly, governors do not know whether the pupil premium, the PE and sports premium or special educational needs funding are making the necessary difference to outcomes for key groups of pupils.
- Governors have not ensured that all the school's policies are up to date or that the school complies with the DfE's guidance on the publication of information.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Leaders and governors have not made sure that staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding or that policies and procedures are clear, up to date and followed consistently. In contrast, support and help for vulnerable pupils, including those with

multi-agency plans, is well coordinated and effective. Reports show that leaders make a strong contribution to protecting and helping this group of pupils and their families.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Inadequate

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate because teachers do not make sure that learning activities are pitched at the right level for pupils. Too often, all pupils are set the same tasks and work at the same pace. This means that the most able pupils find the work too easy and lower-attaining pupils find the work too hard or rely too heavily on adult support. This does not help them to develop their confidence, knowledge and skills in English and mathematics, for example, and, as a result, too many pupils make inadequate progress in these key subjects.
- Importantly, too many teachers do not have the subject knowledge they need to teach pupils consistently well. In mathematics, some teachers are confused about how to teach basic concepts and, crucially, how to increase pupils' fluency and accuracy. They do not know how to help pupils to use and apply their mathematical knowledge to reason and solve problems. Sadly, teachers' expectations of what pupils should know, understand and be able to do in mathematics are simply too low.
- The quality and accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in reading, writing and mathematics are too variable. There is a wide gap between the standard of work in pupils' books and levels recorded in the school's tracking system. Senior leaders recognise this variability but, at this stage, cannot be assured that teachers' assessments give them an accurate picture of how well pupils are doing.
- Teachers are too slow to spot when pupils are struggling with their work or when they have completed a task easily and are ready to move on to something more demanding.
- Over time, reading has not been taught well and, consequently, pupils underachieve. Too many pupils, including the most able pupils, lack confidence in reading. The school's new approach to teaching basic reading skills is starting to accelerate the progress of some pupils, especially those who need help to catch up. There is, however, a long way to go to avoid successive groups of pupils leaving the school ill-prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Teachers are increasingly skilful in promoting good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. There are clear expectations for pupils' behaviour and conduct which are consistently and effectively reinforced by teachers. Pupils value the praise and rewards they receive and, increasingly, understand the consequence of not behaving well.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Inadequate

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. This is because safeguarding arrangements are ineffective and, as a result, pupils' safety and welfare are not promoted well enough.
- Pupils are developing more positive attitudes to learning. They wear their uniform proudly and look after the equipment and resources they use in school. Many pupils

spoke confidently to inspectors about their work and were keen for inspectors to see them 'at their best'. Sometimes, however, pupils' attitudes to their work are less positive. This is almost always the case when the work they are set is too hard, too easy or uninteresting.

- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and well supported in school. Pupils have a developing understanding of how to improve their health and fitness and how to stay safe. For example, Year 6 pupils spoke about how they keep safe when they are using computers or the internet. Although improving, pupils do not know enough about the different faiths and cultures of people living in modern Britain. This important aspect of their development is not consistently well promoted.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. In general, pupils are polite and respectful. Although occasionally boisterous, pupils play and learn cooperatively and conduct themselves increasingly well. In the main, they respond quickly and positively to the helpful direction and guidance they receive from adults.
- There is an improving trend in attendance. The attendance of all pupils and disadvantaged pupils has improved strongly in the last 12 months. Senior leaders and staff have worked proactively to achieve this improvement, for example by collecting pupils from home in the morning and by providing a wider range of before-school, lunchtime and after-school clubs and activities. As a result, the attendance of some pupils who have had previously high levels of absence has improved.
- Pupils report that there is some bullying in school. They do, however, trust the adults who care for them and are confident that it always 'gets sorted out'. Importantly, senior leaders do not monitor the frequency or type of bullying incidents closely enough. This limits their ability to support pupils effectively and reduce bullying further.

## Outcomes for pupils

### Inadequate

- In 2015 and in 2016, Year 6 pupils underachieved considerably in reading and mathematics. Too many pupils, especially the most able pupils, did not make the progress expected from their different starting points and, as a result, achieved well below the expected level by the end of Year 6.
- In 2016, disadvantaged Year 6 pupils made significantly slower progress than other pupils nationally. Similarly, boys made consistently slower progress in reading, writing and mathematics and their attainment was very low.
- The work in pupils' books shows that rates of progress in English, mathematics and a wide range of other subjects vary widely across Years 1 to 6. Too many pupils make slow progress and, as a result, are falling behind the standard expected for their age. Over time, the progress made by the most able pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not improving consistently or quickly enough.
- In 2015, Year 2 pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was below average. In 2016, a higher than average proportion of pupils achieved the expected standard in these subjects. Importantly, however, not enough pupils made more than the progress expected in reading and writing from their different starting points.

- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check declined significantly from 2014 to 2015. In 2016, a higher proportion of Year 1 pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieved the expected standard in phonics. Although this represents an important improvement, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard remained below the national average.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year declined significantly from 2014 to 2015 and there was a widening gap between outcomes for disadvantaged children and other children nationally. Early years outcomes improved in 2016 but, again, remain well below those achieved by other children in other schools nationally.

### Early years provision

### Inadequate

- The early years provision is inadequate because the school's safeguarding arrangements are ineffective and, as a result, the early years statutory welfare requirements are not met.
- In 2016, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development increased. It remained, however, below the national average, and the proportions of disadvantaged children, boys and children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieving this level also remained low. Too many children do not make strong progress from their starting points.
- Although leaders have an increasingly accurate picture of the effectiveness of the early years provision, historic weaknesses have not been tackled quickly enough and, as a result, too many children reach the end of the Reception Year without the important skills they need to be successful in Year 1.
- Leaders and staff have a secure understanding of how to promote children's learning and development. They do not, however, have high enough expectations, especially for the most able children and those who are disadvantaged. Crucially, they do not use assessment information well enough to identify challenging next steps for children. As a result, children's outcomes are not improving quickly enough.
- Children's personal development and behaviour are well promoted. As a result, they are proud of their school and want to do well. Children spoke enthusiastically to inspectors about their teachers and were keen to 'show off' their work.
- The flexible approach to supporting the learning and development of two-year-old children is effective. The youngest children quickly develop their communication and language skills through carefully structured and well-supported learning opportunities.
- Parents told inspectors that they value the close partnership between home and school. Many said that they are kept up to date about their child's progress and that they are encouraged and helped to support their learning at home.

## School details

Unique reference number	138675
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	10020453

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	337
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Acting chair	David Brown
Headteacher	Kirsty McConochie
Telephone number	01274 683128
Website	<a href="http://www.ryecroftacademy.org">www.ryecroftacademy.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@ryecroftacademy.co.uk">office@ryecroftacademy.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	8–9 April 2014

## Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the most recent key stage 2 results on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about pupil premium, PE and sport premium for primary schools, provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the structure and responsibilities of the governing body and its committees.
- Ryecroft is an average-sized primary academy which is sponsored by the Northern Education Trust.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and approximately one quarter are from minority ethnic groups. Almost one fifth of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium is much higher than that found nationally.



- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is much higher than the national average.
- In 2015, the school met the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning on both days of the inspection. They also spoke to pupils and examined the work in their books. Several lessons were visited jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, senior and middle leaders, one governor and two representatives from the Northern Education Trust.
- Inspectors spoke informally to parents at the start and end of the school day. There were no responses recorded on Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors examined documents relating to governance, self-evaluation, school improvement planning, pupils' progress, attendance, behaviour, the curriculum and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Nick Whittaker, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Beverly Clubley	Ofsted Inspector
Elaine Watson	Ofsted Inspector

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