

# Rawlins Academy

Loughborough Road, Quorn, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE12 8DY

## Inspection dates

14–15 March 2017

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders have worked hard to tackle the issues raised at the last inspection. There have been many improvements.
- Leaders and governors are determined that all pupils will achieve well and succeed at school. They are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- There is a culture of care, openness, honesty and respect at the school. The values set out in 'The Rawlins Way' underpin the ethos of the whole school.
- Pupils make good progress across a range of subjects and in all current year groups.
- The differences between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and others nationally are diminishing rapidly.
- Teaching is now good and some is outstanding. Pupils benefit from teachers with strong subject knowledge.
- There are excellent relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils know that there is always someone they can talk to if they have a worry or concern.
- Safeguarding procedures are robust. The school's work to support pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site is good. Pupils are polite, courteous and helpful.
- Attendance has improved because the school has implemented a range of strategies to help pupils to attend regularly.
- The curriculum is regularly reviewed and adapted to meet the needs of pupils. It supports pupils' aspirations and ambitions.
- Extra-curricular activities are wide ranging and make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.
- The governing body makes a significant and highly effective contribution to school improvement.
- The 16 to 19 study programmes are outstanding. Students make outstanding progress in a range of subjects.
- A few teachers do not implement the school's planning and feedback systems with the rigour that is required to deepen pupils' understanding and ensure good progress.
- The training and development offered to teachers and leaders of subjects are very general and not yet systematic enough.
- Teachers do not all use the information about the starting point of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to ensure that they make good progress.

## Full report

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

- Develop the expertise of teachers and leaders by:
  - providing comprehensive training for leaders of subjects and staff new to leadership roles so that they can exercise their responsibilities more effectively in bringing about improvement and raising standards
  - ensuring that the new programme of whole-school training and development is creative, dynamic and responsive to staff needs.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - ensuring that all teachers implement fully the effective practice in planning that exists in most areas of the school
  - making sure that all teachers have a clear idea of the starting points of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that they are able to provide activities that result in these pupils making good or better progress.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- After the last inspection, leaders worked with a sense of urgency to tackle the issues raised. There have been many changes in both leadership and governance since that time and, as a result, considerable improvement has taken place.
- The ethos of ambition and aspiration for all pupils is clearly noticeable throughout the school. Leaders and governors spoke warmly of the school and their intention that all pupils will do well and succeed.
- The values embodied in 'The Rawlins Way' underpin everything that the school does. Leaders have created a culture of honesty, tolerance, respect and openness that is articulated by both staff and pupils. All staff consistently model these values in their day-to-day work.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school. They know its strengths and weaknesses and are tenacious in their drive to tackle any shortcomings. Improvement plans are robust and appropriate and regularly monitored by leaders and the governing body.
- The system to manage the performance of teachers is used effectively to tackle any weaknesses in teaching. Decisions made on whether teachers should receive pay increases are based on performance information and observations of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Teachers are set two ambitious targets each year based on pupils' progress.
- The curriculum offers a wide range of opportunities. Leaders regularly review it to ensure that pupils of all abilities can gain access to appropriate courses. The curriculum offers challenge throughout. It makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development, both in personal development lessons and across a range of subjects.
- There is a very wide range of extra-curricular activities ranging from robotics to cheerleading. They make a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. Participation rates are high, including for disadvantaged pupils.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength. The way each subject includes this area in its teaching is comprehensively mapped. Teachers articulated clearly how their subject enhances pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The curriculum is supported by a range of trips, visits, charity activities and work in the local community. A stunning example of the development of pupils' spirituality was observed in an assembly on how the money raised for 'Comic Relief' is spent. After a video clip was shown about hardship in an African country, pupils, unasked, observed a long period of deep and reflective silence.
- The school holds parents' evenings every three weeks and these are open to any parent who wishes to discuss their child's progress. Parents speak highly of the school. In the online survey, Parent View, there were a large number of positive comments including, 'the school is improving day by day'.
- The positive school culture ensures that all pupils feel safe. They are clear that they

can always talk to an adult if they have a worry or a concern about themselves or one of their friends. Vulnerable pupils are well supported. Inspectors heard no derogatory language during the inspection.

- The new leaders who oversee the school's work with disadvantaged pupils and with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have already put well-judged plans in place to accelerate the progress of these pupils. The new leader of the school's unit for pupils who have moderate learning difficulties is already having a positive impact. The additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used well.
- Senior leaders use additional funding well to support those pupils in Year 7 who arrive at the school behind in their communication and mathematics skills. As a result, these pupils make good progress in their learning.
- Most subject leaders are relatively new to their posts. They have a clear understanding of assessment information and good ideas for making sure that they continue to raise standards in their subjects. The school does not currently offer specific training to help new leaders develop in their roles.
- The training and development of teachers have, rightly, been focused on ensuring that teachers have a common approach to their classroom practice, such as having 'The Big Question' at the start of every lesson. The school's provision for training and development is under new leadership, and a new whole-school programme is in its infancy. This programme links more closely to the management of teachers' performance and the individual needs of teachers at various career stages.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governance was formally reviewed following the last inspection, and a number of new governors joined the board. Governors have a range of experience and the skills that enable the governing body rigorously to hold the principal and other leaders to account.
- Governors are very committed to the school. They know the school well, are frequent visitors and make regular checks on the school's work. They each have specific areas that they oversee, and they take their responsibilities very seriously. They will accept nothing but the best for the pupils at the school. Governors have had a significant impact on recent school improvement.
- The governing body makes sure that no one is rewarded for poor performance. They understand information about pupils' attainment and progress and ask incisive questions of leaders. Teachers who do not meet targets related to pupils' progress do not receive pay increases.
- The finances of the school have been very well managed by the governing body following historic issues related to the budget. The school is now in a position to recruit new staff for the first time in many years.
- Safeguarding is a high priority. All governors undertake regular safeguarding training and are trained in the national 'prevent' strategy. A governor does regular safeguarding checks at the school, and safeguarding is a standing item in meetings of the governing body.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is effective, and there is a strong culture of safeguarding among staff at the school. Staff follow the school's clear procedures if they have a concern. Pupils talk openly about the issues associated with radicalisation and extremism, because these issues have been covered well in the curriculum.
- Senior leaders work closely with parents and local agencies when they have a concern about a pupil's welfare. In so doing, senior leaders are tenacious in ensuring that pupils receive the support that they need.
- Pupils are unanimous in their view that they are safe and well cared for. They know that there are always staff they can talk to if they are worried about something.
- Relationships between staff and students are strong. Pupils are clear that staff know them well and try to help them if they have any problems.
- All staff receive appropriate and regular training, and a detailed tracking system is in place for staff to log and follow up any safeguarding concerns.
- Pupils are taught well how to keep themselves safe, including online and in relation to extremism and radicalisation.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Current pupils achieve well, because they benefit from good and sometimes outstanding teaching.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge, and their enthusiasm for their subjects means that lessons are interesting. Activities engage pupils, and they show enjoyment in their learning. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning contribute to their good progress.
- Time is used well in lessons, and teachers move learning on quickly so that pupils make good progress.
- Teachers set homework regularly and it is completed well by pupils.
- The strong relationships between staff and pupils and among pupils mean that pupils work effectively on their own, in small groups or as a whole class. This helps them to make good progress.
- Good teaching of literacy and numeracy skills, both in English and mathematics lessons and in other subjects, is contributing to pupils' good progress.
- Pupils are not afraid of making mistakes. They see it as part of learning and show perseverance, even when they are finding work difficult.
- The majority of parents feel that their child is taught well. Parents receive reports on their child's progress every 10 weeks. The three-weekly open parents' evenings give parents regular contact with the school to discuss their child's progress.
- The support of other adults in the classroom is helpful to ensure that pupils who are struggling with their learning receive appropriate help.

- A common approach to planning each lesson is used throughout the school. 'The Big Question' helps pupils think deeply about their learning. Three learning objectives are planned, so that pupils of all abilities can succeed and be challenged to achieve above expectations. Some teachers do not always link these objectives together, so it is not clear how pupils' learning will develop.
- Pupils receive regular very effective verbal feedback from teachers in lessons. Inspectors saw much evidence of good-quality written feedback, to which pupils responded at length. A few teachers do not have the same consistently high expectations of pupils' responses to their feedback. This means that some pupils do not make the rapid progress that is now characteristic of the school.
- Inspectors saw evidence of good and outstanding teaching of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, both in the main school and in the unit for pupils who have moderate learning difficulties. Teachers know these pupils well, and plan work carefully so that they can make good progress. In some lessons, however, teachers do not take sufficient account of these pupils' starting points when they plan learning activities. On these occasions, this limits the progress that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school is a very inclusive environment, where everyone is valued as an individual and for who they are. Pupils feel very safe and well supported, and know that the school places a high priority on teaching them to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils are universally proud of the school. They recognise the efforts that teachers and other staff make to ensure that the pupils make good progress. Pupils appreciate all of the extra help that they get with their work if they need it. This contributes to their positive attitudes to learning.
- The personal development curriculum covers a wide range of topics including keeping safe and healthy, and mental health and well-being. It also covers topics centred on relationships, diversity and careers. This curriculum prepares pupils well for life after they leave school.
- The school is very welcoming. Pupils report that bullying and name-calling are extremely rare. They are unequivocal in their view that, if any does happen, staff deal with it swiftly and effectively.
- Pupils take part in a number of charity fund-raising events throughout the year, as well as undertaking work in the community and taking advantage of leadership opportunities within the school. These activities make a positive contribution to their personal development.
- The personal development of the very few pupils who receive their education elsewhere is well supported. Their attendance and progress are monitored rigorously.

- Children who are looked after benefit from good support in school and effective liaison with outside agencies.
- The majority of parents agree that their child is happy and safe at school.
- The school places a high priority on good-quality careers education, and this is a focus in all year groups. This means that pupils are fully prepared for their next stage of education, training or employment.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy school. They are punctual to school and to lessons. They arrive at school ready and eager to learn.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is consistently good. Pupils get on well together and are respectful of everyone's backgrounds and differences. They are polite, courteous and well mannered.
- Good relationships contribute to a very welcoming and friendly atmosphere at the school.
- Pupils look smart in their school uniforms. They respect the school buildings and site, and there is almost no litter.
- Attendance overall has improved each year and is now in line with national averages. The number of pupils who are regularly absent from school is reducing. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is also improving.
- The numbers of pupils who have been excluded from school for a short period of time have reduced significantly each year. This is because staff at the school have worked hard to identify early those pupils who might be at risk of exclusion. They have then worked with these pupils and their families to ensure that they remain in school.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Over recent years, pupils have joined the school at various points in their education. Almost all pupils in last year's Year 11 joined the school in Year 10. In so doing, they arrived with attainment and skills below those expected for their age. Results in 2016 show that pupils made good progress during the time that they attended the school. Pupils in the current Year 11 joined the school in one of Years 9, 10 or 11. Leaders are rightly cautious about predicting their GCSE results this year, but the school's tracking data shows that this group are on track to make good progress from their starting points on entry to the school.
- Pupils who entered the school in Year 7, often with below-average starting points, are making good progress across a range of subjects and in all year groups. Current pupils, especially low-ability pupils, are making faster progress than previously. Progress in mathematics is also accelerating.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. The differences in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally are diminishing and, in Year 7, are almost

eradicated. This is because the progress of these pupils is tracked rigorously and support is put in place to ensure that they do not fall behind. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is a key focus for all teachers. In Year 11, the most able disadvantaged pupils are making progress at the same rate as their peers in English and close to that of their peers in mathematics.

- Pupils who enter Year 7 with attainment that is below average in English and mathematics receive extra help so that they catch up. This ensures that they make good progress.
- The most able pupils are expected to aim routinely for the 'gold' objective present in every lesson. There are also extra 'challenges' for the most able pupils, and they are keen to take these on. This is ensuring that they make good progress.
- Pupils read widely and often. The library is very well used, and all pupils in Years 7 and 8 have a library book with them at all times. Pupils are keen to read silently and out loud, and show good skills for working out unfamiliar words.
- A very small number of pupils receive their education elsewhere. They are on appropriate courses for their individual needs and are making good progress.
- There is a sustained improvement in attainment from Years 7 to 11. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education, employment or training. The number of pupils who do not go into further education, employment or training after school is very low.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are now making faster progress from their relative starting points. They make rapid gains when teachers know them well and use information on their starting points to plan for their learning. Some teachers do not use the information that they have to plan appropriately to meet these pupils' needs.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

## Outstanding

- New leadership of the 16 to 19 study programmes has galvanised staff and students alike into action. High expectations and aspirations for all students have led to rising standards over the last three years. Attainment and progress in 2016 were above average in a wide range of subjects and courses.
- The curriculum is very broad. Students have a very wide range of academic and vocational subjects to choose from. This means that students are fully engaged with their courses and achieve highly. The curriculum is regularly reviewed to ensure that there is an appropriate level of challenge for each intake.
- Students who take English and mathematics GCSE as part of their study programmes achieve well.
- The quality of advice and guidance offered to students is outstanding. Careers advice is available at all times, as is support to fill in university application forms. As a result, all students go on to further education, employment or training after they leave the sixth form.
- The teaching in the sixth form is some of the best in the school. Lessons are typified by high levels of challenge, excellent questioning, and an expectation that students will

reflect on how they can do better after receiving high-quality feedback. This is helping students to excel.

- Students consistently show highly positive attitudes to learning. Attendance rates are high, and students are punctual to lessons. They take part in a range of extra activities to develop their leadership and employability skills. They help younger pupils with reading and act as role models. All students experience high-quality work experience placements. They take part in regular sessions to explore the challenges facing young adults in British society.
- Students feel well supported and coached by teachers and other staff. They articulate the high expectations of the sixth form and appreciate the very high level of personalised support they have.
- Behaviour in the sixth form is exemplary. Students are confident and self-assured.
- Students make sustained and substantial progress from their starting points in the sixth form, and most swiftly move on to higher levels of study. Retention rates are high, and the sixth form is a popular choice for students who did not attend the school previously. Students make above-average progress in most subjects.

## School details

Unique reference number	137640
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10023085

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	1409
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	322
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Fiona Hollas
Principal	Callum Orr
Telephone number	01509 622 800
Website	<a href="http://www.rawlinsacademy.org.uk">www.rawlinsacademy.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:enquiries@rawlinsacademy.org.uk">enquiries@rawlinsacademy.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	10–11 December 2014

## Information about this school

- The school changed from an age range of 14 to 18 to an 11 to 18 secondary school in 2013. It is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The Rawlins Academy Trust forms the governing body of the school, which is also known as the board.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above average.

- The school has a specialist provision for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. There are currently 30 pupils using this provision, all of whom are on the school's roll.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- A very small number of pupils receive their education full time through the Loughborough Inclusion Partnership and the Autism Outreach Service.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 11.
- The 16–19 study programmes meet the minimum standards set by the government.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of information on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about performance information at the end of key stage 4 and the sixth form, and about some parts of the information relating to the pupil premium.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across subjects and year groups in 42 lessons and listened to pupils read. A number of observations were carried out jointly with a senior leader.
- The inspection team looked closely at pupils' work in a sample of books across a range of subjects and in all year groups. They also looked at pupils' books in lessons.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, leaders in charge of subjects and other aspects of the school's work, teachers and governors. A meeting was held with a consultant who has been working with the school.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils from all year groups in meetings, informally around the school and in lessons.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents. These included senior leaders' evaluations of the school's performance, improvement plans, performance management documentation, records of training and professional development, and information on pupils' attainment, progress, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the 168 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. They took account of the 105 responses to the online questionnaire for pupils and the 60 responses to the online questionnaire for staff.

## Inspection team

Denise Newsome, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Javier Sanchez-Garcia	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Staley	Ofsted Inspector
Matthew Sammy	Ofsted Inspector
Jo Ward	Ofsted Inspector

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