

Rawmarsh Community School

Monkwood Road, Rawmarsh, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S62 7GA

Inspection dates

4–5 May 2017

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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This is a good school

- The headteacher's determined leadership has secured improvements across the school's work since becoming an academy in August 2014.
- Pupils' progress from low starting points on entry to the end of Year 11 has risen from below average to above average overall, and in a range of subjects over that time. This is also the case for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils' attainment has also risen from below to above that found nationally in English and mathematics.
- Detailed checks on the school's work means that the headteacher, leaders and governors have a clear understanding of what is working well and what needs to be better. Timely action is taken to tackle weaker areas. For example, the quality of teaching has improved well.
- Teachers use regular assessments of pupils' work to plan activities or extra interventions that are usually matched well to pupils' varying starting points. Consequently, pupils make generally good progress in their learning across an increasingly broad range of subjects
- While leaders check pupils' progress from regular tests, a few do not also check if pupils' workbooks confirm similar rates of progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the care and extra support they receive. Consequently, the additional funding for these pupils is used well.
- Leaders know that modern foreign languages and core science remain weaker areas of the curriculum. They are currently working with staff to improve matters and to ensure all teaching is as good as the best. Action is also being taken to ensure the most able pupils make consistently strong progress.
- There has been good improvement in pupils' behaviour, attendance and attitudes to learning. Pupils attend regularly, arrive at lessons ready to learn and settle down quickly.
- Pupils are polite and friendly. They usually behave well in class and as they move around the sprawling school site. They report they are safe and learn how to keep themselves safe.
- Promotion of pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. The broad curriculum, extra-curricular opportunities, visitors and visits out of school are raising pupils' aspirations and broadening their horizons well. Pupils are prepared well for their next steps and virtually all move on to their chosen destinations.
- Governors and the leaders of the trust share the headteacher's vision to ensure that pupils get the very best deal possible. They challenge and support leaders effectively in their drive to realise the vision.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Iron out the remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching so that teachers ensure that all pupils, including the most able, make consistently rapid progress, particularly in modern foreign languages and core science by:
 - making sure activities planned in lessons challenge the most able pupils sufficiently and meet the needs of the least able pupils consistently
 - using evidence of pupils' learning in books as well as assessment information to identify pupils' current achievements and learning needs so that pupils' next steps can be planned accurately.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has striven successfully to develop an atmosphere where staff and pupils have increasingly high expectations of themselves and each other. Supported by governors, school leaders and leaders of the trust, she has developed a culture in which, as one pupil reported, 'it's cool to learn'. Pupils say that this was certainly not the case a few years ago. Such a transformation is contributing to pupils' generally good progress in their learning, good behaviour, improved attendance and positive attitudes in class.
- Together with strong pastoral support, this 'can do' approach is building pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Pupils want to attend and are willing to learn. Attendance rates have improved and are average. Last year, attendance rates for the few pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities with an education, health and care plan were too low. Strong partnerships with parents and timely support to pupils and families in times of need have improved rates well.
- The special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) secure highly individualised support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Careful identification of need ensures that strategies are put in place quickly to tackle any barriers pupils may face. They are included in the life of the school fully and are helped to achieve well from their starting points.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas that need to improve. For example, they are aware that despite some improvement, pupils' achievements in modern foreign languages are not good enough. While pupils taking separate science subjects usually make good progress from their starting points, progress in core science is often steady rather than good. Improvement plans are being implemented effectively to tackle these issues.
- Senior and middle leaders are involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning and progress. Targeted training and bespoke coaching and development activities address any weaknesses identified. As a result, the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress is continuing to improve effectively.
- Leaders review pupils' workbooks and regular test results to check how well pupils are doing. Such work, together with regular 'summit meetings' between leaders and staff, identifies pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Timely additional support in lessons, or through specific small group or one-to-one activities, is then provided to help pupils catch up to where they should be. Occasionally, leaders do not check if work in pupils' workbooks corresponds to their test outcomes, or if activities planned by teachers take account of pupils' current skills identified in their workbooks. As a result, work is sometimes too easy for the most able pupils or too hard for lower-ability pupils.
- The broad curriculum provides a good balance of subjects to meet pupils' needs and interests. Pupils benefit from opportunities to broaden their horizons, raise their aspirations and increase their enjoyment of school through the wide range of activities within and the beyond school day. These, together with social sciences (personal, social, citizenship and health education) and assemblies, contribute successfully to the development of the personal qualities pupils need to be active and respectful citizens in

school, and in the local and wider community. It also supports pupils' good understanding of how to stay safe and their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- The school uses the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils well. In 2016, Year 11 disadvantaged pupils' progress from their starting points into school was above that of other pupils nationally, particularly in English, mathematics and humanities. Reviews of learning, pupils' books and the detailed assessment information leaders gather about disadvantaged pupils show that current rates of progress are generally similar to that of other pupils in their classes. Recent work to diminish the difference between middle-ability disadvantaged pupils and other pupils is having the desired effect.
- The additional Year 7 catch-up fund for literacy and numeracy is also used effectively. Very detailed analyses of carefully planned one-to-one sessions or small group work show that those in interventions have made rapid progress in their reading, writing and number this year. A very small number of pupils attend alternative providers for some sessions during the school week. Leaders visit providers regularly to make careful checks on pupils' safety, progress, attendance and behaviour.
- Improvements in the way leaders' manage teachers' performance are contributing to the improvements in the quality of teaching and in pupils' learning and progress across the school. Teachers benefit from partnership working with other staff in the Wickersley Multi-Academy Trust. Strong practitioners in the trust often teach in Rawmarsh. This helps to utilise expertise and share good practice. Newly qualified teachers feel well supported and are helped to improve their effectiveness through such support and the additional training and coaching they are afforded.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. Members of the governing body and leaders of the trust share the headteacher's ambition. They are focused resolutely on driving continued improvements in the effectiveness of the school's work and on pupils' achievements, progress, attendance and well-being.
- Many governors have been appointed recently. They have embraced their roles enthusiastically. Governors have developed and implemented quickly their own action plan to develop their skills further.
- Governors and leaders of the trust have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. This is because of the regular communication with school leaders, visits and the headteacher's detailed reports. Reports identify clearly leaders' progress towards improvements identified in their action plans and the progress pupils and groups of pupils are making towards their end of year targets across the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff are well trained, well informed and vigilant in identifying and reporting any concern to the designated safeguarding lead. This is despite the safeguarding policy on the school's website, at the time of the inspection, not meeting the Department for Education's requirements fully.
- Leaders have a good understanding of risks to pupils in their local community because they keep their ears to the ground and talk regularly with pupils about risks. Staff have

a good understanding of the risks from extremism and their statutory roles regarding female genital mutilation. Local intelligence indicates these risks are not substantial at the moment. Currently, leaders are aware of escalating risks to pupils' safety from bullying behaviour on social media. Training and support to pupils keeps them alert to such dangers.

- Strong partnerships and regular meetings with local authority early help teams, local police, social services and youth offending services enable leaders to share concerns quickly. This means the right support can be 'wrapped' around the pupils and their families in a timely way.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment have improved in the past three years because of the strategies developed to build teachers' skills and competencies through training, development activities and improved appraisal procedures. As a result, pupils' progress has also improved and they generally make good progress in their learning over time.
- The teaching of English language has improved well and, along with teaching in the humanities and arts subjects, is generally a strength of the school. For example, in the creative subjects, pupils enjoy their learning and want to achieve and deepen their learning and understanding. High-quality artwork adorns spaces across the school. Leaders know that there is still some variation in the quality of teaching in a few subjects, for example in some core science and in modern foreign languages where pupils' progress is not as strong. They are working closely with staff to ensure that all teaching is as good as the best.
- Lessons are usually typified by pupils who come to lessons promptly and ready to learn. Attitudes to learning are positive. Pupils are polite and friendly and can work successfully either independently or in groups.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are taught well because teachers have a detailed understanding of their learning needs. Teaching assistants are often well deployed and support and challenge pupils' learning sensitively and effectively. The SENCos keep a close eye on how well pupils are doing and make sure that teachers are responding to their needs.
- Pupils at risk of falling behind are identified quickly through the regular assessment of their learning. Intervention activities or additional targeted work in class is then quickly put in place. In one-to-one sessions or small group work, staff are skilled in open questioning. They ensure that pupils think about what they are learning and what they need to do next in a non-threatening way. This builds pupils' confidence to 'have a go' and succeed.
- The literacy and numeracy Year 7 catch-up fund is used effectively. Regular additional lessons are provided for pupils who start school with below average skills and abilities in these subjects. Careful tracking of pupils' learning means that once they have caught up well, support ceases. Numbers remaining in these lessons reduces well over time.
- As a result of improvements in the quality of teaching, the effective interventions and additional support provided when needed, there is generally little difference currently in the progress that disadvantaged and other pupils make in their learning. However,

occasions remain where the most able pupils and lower-ability pupils do not make strong enough progress. This usually happens when the detailed assessments that teachers now have about their pupils' learning are not used well enough to plan lessons that deepen knowledge and understanding from pupils' current starting points. Occasionally, teachers rely on test results to plan next steps and not evidence from pupils' understanding in their workbooks. This is as a result of teachers not following the school's marking policy consistently and subject leaders not always challenging this.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is good. Attitudes to learning have been transformed. Leaders have engendered a culture where pupils report, 'it's now cool to learn and achieve rather than cool to be bad'. This has had a positive impact on most pupils' sense of belonging to the school, their usually positive attitudes to learning in class and the higher aspirations most have for their futures.
- Work to keep pupils safe in school and to understand how to stay safe in risky situations is strong. Pupils say they feel safe and well supported in times of need from any adult. The personal, social, health education and citizenship curriculum (social studies) and assemblies are responsive to local and national requirements. Pupils are taught well to understand risks, including current local risks, from sexting, grooming, sexual exploitation, drugs (such as steroid use) and anti-social behaviour. There is a strong focus on healthy eating by using positive measures to promote good health.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including homophobic bullying. The school adopts a zero-tolerance policy towards derogatory or aggressive language. Pupils say bullying does occur occasionally, and school records show this to be the case. However, pupils also report that staff deal with issues promptly. Pupils' concerns about bullying on social media in their community are brought into school and staff, particularly pastoral staff, work with them to tackle issues.
- Although most pupils are of White British heritage, significant work is undertaken to ensure that pupils have a good understanding of faiths and cultures other than their own. The work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is embedded effectively across the curriculum. This is also the case for their work to ensure that pupils develop the qualities to become active citizens in modern Britain.
- Pupils are provided with good-quality and appropriate independent careers advice and guidance. They have access to a wide range of providers such as sixth form and further education providers. Visits from representatives of professions and visits to local universities help to raise their aspirations. Mentoring schemes in school also help to tackle barriers and raise aspirations successfully. As a result, high proportions of pupils move onto, and sustain, their chosen destinations.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This was evident in classes and as pupils moved around the school site throughout the day. Older pupils report how much behaviour has improved since their early times in school. Pupils are polite and friendly and readily

talked to inspectors about their work and what they think about the school and their learning.

- Pupils are now willing to come to school. Attendance rates have improved and are currently average. They were above average last year. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is below average. Strong pastoral support and actions such as a nine o'clock follow-up for any vulnerable pupil who does not turn up at school is contributing to the improved attendance rates.
- Teachers' strategies to manage behaviour are consistent. Pupils have developed a more mature approach and take more responsibility for their own behaviour. Consequently, lessons are usually typified by a calm and productive atmosphere. Any misbehaviour is tackled quickly.
- Focused and supportive work is undertaken with pupils at risk of exclusion. As a result of improvements over time, the proportion of pupils who are temporarily excluded has reduced well. Alternative provision, often work-related opportunities, is offered to a very small number of pupils. However, pupils attend for a small number of sessions during the week and spend most of their time in school. Leaders visit providers regularly and check pupils' safety, progress, attendance and behaviour carefully.
- Around a quarter of the very small proportion of parents (2.7%) who responded to the inspection questionnaire consider that behaviour is not good and incidents of poor behaviour are not dealt with well. While this may have been an issue three years ago, it is no longer typically the case. Leaders know that congestion in the toilets is a concern to some pupils and they are taking action currently to tackle this.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The attainment and progress of pupils has risen well in the past three years. The proportion of Year 11 pupils gaining a grade A* to C in English and mathematics GCSE examinations has risen from below average to above average in that time.
- Pupils' progress from their often low starting points has risen similarly and in 2016 was also above that found nationally. This was particularly the case in English, mathematics and humanities and for low- and middle-ability pupils. Disadvantaged pupils also made good progress, especially in mathematics and humanities. As with other most-able pupils, some most-able disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- Observations of learning, reviews of pupils' work and workbooks, alongside the regular assessment information teachers have about each pupil's learning, show that progress is at least steady and often good from their low starting points into school. For example, achievement in English and mathematics in Year 7 and Year 8 is improving well and pupils are well on the way to achieving their challenging end-of-year targets.
- One-to-one support, small group work and targeted activities have ensured that there is little discernible difference between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school. This is because of the effective use of pupil premium funding and improvements in leaders' tracking of the individual interventions that are carried out.
- Strong pastoral care, targeted actions and good support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that they make at least similar progress

to that of their peers from their starting points.

- Pupils achieve well in art and design, English language, business studies, geography, history and information and communication technology. Achievement in modern foreign languages and core science, particularly for those of higher ability and for disadvantaged pupils, is not good enough. Leaders are taking action to tackle these weaknesses and although improving, progress in these subjects still lags behind that of many other subjects.
- Leaders know there is still some work to do to ensure that all higher-ability pupils achieve their best and that work for some low-ability pupils is not pitched well enough to meet their individual needs. Leaders are currently taking action to iron out these remaining inconsistencies.
- Pupils develop their reading skills effectively. Targeted phonic activities are provided for any pupil who is struggling to read fluently. The headteacher has invested a significant amount of funding to improve the range of library books. Plans are in place to ensure that pupils have opportunities to read more regularly during the school day.

School details

Unique reference number	140553
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	10031945

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	856
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Judy Odale
Headteacher	Helen O'Brien
Chief executive officer	David Hudson OBE
Telephone number	01709 710 672
Website	www.rawmarsh.org/
Email address	rccsmail@rawmarsh.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the child protection policy on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Rawmarsh is a smaller-than-average-sized secondary school, although the number on roll has increased over the past two years.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- An above-average proportion of pupils have been identified by the school as requiring

additional support for their special educational needs and/or disability. A slightly below-average proportion of these pupils has an education, health and care plan.

- The school became part of Wickersley Partnership Trust, a multi-academy trust, in August 2014. The predecessor school was last inspected in May 2014 and was judged to require improvement. It had been placed in special measures 15 months previously.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision for part of the week. They still attend Rawmarsh for the bulk of their education. The providers include: Get Sorted Academy, Dearne Valley College, the Rowan Centre and Wingfield Comprehensive School.
- In 2016, the school met the government's floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across the school. Inspectors visited a number of lessons jointly with senior leaders. They reviewed pupils’ workbooks during lessons and also heard a number of pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, newly qualified teachers and a group of staff. Inspectors also met the chief executive of Wickersley Partnership Trust.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils in lessons and around the school over the two days of the inspection. They also spoke to formally to three groups of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the views made by 23 parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire and the written text comments made by 18 parents. They also considered the school’s recent parental survey that had many more responses. They took account of the views of 56 staff who completed the staff questionnaire. The lead inspector spoke to one parent who came to the school on the second day of the inspection specifically to speak to an inspector.
- A range of documents was reviewed. These included key safeguarding documents, the school’s written evaluation of its work and improvement plans. In addition, reports to the governing body, assessment information about Year 11 outcomes last year and assessment information on the current progress and learning of groups of pupils across the school and year group information were scrutinised.

Inspection team

Margaret Farrow, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Janet Gabanski	Ofsted Inspector
Natasha Greenough	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Lanovy-Taylor	Ofsted Inspector

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