

The Ripley Academy

Peasehill, Ripley, Derbyshire DE5 3JQ

Inspection dates

13–14 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders have not done enough to improve the quality of teaching and the progress made by pupils since the school opened as an academy.
- Very recent changes in leadership have not had time to make demonstrable improvement.
- Leaders did not anticipate the poor 2016 GCSE results because they believed that pupils were doing better than they actually were. The governors have not held school leaders to account.
- The East Midlands Education Trust (EMET) has recently taken more effective actions to improve leadership, but it has not done enough to support and challenge school leaders over time.
- Pupils are making insufficient progress across the school in almost all subjects. They have too many gaps in their learning.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in English and mathematics. They are not prepared well enough for the next stage of their education or training.
- Teachers have not assessed pupils' work accurately. The expectations for what pupils are able to achieve in lessons have been too low.
- The school has not made effective use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. These pupils have made poor progress from their starting points.
- Leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching have not been accurate and they have believed that teaching is better than it actually is.
- Too many of the school's subject leaders are either new, temporary or have not demonstrated that they have sufficient capacity to improve learning in their subjects.
- Some pupils find it difficult to maintain their interest in learning. This results in disruption to learning in some lessons.
- The sixth form requires improvement. While some students in the sixth form have made insufficient progress over time, students in the current sixth form are now making better progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed executive headteacher and the head of school have an accurate understanding of the school's current weaknesses.
- Pupils receive impartial careers advice and appropriate guidance on maintaining a healthy lifestyle.
- Attendance has improved during this academic year and is now average.

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?

- Improve the quality of teaching across all year groups by ensuring that all teachers:
 - have high enough expectations for what pupils can achieve across all subjects and year groups
 - plan activities that meet the needs of all groups of pupils effectively, especially the most able and those who are disadvantaged
 - use the school's systems for managing behaviour consistently well and that lessons consistently engage pupils in their learning
 - check carefully that pupils have learned and understood things before moving them on to the next topic.
- Raise achievement across the school, particularly in English and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that assessment information is accurate
 - ensuring that target setting and monitoring of pupils' progress is robust and aspirational, including in the sixth form
 - sharing current best practice within the school and across the trust effectively.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - evaluations made by leaders at all levels are accurate
 - subject leaders and those with other roles of responsibility have sufficient training and skills to carry out their roles effectively
 - external moderation of work across the trust is systematic and robust
 - the use of extra funding to support disadvantaged pupils is rigorously evaluated
 - the governing body and academy trust are more effective at holding leaders to account by checking more carefully that agreed actions have had sufficient impact.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Significant aspects of leadership are very new and have not had time to demonstrate effectiveness. At the time of this inspection, an executive headteacher had been in post for one week. She has identified quickly that significant improvements are required at this school.
- Leaders have not demonstrated that they have sufficient capacity to improve the school. Actions they have taken have been too slow, ineffective or are too recent to have had sufficient effect.
- Evaluations made by leaders have been consistently inaccurate and too positive. This has been a barrier to improvement. It meant that the poor results achieved at GCSE in 2016 were a surprise to all concerned.
- Teaching has not improved sufficiently since the school opened as an academy in 2014. Leaders have not identified areas where teaching has not been effective enough because they have had the impression that it is better than is actually the case.
- Leaders have not been effective in establishing a culture of high expectation since the school opened. A significant turnover of teaching staff has hampered attempts to improve consistency.
- Subject leaders are either relatively new, temporary or lack sufficient experience to ensure that learning improves rapidly in their subject areas.
- Some aspects of the school are showing early signs of improvement. The expectations for standards of uniform, punctuality to lessons and regular attendance are all stronger. Many parents, staff and pupils recognise a greater clarity about what is expected. They also understand that this more positive culture needs more time to ensure that it is firmly established.
- Although behaviour is not consistently good most pupils feel they are clear about what is expected of them. They understand the school's systems for managing, or rewarding, behaviour. This is especially the case for pupils in Years 7 and 8.
- The management of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is relatively strong. The leadership of this area has ensured a clear focus for the use of additional funding and a robust and accurate understanding of strengths, as well as an honest appraisal of weaknesses.
- Pupils arriving in Year 7 below the expected level, who need to catch up, have increasingly started to do so. They now receive well-planned additional support. Regular checks provide accurate information about their progress. However, senior leaders and governors have not evaluated the use of additional 'catch-up' funding other than taking a retrospective view of the progress made by pupils at the end of a year.
- The school provides pupils with a broad range of subjects to study. Many are encouraged to take academic subjects in order to ensure that they can go on to further education studies of their choice.
- The school currently provides some additional extra-curricular trips and activities.

Participation in these activities is limited. Staffing constraints and reductions over recent years have meant that this aspect of provision has been difficult to maintain.

- Leaders are promoting a culture of tolerance and respect. Pupils have the opportunity to consider British values and a range of beliefs during personal, social and health education lessons (PSHE), assemblies and sometimes as part of house activities. The ethos of the school is beginning to improve, but is not fully established.
- The school provides effectively for pupils' moral and cultural development as part of lessons and the house structure. They are also learning about spiritual development and social development through PSHE, tutor groups and house activities.
- Parents receive regular and helpful reports about the progress made by pupils.
- Leaders have improved attendance, for all groups of pupils, by appointing an additional member of staff with responsibility for this area.
- Staff have received increasingly focused training and support to improve over this year. Performance management arrangements have been adjusted to ensure that they are clearer and more robust. However, these actions have not had sufficient effect yet.
- Newly qualified teachers receive a good level of support and training.

Governance of the school

- The governance of the school has been weak.
- The governing body has not held leaders to account sufficiently and governors have relied too much on over-optimistic and inaccurate evaluation. The governing body has had a more limited level of delegated responsibilities this year because EMET has provided stronger support and challenge.
- Over time, the governing body has not checked rigorously enough the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. Although information is available about the progress of those who need to catch up in Year 7, the governing body has not monitored the impact of this additional funding carefully enough.
- The academy trust has needed to give a significant amount of its attention to dealing with structural and financial challenges faced by the school from the point at which it opened. It has provided a strong level of support for both these areas and has been successful in resolving them.
- EMET has not given other aspects of the school's performance a high enough priority since it opened. The trust is, however, very aware of the need for it to provide stronger support and challenge.
- The trust has very recently appointed an executive headteacher who has experience of successfully improving schools. The trust has also provided stronger challenge, including the removal of some delegated responsibilities for the local governing body. The governing body is being reconstituted and governance will be shared with another local school in the trust. A 'chair designate' is in place. A recommendation for a review of governance has not been made following this inspection because the new governing body is not yet in place.
- The trust has provided an increasing level of support for teaching at the school by providing additional staffing, training and resources.

- The trust has supported the sharing of best practice across the trust and started to support the moderation of pupils' work in order to ensure that expectations are high enough. This work is still at an early stage of development and has not had sufficient positive impact on pupils' outcomes. However, there are some signs of improvement in subjects benefiting from additional teachers, or additional resources.
- The governing body has ensured that it has a representative with skills and experience in safeguarding. Governors have received relevant training in safeguarding and the governor with this responsibility has developed good systems to monitor the school's safeguarding processes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has ensured that staff with responsibility for safeguarding have received recent and relevant training.
- Staff have a good understanding of how to report any concerns they might have. They have received regular training on a wide range of topics, including radicalisation.
- The school keeps satisfactory records about the checks made on the suitability of staff.
- Appropriate systems are in place to check the identity of visitors to the school.
- The majority of pupils spoken to during the inspection said that they felt safe in the school.
- The records of behaviour and racist incidents and bullying logs were considered alongside any comments made by parents who completed the Parent View survey. This information showed that these aspects of the school are improving over time.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Too much teaching has been weak and ineffective across a wide range of subjects. It remains too inconsistent in key subject areas, especially mathematics, science and French.
- Some learning does not engage pupils well and pupils find it difficult to maintain their concentration. All teachers do not use the school's behaviour policy consistently.
- Expectations held by teachers for what pupils might achieve have been too low across almost all subjects and year groups. A recent revision to the targets given to pupils for what they should achieve in their work has resulted in greater challenge for pupils.
- Because expectations have not been high enough over time, too many pupils have fallen behind in their learning. Too many of the current pupils in Years 10 and 11 in particular have not made sufficient progress from their starting points. Disadvantaged pupils and the most able have done especially poorly over time.
- Assessment information has not been accurate and this has been a significant barrier to learning. Assessments have often been too positive and not supported by the evidence in pupils' work.
- In too many lessons, pupils have covered information about a topic but do not have a sufficiently strong understanding of ideas before being moved on. Their learning is

superficial. They have misconceptions or gaps in their knowledge.

- The teaching of reading is not consistent across the school or sufficiently well organised. Pupils do not read with fluency and enjoyment, or have the opportunity to look at a wide range of texts and styles of writing.
- The teaching of writing has recently improved in English, although it is too soon for changes to have demonstrated sufficient effect, especially for the pupils in Years 10 and 11. The teaching of writing is too inconsistent across different subject areas.
- The teaching of mathematics is weak. It is too inconsistent in mathematics lessons and the calculation skills developed and methods used are not consistent across other subjects.
- EMET has provided additional resources, training and, in some subjects, teachers in order to support teaching in the school. Some of this additional support is too recent to have had sufficient effect and some teaching is still weak.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive regular additional support and opportunities to learn in a small group. This work is planned well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- The culture and ethos of the school are improving, but parents and pupils have expressed concerns about name-calling and other poor behaviour. Some pupils are not yet complying with the expectations of leaders. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said they felt that occasionally bullying was a problem and were not always confident that staff would deal with any problems they might have in an effective way.
- The arrangements for personal, social and health education are organised well.
- Pupils feel they have access to careers advice and guidance, which is helpful and impartial. They are encouraged to consider a good range of different options when making choices about learning beyond Year 11.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and know about the importance of the choices they make when eating different foods.
- Pupils say that the school does help them as much as it can to understand the importance of staying safe when using the internet.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- In too many lessons, pupils find it difficult to maintain their concentration and enthusiasm and can become disruptive when learning does not interest them. Pupils who spoke with inspectors described behaviour as 'their biggest concern'.
- Over time, the school has not been successful in reducing the number of incidents of poor behaviour. The higher expectations recently introduced are yet to ensure that

pupils consistently comply with these expectations.

- Pupils who spoke with inspectors recognise that new leaders have introduced and reinforced higher expectations about the sort of behaviour that is acceptable. Not all pupils who spoke with inspectors agree that behaviour is improving, however. The systems for rewarding positive behaviour and addressing poor behaviour are sufficiently clear, but staff sometimes do not use the systems consistently.
- The school maintains a high level of staff presence during lessons and breaktimes in order to ensure that incidents of poor behaviour are resolved quickly.
- The proportion of pupils who have been excluded is still relatively high, but has reduced over the last two years.
- The attendance of pupils is about average. It has improved this year and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has fallen.
- The majority of pupils are respectful. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 in particular have a good understanding of what the school expects of them and are happy to comply.
- Pupils understand the school's expectations for uniform and the very large majority support this. Most staff, parents and pupils feel that expectations for behaviour are becoming more consistent.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils have made poor progress across a wide range of subjects and year groups since the school opened.
- Pupils made significantly less progress than other pupils did nationally in both 2015 and 2016. Their progress was weak across almost all subject areas, regardless of their prior attainment.
- Disadvantaged pupils made especially poor progress across almost all subjects in 2016. This has been a priority for school leaders and there are signs that this group of pupils is starting to do better, especially in Years 7 and 8.
- The most able pupils do not achieve the levels of attainment that might be expected of them. They are making slower than average progress from their starting points.
- All groups of pupils are continuing to make inconsistent and insufficient progress across the different subjects and year groups seen during this inspection. Those in Years 10 and 11 in particular are making insufficient progress from their starting points.
- Too many pupils have left the school in recent years with weak literacy and numeracy skills. They have not been prepared well for the next stage of their education or training. A higher than average proportion have ended up not in education, employment or further training.
- Pupils are continuing to make insufficient progress across different year groups currently in the school. This is especially the case in mathematics, science and languages. Some pupils are starting to make better progress in English, especially in Years 7 and 8.
- Too many pupils continue to have weak skills in reading, writing and mathematics, especially those currently in Years 10 and 11.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress from their starting points.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Students made below average progress overall in academic subjects in 2016. Progress was weak in English literature, mathematics, French, history, textiles and media.
- No students achieved the highest grades in academic qualifications in 2016.
- The evaluation of leaders has been inaccurate and too positive over time. This has deflected them from making some improvements.
- Leadership has improved recently. Some courses are no longer offered, staffing has changed and clearer expectations are in place for teaching staff about what is required in terms of planning, feedback and monitoring.
- During this inspection, only a few formal sessions were seen. The planning of these sessions was thorough. The samples of work completed by students in Years 12 and 13 seen during the inspection show that students are making better progress in academic subjects this year.
- The proportion of students who go on to higher education has been below average. School information shows that the proportion of the current Year 13 who will go to university will increase significantly.
- Students spoken to said that the guidance given on careers education was helpful. They also believe that they benefit from the opportunities they have had to take part in work experience and learning activities designed to equip them for work.
- Several students have successfully achieved a GCSE qualification at a C grade in English and mathematics since joining the sixth form. Students taking applied courses made average progress in 2016.
- Students are able to study a broad range of subjects, even though the number of students in the sixth form is below average.
- Students have good opportunities to participate in additional enrichment activities that cover study skills, entry to higher education, finance and a wide range of other topics.
- Students enjoy the access they have to dedicated space for both study and social activities in the sixth form. They attend regularly and say they feel safe at the school.
- The small number of students present during the inspection said that they enjoy lessons and that other students focus on their learning well.
- The plans to develop sixth-form provision with another local school have ensured that students can access a good range of courses and additional activities.

School details

Unique reference number	141259
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10031113

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

Type of school	Secondary 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	667
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	104
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Margaret Powis
Executive Headteacher	Lisa Walton
Telephone number	01773 746334
Website	ripleyacademy.org
Email address	enquiries@ripleyacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about pupil premium funding.
- This is slightly smaller than the average-sized secondary school. The number of pupils on roll has fallen in recent years.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.

- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is broadly average.
- In 2016, the school did not meet the government's floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in secondary schools. The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 4 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.
- The school opened as an academy in September 2014. It was previously called Mill Hill School. The school is part of the East Midlands Education Trust (EMET).
- At the time of this inspection, the executive headteacher and head of school had both been in post for one week. The executive headteacher is currently also the headteacher of John Flamsteed Community School.
- A new governing body is in the process of being set up for this school. A chair designate has been appointed, who is currently the chair of governors at John Flamsteed Community School. The new governors will be responsible for the governance of Ripley Academy and John Flamsteed Community School.

Information about this inspection

- The members of the inspection team visited 36 lessons, four of these jointly with senior leaders, to review learning. They also made shorter visits to some classrooms to review work or other aspects of learning. The inspectors visited different areas of the school and the site during lunchtimes and breaktimes.
- At the time of this inspection, pupils and students in Years 11 and 12 were on study leave. Those in Year 13 had left the school. Inspectors spoke to some Year 12 students who were in the school because they were taking examinations or finishing course work. On a few occasions, sessions taught to Year 12 students were seen.
- Inspectors heard a group of pupils in Year 7 read.
- The inspectors met four different groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body, senior staff, subject leaders and representatives from the East Midlands Education Trust.
- The inspection team considered a wide range of school documentation, including the development plans, policies, lesson plans, monitoring records, and checks on students' work. Inspectors reviewed the minutes of meetings, including those of the governing body.
- Inspectors examined a range of data used by the school to monitor pupils' progress and attendance. Recent public examination results for the school were analysed and reviewed.
- Nineteen responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered, along with 36 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

David Bray, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ellenor Beighton	Ofsted Inspector
Gee Kader	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Lyn-Cook	Ofsted Inspector

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