

Rose Bridge Academy

Holt Street, Ince-in-Makerfield, Wigan, Lancashire WN1 3HD

Inspection dates

24–25 January 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders have not ensured that pupils receive an acceptable standard of education. They have been too slow to address low standards of teaching and poor progress.
- Governors do not understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have not held leaders to account for the quality of education provided by the school.
- Leaders have an overgenerous and inaccurate view of how well the school is performing. Therefore, their improvement plans do not adequately address key weaknesses in teaching.
- Leaders' systems for tracking pupils' progress and setting targets have not been fit for purpose. Improved systems have recently been introduced but these are not embedded.
- Teaching is inadequate. It is particularly weak in English, mathematics and science. Over time, it has not ensured that pupils of different abilities make enough progress.
- Teachers' expectations are too often too low. They do not provide pupils of different abilities with sufficiently challenging work.
- Leaders, including governors, do not effectively evaluate the impact of the strategies that they use to improve pupils' outcomes. In particular, they do not carefully measure the effectiveness of their spending of additional funding, such as the pupil premium.
- Differences between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally remain wide.
- Leaders' work to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is not effective.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning vary enormously within and across subjects.
- Too many pupils are late to school.
- Not enough pupils benefit from a broad range of extra-curricular activities.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are well looked after and safe in school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a strength.
- Pupils make good progress in art, photography, physical education (PE) and drama.
- Attendance for all pupils has improved to be in line with national benchmarks.

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 effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - developing governance so that governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and hold leaders to account for the quality of education provided
 - improving the way that pupil premium funding is deployed and its impact evaluated so that disadvantaged pupils make faster progress
 - improving the accuracy and rigour of self-assessment and development planning so that leaders respond more effectively to address areas in need of improvement
 - ensuring that all teachers are held to account for the progress that pupils are making
 - embedding the school's new systems for tracking pupils' progress so that pupils, teachers and leaders have a clear understanding of how much progress pupils are making
 - widening the range of extra-curricular opportunities so that more pupils can benefit from these activities
 - making better use of the pockets of strong teaching practice that do exist to raise the overall quality of teaching across the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and so rapidly improve pupils' outcomes by:
 - ensuring that teachers make better use of assessment information to plan activities which meet pupils' different needs and engage their interest
 - ensuring that teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils with different starting points and backgrounds can achieve
 - teaching and developing pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills more effectively across all areas of the curriculum.
- Develop pupils' behaviour by:
 - ensuring that pupils adopt consistently positive attitudes to learning and take pride in their work
 - tackling persistent lateness more effectively so that pupils are punctual to school.

It is strongly recommended that the school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this

specific aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium 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

- Leaders have failed to ensure that the school provides its pupils with an acceptable standard of education. The current leadership team does not have the capacity to bring about the rapid improvements that the school requires.
- The school's self-evaluation is inaccurate and imprecise. Leaders have an overgenerous view of how they, and the school, are performing. This has prevented them from taking action to stem the decline in the quality of teaching. As a result, all groups of pupils make inadequate progress.
- Leaders have not created a culture of high expectations across the school. Their low expectations for what pupils can achieve are a serious impediment to school improvement.
- Leaders, including those in middle leadership roles, do not monitor pupils' progress sharply enough. They have focused too much on pupils' attainment rather than the progress that pupils make from their different starting points. Leaders have recently introduced new systems for setting academic targets for pupils and tracking their progress. However, these systems are not embedded.
- Leaders have not addressed weak teaching in science and English. As a result, pupils have made very slow progress in these subjects over time. Furthermore, leaders have not been able to prevent a decline in outcomes in mathematics.
- Systems for evaluating teachers' performance are not effective. Teachers, including middle leaders, are not routinely held to account for the lack of progress that pupils are making.
- Leaders have not created enough opportunities for sharing the pockets of good teaching practice that exist across the school. In addition, leaders do not carefully check whether staff training is having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders have not ensured that additional funding, such as the pupil premium, is used effectively. Leaders do not effectively evaluate the impact that this additional funding is having on raising the academic standards of disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, the difference between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils nationally remains wide.
- Leaders have not used the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding effectively. Evidence presented by the school does not indicate that this additional funding is helping these pupils to catch up with their peers.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils are able to access an appropriate range of subjects ranging from core subjects, such as English and mathematics, to computer science and photography. However, the range of extra-curricular activities outside of lessons is narrow and so limits pupils' opportunities to get involved.
- The 'Small Learning Community' is well led. This provides vulnerable pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities with a strong foundation for developing the life skills that they need.
- The leadership of attendance and behaviour has been effective in raising attendance

over the last two years. When the school opened, pupils' attendance was well below national figures. However, it is currently in line with the national average.

- The majority of staff who responded to the staff questionnaire are proud to be a part of this school.

Governance of the school

- Governors accept that they have been too slow to challenge the underachievement of pupils in the school. They have been too accepting of the achievement information that they have received from school leaders. For example, they have been oblivious to the fact that girls underperform significantly in many subjects.
- Governors have not been firm enough in checking whether leaders' actions are making enough of a difference. They are aware of how additional funding is spent but are not evaluating what impact it is having. This is because governors do not routinely ask challenging questions of senior leaders.
- Governors have allowed low expectations of what pupils can achieve to limit pupils' horizons. The commendable focus that has been placed on nurturing pupils has not been accompanied by the raising of academic expectations.
- The trust and governors are fully engaged in the life of the school. For example, link governors meet regularly with leaders and joint work scrutiny and observations of teaching and learning are undertaken. This is beginning to give them a better awareness of what needs to be done to improve the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and managers have created a culture where pupils feel safe. Pupils said that they trust their teachers to look after them. The majority of pupils who responded to the online survey said that they feel that they are listened to and that they have someone to talk to if they are experiencing problems.
- Leaders work very effectively with parents, carers and external agencies to support pupils who are vulnerable.
- There is a clear sense of shared responsibility among all staff about the need to work together to safeguard children. Staff regularly receive updates about safeguarding from school leaders. They know the procedures in school for passing on concerns and they are clear about their own responsibilities for keeping pupils safe.
- The school was awarded the national pupil premium plus award in March 2017. This is an indication of the positive impact of their work with children who are looked after.
- Leaders and school staff know the pupils well. They place a high priority on providing individual support to pupils where and when it is needed. Pupils from different year groups and backgrounds told inspectors that they feel safe and have a good understanding of some of the dangers that they may face, including, for example, cyber bullying and the risks of radicalisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teaching has not enabled pupils to make the progress that they should. There is too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching across a range of subjects and within them.
- Too many teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve, given their starting points. Over time, pupils' academic targets have been too low. This has contributed to a lack of appropriate challenge and has resulted in pupils failing to achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- Too often, questioning is superficial and does not check the progress and learning of pupils before they progress to the next stage of the lesson. As a result, misunderstandings are not identified quickly enough to move learning on.
- The school has a new policy which informs teachers how they should give feedback. Teachers do not follow this consistently.
- Teaching does not enable pupils to develop and practise the basic skills that they need to make rapid progress. For example, many pupils' poor recall of times tables prevents them from being able to develop their mathematical problem-solving and reasoning. In English and in other subjects, opportunities are limited for pupils to write extended answers or to develop their speaking skills. Consequently, many pupils are working at levels that are well below their targets in these subjects.
- Teaching fails to engage pupils in science. Teachers do not provide pupils with work that is well matched to their starting points and needs. Consequently, pupils continue to make very weak progress in this subject.
- Too few teachers are providing pupils with clear examples of what good work looks like. As a result, pupils of all abilities do not have clear guidance on what to aim for in their work. This is contributing to the low expectations that some pupils have. For example, many pupils' exercise books contain work that is incomplete and poorly presented.
- There is an expectation from leaders that all pupils receive homework to extend and deepen their learning. However, pupils confirm that only some pupils get homework frequently. This means that not all pupils are provided with the same opportunities to develop their learning.
- Teaching is effective in art, performing arts, PE, computing and photography. This is reflected in high levels of pupil engagement and the progress that pupils make in these subjects over time. In photography, the work that some Year 9 girls are producing is already at a high GCSE standard.
- There are early indications that the needs of some of the most able pupils in Year 7 and Year 8 are being more adequately addressed through the introduction of a more challenging curriculum. For example, in a Year 7 computing lesson, pupils were making rapid progress because they were confidently rising to the high levels of challenge that were set.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning vary across the school. Where standards of teaching are too low, particularly in science, pupils do not take pride in their work.
- Form time is a missed opportunity to instil good learning habits. Time is not always used constructively enough to be of value.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are cared for extremely well. Pupils value the extensive social and emotional support that they receive in school. The pupils who benefit from the mentoring that the school has provided speak very positively about it.
- Pupils show respect for each other and their school environment. They talk confidently about the many opportunities that the school provides to help them to keep themselves safe. Displays in the corridors inform pupils of a range of support agencies they can turn to for help. The school's website directs parents to additional information.
- The personal, social and health programme is well planned. The wide range of learning experiences build pupils' confidence, for example for job interviews and to support them with financial planning.
- The careers information and guidance provided to pupils are well planned across different year groups.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Low-level disruption and disengagement hinder pupils' learning in some lessons. Pupils' attitudes to learning vary enormously between and within subjects. In the most effective lessons, pupils respond positively to teachers and are keen to work hard. However, there are too many lessons in which this is not the case.
- Attendance has improved rapidly over the last three years from a very low starting point. The importance of good attendance is shared frequently with pupils and parents and good attendance is celebrated. Attendance is now in line with national benchmarks. Leaders have been particularly effective in ensuring that pupils who have been persistently absent in the past now attend regularly. This rapid turnaround is a result of targeted work with individual pupils, strong parental engagement and robust systems.
- Although attendance has improved, punctuality is a significant issue. Too many pupils are late to school in the morning. Leaders' systems for addressing issues of poor punctuality are lax.
- The school supports pupils who have struggled to manage their own behaviour well. Many pupils have joined the school after exhibiting challenging behaviour in other settings. As a result of careful personalised support, these pupils have re-engaged with education and improved their behaviour.

- There have been no permanent exclusions since the school opened. The number of fixed-term exclusions has declined since 2015. School records indicate that the proportion of pupils who have repeat exclusions has also declined.
- Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. They are keen to talk about their school and most value the education they receive.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils' outcomes in 2017 were inadequate. Pupils did not make the progress that they should in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science and humanities. In 2016, pupils' examination results in English and science were in the lowest 10% of all schools nationally and they did not improve in 2017.
- Pupils have achieved significantly less well than other pupils nationally. The proportion of pupils leaving the school with a standard pass in English and mathematics was significantly below the national average.
- Both girls and boys are making significantly less progress than their peers nationally in English, science and mathematics. In English and science, their progress was in the lowest 10% nationally.
- The achievement of the most able pupils is weak. In 2017, the attainment of the most able pupils in the school was almost a full GCSE grade lower than the national average for pupils of similar abilities.
- The picture for pupils currently in the school is largely unchanged. Evidence from visits to lessons and pupils' work show that current pupils are still underachieving across different year groups and in a wide range of subjects. Where better progress has been made, it is fragile or is not maintained, and the data held by leaders is not robust enough to secure consistent progress.
- The progress that pupils are making in key stage 3 is too variable. For example, the information presented by subject leaders in English and science indicates that lower-ability pupils are making the most progress. However, the progress being made by other pupils is still inadequate. In English and science, the Year 9 pupils with middle and higher prior attainment are underachieving considerably.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make slow progress, similar to that of their peers in school. This is because the positive work undertaken by the special educational needs coordinator and her team is undermined by weaknesses in teaching across the curriculum.
- Not enough pupils are progressing to study for higher-level qualifications when they leave school. This is because they have not achieved the qualifications that would allow them to do so.
- Pupils are sustaining good progress in drama, the performing arts and photography. Inspectors observed high levels of motivation, creativity and engagement in PE, art, computing and key stage 4 religious education.

School details

Unique reference number	141746
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10042424

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	680
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Position currently vacant
Headteacher	Debra Wood
Telephone number	01942 510 712
Website	www.rosebridgeacademy.co.uk
Email address	enquiries@rosebridgeacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Rose Bridge Academy converted to become an academy on 1 April 2015. When its predecessor school, Rose Bridge High School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- Rose Bridge Academy is a member of The Community First Academy Trust.
- Rose Bridge Academy is smaller than the averaged-sized comprehensive.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is significantly higher than the national average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is higher than the national average.
- The school does not use alternative providers for the education of its pupils.

- The school met the government's floor standards in 2016. The floor standards set the minimum expectations for progress and attainment in key stage 4.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in a range of lessons across key stages 3 and 4. Several observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors carried out an in-depth analysis of pupils' work in several subjects. This was jointly conducted with senior and middle leaders. In addition, inspectors looked at a range of pupils' books in lessons.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, governors, members of the trust and newly qualified and recently qualified teachers.
- Formal meetings were held with pupils from all year groups in the school.
- Observations of pupils' behaviour were undertaken before the start of the school day, in form time and at break and lunchtimes.
- A range of documentation was considered by the inspection team, including the school's own evaluation and improvement plan, governors' minutes, departmental review documentation, records of the quality of teaching and assessment, information about how well current pupils are progressing in their learning, the school's marking policy, attendance and behaviour records, safeguarding records and case studies.
- Inspectors took into account 13 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors took into account 191 responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors took into account 65 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Deborah Bailey, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Tuesday Humby	Ofsted Inspector
Will Smith	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mike Merva	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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Manchester
M1 2WD

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