

Ravenshall School

Ravensthorpe Road, Thornhill Lees, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire WF12 9EE

Inspection dates

12–13 February 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Since the last inspection, the headteacher, senior and middle leaders have been relentless in their drive to improve the effectiveness of this outstanding school. Leaders have developed a curriculum which is rich and varied and well organised to meet the needs of pupils with a wide range of starting points.
- The headteacher's vision and dedication have created a community where there is strong teamwork and a constant ambition to improve. As a result, there is a culture of high expectations, which is deeply embedded in all aspects of the work of the school.
- Teaching is consistently strong, and often outstanding, as a result of well-planned lessons and work which is closely matched to pupils' needs. Teachers' high expectations are matched by pupils' work and pride in achievements. Pupils' progress is closely checked, and leaders act promptly to ensure that pupils make consistently strong progress.
- Following a pilot project, leaders have established a sixth form for those students who are not ready to leave school at the end of key stage 4. Students in the sixth form make strong progress and are well prepared for the next step in their education, training or employment.
- Since the last inspection, more pupils with complex needs attend the school. In response, leaders have revised the curriculum, the organisation of teaching, learning and assessment, and have supported staff to develop their skills through an extensive programme of continuing professional development.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent throughout the school. Pupils are friendly, kind and courteous to one another, and enjoy respectful relationships with staff and visitors. On the very few occasions when a pupil's behaviour affects their learning, they are quickly helped to return to lessons through the sensitive support of the behaviour and inclusion team.
- Governors are proud and ambitious for the school and provide strong and effective leadership. They are well supported by school leaders to understand information about the school's performance and the priorities for development. They analyse information in detail and challenge leaders robustly.
- Parents and carers have confidence in the headteacher and the staff team. They describe strong working partnerships with the staff and value the regular feedback about their child's progress. Parents describe the school as 'brilliant' and say that the staff 'go above and beyond'.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to refine the school's assessment system to enable the development of pupils' personal and social independence skills to be recorded and tracked.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Ravenshall is an exceptional special school. The headteacher, ably supported by senior and middle leaders, has built upon the strengths of the school since the last inspection. The headteacher's vision, determination and strong leadership have created a culture of high expectations and a drive for continual improvement. Ravenshall School is a community where there is strong and effective teamwork and where professional enquiry is central to the aim of improving the outcomes for every pupil. As a result, the school has grown from strength to strength and its effectiveness has improved. The staff agree. Of those who completed the Ofsted staff survey, almost all staff considered that the school has improved a lot since the last inspection.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths as a result of their detailed analysis of the school's work and pupil-progress information. This information is shared regularly with staff and governors to identify areas for improvement. Middle leaders evaluate their work and prepare individual action plans which, combined with the work of senior leaders, contribute to the whole-school improvement plan.
- The school's motto of 'everyone a leader' is evident throughout the school. The headteacher has created a strong culture where staff at every level are encouraged and supported to lead initiatives. Working with a senior leader, the leaders of English and mathematics made a strong contribution to the recent curriculum review. To check that these changes are having the desired impact, these leaders regularly check pupils' work, carry out lesson observations and lead targeted professional development to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Support staff make a strong contribution to the quality of teaching and learning in lessons; they lead interventions, lunchtime activities and after-school clubs. The behaviour and inclusion team works effectively with staff, pupils and their parents to ensure that behaviour is well managed and that pupils benefit from regular attendance.
- Pupils have been encouraged to develop their leadership skills and contribute to the work of the school. Sports leaders help staff prepare lessons and support lunchtime clubs and sports events. Older pupils help younger pupils, for example with the development of their reading skills or at lunchtime in the dining hall. Members of the school council, 'school ambassadors', have helped senior leaders understand what the pupils think is important. For example, following feedback from the school council, leaders changed the time of some lessons, increased the number of lunchtime clubs and purchased specialist play equipment. Leaders reported that the impact of some of these changes has led to an improvement in behaviour.
- The school's curriculum is outstanding. Leaders have reviewed and developed the curriculum to ensure that as more pupils with complex needs attend the school, the curriculum continues to meet the needs of all learners. In response to these changes, leaders have developed curriculum pathways to meet the needs of pupils with different starting points. As a result, teaching and learning are closely matched to pupils' age and their special educational needs. For older pupils, there are separate lessons for English, mathematics and science. For younger pupils, and those with more complex

needs, these subjects are taught through topics.

- The broad and rich curriculum provides a strong focus on practical learning and preparation for adulthood. Pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of literacy and numeracy in lessons. They have the opportunity to use these skills in practical activities. For example, pupils learn about money in numeracy lessons and then practise using money in enterprise activities and in the school's charity shop.
- The school's curriculum provides opportunities to accredit the achievements of key stage 4 pupils and those in the sixth form. Staff know pupils exceptionally well and skilfully match work to meet each pupil's learning targets. For example, in an English lesson, all the pupils were working on the same text. The teacher had organised the learning outcomes to enable some pupils to work towards a GCSE qualification and others to work towards other certificates and awards.
- The headteacher and senior leaders support staff to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding through the school's extensive programme of training and professional development. Leaders use performance management effectively to enable staff to identify their training needs. Throughout, there is clear focus on how staff training will support whole-school improvement priorities and lead to improved outcomes for pupils.
- The strong emphasis on teamwork includes effective partnerships with parents to develop their skills and confidence. For example, parents spoke enthusiastically about the value of parent workshops on sign language and working with children with autism. Staff work effectively with professional partners and other agencies outside school. For example, leaders have established regular workshops, led by psychologists, to support a group of pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Leaders use additional funding, the pupil premium, Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding and the sports premium effectively. Leaders regularly check whether pupils are making expected progress. If a pupil is falling behind in their learning, they are quickly helped to get back on track through well-planned and timely catch-up interventions. As a result, the progress of disadvantaged pupils across the school is as good as, and often better than, that of other pupils.
- Sports premium funding has been used successfully to develop the pupils' sports leadership programme, to improve the quality of the teaching of physical education for staff who are not specialist teachers, to develop extra-curricular activities and to provide specialist sports equipment.
- The work of the headteacher and other school leaders is highly valued by the local authority. Senior and middle leaders work effectively with other special and mainstream schools to provide support and share good practice. Leaders have been influential and effective in working with the local authority to develop the support provided for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families.
- Parents strongly support the school; they have confidence in the leadership of the headteacher and the work of the staff team. All the parents who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, and those who spoke to inspectors strongly support the school. Parents felt that their child is safe, that the school is a welcoming place and that if they have a concern, their views are listened to and acted upon. Parents commented on the quality of information that they receive about their child's

progress and the regular opportunities to meet staff through open mornings and parent workshops. The comment made by one parent, 'My son has come on leaps and bounds since starting at Ravenshall, the staff are fantastic', is characteristic of many comments made by parents.

Governance of the school

- Governors are proud of and very ambitious for the school. They value the work, commitment and support of the headteacher. Governors are well supported by senior leaders and effectively challenge the headteacher and other leaders to improve the school's effectiveness.
- Under the skilful leadership of the experienced and dedicated chair of the governing body, governors have reviewed their skills and appointed new members to ensure that they are well placed to support and challenge the work of senior leaders.
- Governors have a commitment to continual improvement and checking how they can improve the impact of their work. They undertake regular training, either in school led by staff, online or through the local authority's extensive governor training programme.
- Two governors are national leaders of governance. This has led governors to develop links with the governing bodies of other schools, providing support and sharing good practice.
- Governors have established effective link roles with middle leaders, subject areas and different areas of the school. They visit regularly to talk to staff and pupils and observe learning. Governors' observations are discussed with leaders at each meeting of the governing body; these discussions often lead to further areas for investigation.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. The school's motto of 'safeguarding is everyone's responsibility' is clearly demonstrated by staff and valued by parents. The designated safeguarding leader has established effective systems which put the safety and well-being of pupils at the centre of the school's work. Leaders ensure that there is a member of the safeguarding team on site at all times.
- Staff receive regular safeguarding training and take prompt action when they have a concern about a child's well-being. The school's '15 minute' rule means that safeguarding concerns are promptly raised with the designated safeguarding leader. Leaders keep detailed records which demonstrate that the school works effectively with other agencies to ensure strong outcomes for vulnerable children.
- Leaders hold regular multi-professional safeguarding meetings to share and review information. There are effective systems and procedures which enable staff to respond promptly to children missing from education. The school's graduated response, working effectively with other agencies, ensures that pupils who are absent from school are safe.
- Pupils are confident that they can talk to staff if they have any concerns – they say that they feel safe in school, and their parents agree. Pupils are taught how to stay safe online in information and communication technology lessons, through the personal and

social education curriculum and in assemblies and workshops. The school's internet filtering system prevents pupils and staff from using social media at school. If pupils are worried about the results of using social media outside of school, they discuss their concerns and receive support from the school's behaviour and inclusion team.

- The chair of the governing body is the link governor for safeguarding. The chair of the governing body checks the school's single central record each term and notes any points for improvement. Leaders respond promptly to this advice. Recruitment panels include members with safer recruitment training, and governors receive regular updates about safeguarding and the action that leaders take to protect vulnerable children.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teaching is consistently strong and sometimes outstanding. Pupils make strong progress because teachers have good subject knowledge, make lessons enjoyable and set work which is closely matched to pupils' needs. Leaders and teachers have high expectations, which pupils achieve.
- Teachers and support staff work well together. Detailed planning clearly describes the learning outcomes for each pupil, and these are matched closely to the desired outcomes in pupils' education, health and care plans. Teachers record pupils' progress throughout the lesson, and staff use information and communication technology to photograph pupils' achievements. This information is used to assess pupils' progress and is shared regularly with parents.
- There are strong and respectful relationships between pupils and with staff. Pupils are encouraged to work independently or in small groups. Staff are skilful in promoting pupils' independence skills and intervening to provide support when appropriate. Observations provided clear evidence of the development of independent learning that was described as a desired outcome in pupils' education, health and care plans.
- Teachers bring learning alive through lots of practical 'hands-on' activities, particularly for younger pupils and those who have more complex needs. In a primary lesson, pupils were learning about the effects of a tsunami as part of a project about extreme events. The teacher had designed an activity which helped pupils practise their measuring and estimation skills and develop their communication skills by discussing their ideas and findings.
- Teachers use lesson time effectively, and little time for learning is lost. Pupils in a primary class were observed to start the lesson promptly on arrival at school. In observations in the secondary department, learning continued effectively until the end of the lesson. In the lessons visited, teachers encouraged a strong pace to learning, but regularly checked with pupils that they understood the lesson objectives and what they were expected to do.
- Pupils with complex needs have highly individualised provision which accurately matches their individual starting points. Staff are skilful in creating practical activities which engage pupils' attention and develop their skills in literacy, numeracy and communication. The school's detailed assessment system enables staff to record the small steps in each pupil's progress.
- Teachers and support staff use questions effectively to check pupils' understanding and

to develop and deepen their learning. For example, in a key stage 4 lesson about the effects of exercise on the body, the teacher quickly identified a pupil who had become disengaged. The teacher skilfully and sensitively helped the pupil re-engage with the lesson and return to learning. The teacher used well-chosen questions to check what the pupil had understood about the lesson.

- Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour in class are excellent. Pupils are proud of their work and achievements, and these are celebrated in rich and vibrant displays in classrooms and corridors. The standard of work achieved across the curriculum is strong, particularly in art, English and design and technology.
- Pupils understand that staff are there to help them. One pupil described Ravenshall School as 'a five-star school'; another said the school is 'brilliant and couldn't be better'.
- On the few occasions when pupils do not make expected progress, leaders quickly identify this through their regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning and the detailed analysis of pupils' progress. Leaders intervene promptly, they provide effective support and ensure that learning outcomes are closely matched to the pupils' needs. As a result, pupils quickly get back on track and achieve expected outcomes.
- Leaders have taken prompt and decisive action to develop the school's assessment system. The assessment system is closely matched to the changes in the curriculum and enables progress towards achieving the desired outcomes in pupils' education, health and care plans to be recorded. Leaders understand that the assessment system needs to be further developed to record the development of pupils' personal and social independence skills, for example road-safety skills or independent travel.
- Staff use a wide range of resources, including information technology, effectively. Lesson objectives and supporting information are displayed on interactive whiteboards, and staff use these to remind pupils of their targets and the content of lessons. For pupils with delayed literacy skills, written information is supported with symbols, and staff use signing effectively to communicate with pupils. Staff photograph pupils' learning and use this as evidence of progress against learning objectives. Parents value the school's use of information technology, which enables them to quickly see photographs of their child's learning and to have regular contact with their child's teacher.
- Work in books reflects pupils being encouraged to work independently and provides evidence of strong progress over time. Middle leaders have established common expectations for checking pupils' progress through checking workbooks, focused learning walks and formal lesson observations. Middle leaders provide feedback to staff and then follow this up to check that any action points have been acted upon.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are confident and have strong attitudes towards learning. They are engaged and enthusiastic learners who want to achieve. They are encouraged to work independently and in small groups. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their progress towards learning outcomes and how they could improve their progress.

- Pupils have strong ambitions and high expectations; they are proud of their achievements and say that teachers are always helpful. Pupils speak confidently about how the school has helped them improve, and that they feel well prepared for the next step in their education, employment and training.
- There is a strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural element to the curriculum. Regular 'drop-down days' provide opportunities for all pupils to work on a theme or topic. These days provide an opportunity for pupils to take part in activities in the local community, and for members of the local community to visit school. Pupils have visited places of worship that reflect the rich and varied community that the school supports. Members of the emergency services visit school to talk to pupils about their work.
- The well-planned programme of communication and social interaction lessons provides opportunities to learn about different religions and cultures and to promote fundamental British values. Pupils are helped to understand their place in the local community, consider local and national political issues and to develop tolerance and respect for those who are different.
- The school's programme of impartial careers advice and guidance helps pupils, and their parents, make informed choices about the next steps in their education, employment or training. Post-school options are discussed at each review meeting, and pupils and their parents attend local events to learn about the next steps after school. As a result, most pupils leave school at the end of key stage 4 and successfully transfer to the local further education college. A small number of pupils who are not ready to leave school stay at school and transfer to the school sixth form to follow the 'preparation for adulthood' programme.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour is exceptionally strong in lessons, at breaktime, at lunchtime and when moving around school. Pupils are respectful of individual differences, helpful towards one another and kind and courteous. On the very few occasions when a pupil's behaviour affects their learning, the members of the behaviour and inclusion team provide prompt and sensitive support which quickly helps the pupil return to lessons. As a result, most lessons proceed without interruption.
- Pupils say that they are safe at school, that there is no bullying and that if they have a concern, they are confident to talk to a member of staff. Pupils also say that the staff are there to help them.
- The school environment is welcoming and vibrant. Well-presented displays throughout the school celebrate pupils' work and achievements across the curriculum. The display about a recent residential visit illustrates the development of pupils' communication skills, resilience, teamwork and leadership skills. The displays of pupils' work in science, art, and design and technology illustrate work of a high standard. Displays reflect the school's commitment to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, pupils' high standards of achievement and the strong pupil voice.
- Classrooms and specialist teaching rooms are well organised. Resources and displays are used effectively to support learning and to promote positive attitudes to learning

and behaviour. The classrooms for younger pupils, and those with complex needs, are organised to provide separate teaching areas to meet the needs of pupils with different starting points.

- Attendance is consistently better than similar schools in both the local area and nationally. Despite this, leaders are not complacent. The headteacher is resolute in her approach to improving attendance and does not approve holidays during term time. Leaders work determinedly, and effectively with other agencies, to improve attendance and ensure that pupils are safe when they do not attend. Leaders have started to work with other schools in the local community to share information and improve the attendance of the small number of pupils who are persistently absent.
- Leaders' commitment to an inclusive community and meeting the needs of each pupil has meant that there have been no fixed-term or permanent exclusions during the last two years.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Throughout the school, pupils consistently make strong progress in English and mathematics from their individual starting points.
- Pupils develop effective practical life skills. Using their knowledge, skills and understanding from numeracy, literacy and communication lessons, pupils develop practical independence skills that effectively prepare them for adulthood.
- Pupils are confident learners and are proud of their achievements. They communicate their needs and interests effectively, using speech and a range of communication systems, including signing and symbols.
- Some pupils are able to read confidently and with enjoyment, using well-developed phonic skills. Other pupils read a 'social sight' vocabulary to support social independence.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils in all areas of the curriculum is as good as, and often better than, other pupils in the school.
- The school prepares pupils effectively for life after school and for adulthood. Most pupils leave school at the end of key stage 4 and successfully move to the local further education college. A few pupils have successfully gained employment, others volunteer regularly in school or other settings.
- The small number of pupils who are not ready to leave school transfer to the school's sixth form. Sixth-form students achieve well, develop their communication skills, employability and independence skills and are well prepared for the next step after school.
- All pupils leave school at the end of key stage 4 or following study in the sixth form with a range of awards and qualifications. Some pupils successfully achieve GCSE qualifications in English and art. Other pupils achieve entry-level awards and certificates in science, information and communication technology, mathematics and personal independence skills. All students achieve an award in personal and social development.

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- Following a pilot project with the local further education college, the school opened a sixth form in September 2016. The 'preparation for adulthood' provision currently supports 17 students who were not ready to transfer to continuing education, employment or training at the end of key stage 4.
- The sixth-form leader is ambitious and has high aspirations for students. Staff have developed a strong and purposeful curriculum that promotes the development of students' academic, personal, social and independence skills and successfully prepares them for adulthood. Students learn about the practical use of literacy and numeracy skills, employability, first aid, health and safety, and how to use their leisure time effectively. Students learn and practise these skills at school and during regular visits in the local community.
- All aspects of the students' achievements are assessed through a wide range of external awards and certificates. At the point that they leave school, every student leaves school with a record of their achievements.
- As a result of the well-planned curriculum, strong teaching and the detailed assessment arrangements, students develop their confidence, improve their communication skills and learn a wide range of life skills. Students move successfully to a wide range of destinations after school.

School details

Unique reference number	107799
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10059010

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	17
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Metcalfe
Headteacher	Jeanette Tate
Telephone number	01924 456811
Website	www.ravenshallschool.org.uk/
Email address	office@ravenshall.org
Date of previous inspection	16–17 October 2013

Information about this school

- Ravenshall School is an all-age special school for children and young people with complex learning difficulties. Most pupils have additional speech, language and communication difficulties; some pupils have additional needs such as autism. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Since the last full inspection, the school has opened a sixth form for those pupils who are not ready to move on to continuing education, employment or training.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is much higher than the national average.

- Although the school provides for pupils aged 5–19 years, most pupils are in the secondary department. A small number of pupils stay at school at the end of key stage 4 and transfer to the school's sixth form. Boys outnumber girls, and the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- Ravenshall School is a national support school. Staff and governors provide support to other schools in the local authority and the wider region. The headteacher and two middle leaders are leaders of education. Two governors are national leaders of governance.
- The school has a wide range of awards and accreditations, including the gold standard for Investors in People, which recognises the quality of its work and commitment to its employees.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited parts of lessons across a range of subjects, involving all year groups, and the sixth form. Joint observations were carried out with the headteacher and senior leaders. During visits to lessons, inspectors spoke to pupils, looked at their workbooks and spoke to staff about planning and learning objectives.
- Inspectors observed pupils arriving at school, at breaktime and lunchtime and as they moved between lessons.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders, members of the governing body and the school improvement partners to discuss all aspects of the school's work.
- Inspectors spoke to teachers and teaching assistants during lessons.
- Inspectors considered 15 responses to Parent View, including free-text responses. They also considered the results of the school's survey of parents' views and a pupil questionnaire. Inspectors held a meeting with seven parents and spoke to five parents as they brought their child to school. Inspectors considered 77 responses to the Ofsted online staff survey. There were no responses to the Ofsted online pupil survey.
- Inspectors held a meeting with a group of pupils from the secondary department and heard a group of pupils read.
- A wide range of school records, documents and information were reviewed and discussed.

Inspection team

George Gilmore, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Fiona Dixon	Ofsted Inspector
Berni Moorcroft	Ofsted Inspector

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