

Inspection of Ryecroft Academy

Stonebridge Grove, Farnley, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS12 5AW

Inspection dates: 17–18 September 2019

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very happy and safe. The headteacher and staff have created a caring, nurturing school where pupils achieve well. Pupils learn well in subjects such as reading, mathematics and writing. In some subjects, such as geography and science, they do not remember all the valuable information. Children settle quickly into Nursery and Reception classes. They make a good start with their learning.

Pupils' behaviour in school is good. Incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils know that staff will support them with any concerns, including bullying. Pupils learn how to live healthy lives and the qualities needed to be a successful citizen. Relationships with parents and carers and members of the surrounding community have improved. Many parents like the improvements in the school over the last two years. A very small number of parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) were not as positive. When inspectors looked at the provision for pupils with SEND, we found that staff plan carefully to meet the needs of these pupils. The Gorse Academy Trust has supported the school to improve. Training from the trust has helped leaders and staff to improve teaching. The trust has helped to make a good-quality school building for pupils to learn in.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders are determined that all pupils, including pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, achieve as well as they can. Teaching in subjects such as reading, mathematics and physical education is well planned. Over the last two years, pupils' achievements have improved greatly in these subjects. Planning in subjects such as science and geography is clear. However, pupils are not building their knowledge and remembering their learning as securely in these subjects. Leaders and staff are acting to address this. They have introduced assessments to check that pupils are remembering the important knowledge. Some of this work is not fully embedded, but there are clear plans in place to cement this approach.

Staff apply the school's behaviour policy consistently. They use praise effectively when pupils are meeting the school's expectations. Pupils behave well in lessons. They mostly listen attentively and work hard. Behaviour at playtimes and lunchtimes is positive. Leaders use exclusions as a last resort. The number of exclusions has fallen over recent years. Good attendance has a high profile. Pupils' attendance has improved and is better than that of schools in similar contexts. Leaders' analysis notes that sometimes the attendance for younger pupils is not as strong. Bullying is rare and dealt with promptly by staff.

Leaders' work to secure pupils' personal development is exceptional. This a particular school strength. Pupils enjoy an extensive range of opportunities for their personal development. This entitlement is particularly strong. Pupils have the chance to be a school councillor or an LGBTQ ambassador. This develops their understanding of democracy and diversity. Visitors into school raise pupils' aspirations. They help pupils to consider different jobs, careers or education

pathways for the future. The school helps pupils to know how to look after their physical and mental needs. Sport, healthy lifestyles teaching, yoga and mindfulness all contribute to pupils' development. If pupils have any anxieties, they can visit 'time to talk' for support from staff.

Leadership is remarkably strong at all levels. The headteacher, well supported by other leaders and staff, has brought about substantial improvements to all aspects of the school. Clear plans for further improvement are in place. Governors know the school well and hold leaders to account effectively. Governors visit regularly to find out how the school is developing. They are vigilant to make sure that their statutory obligations are met. The trust has brought expertise to help improve leadership capacity and train staff. This has helped the school address its priorities promptly and systematically. Leaders carefully take account of staff workload. Responses to Ofsted's staff survey and discussions with staff show that staff are incredibly positive about the way leaders consider their well-being.

Leaders and staff have taken determined action to engage with parents and the community. The headteacher and staff are highly visible at the start and end of the school day. Newsletters help parents know what is being taught. Workshops show parents how to help their child to learn at home. Visits to the local residential care home help pupils to contribute to the local community. Parental confidence in the school is high. The vast majority of parents who completed Ofsted's survey, Parent View, would recommend the school.

Children settle quickly into Nursery. Home visits enable staff to know children before they start school. Once children are in school, staff teach them expectations and school routines. I saw staff patiently explaining to Nursery children how to move sensibly around school. Teaching of the early years curriculum is well matched to children's needs. The early years leader knows what needs to be done to continue to improve children's learning. For example, she has clear plans for the recently developed outdoor areas. Children's achievements by the end of Reception have improved greatly over the past three years. However, there is still more to do to increase the proportion of children who are working at the standard to be ready for starting Year 1.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, staff and governors give the highest priority to keeping pupils safe. There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Well-trained staff promptly identify any safeguarding risks to pupils. They secure help for pupils and their families by working with a range of agencies. The school helps pupils and parents understand how to stay safe online. Leaders complete careful safeguarding checks for all staff, trustees, governors and volunteers. This ensures they are suitable to work with children. Pupils believe staff will help if they have any worries.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A carefully sequenced curriculum in subjects such as geography and science has been introduced. However, pupils do not retain their learning as well as they do in reading, writing and mathematics. The curriculum developments and the school's approach to assessment to check that pupils acquire and remember the appropriate knowledge in subjects such as science and geography now need to be embedded.
- Leaders and staff have worked hard to gain the confidence of the community and parents. This work needs to continue to ensure the confidence of all parents of pupils with SEND and to improve the attendance levels of younger pupils.
- The outdoor learning area has recently been developed in order to enhance the delivery of the early years curriculum. Plans to use this area more effectively should be implemented. Although the proportion of children attaining a good level of development by the end of Reception has increased, further improvements are needed so that more children are prepared for the demands of Year 1.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	140824
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10110596
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	309
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Mark Roper
Principal	Helen Townsley
Website	www.ryecroft.leeds.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 May 2017

Information about this school

- The school is part of The GORSE Academies Trust.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with a range of school and trust leaders, including the trust’s chief executive officer (CEO), the executive principal, principal, senior assistant principal, assistant principals and special education needs coordinator (SENCo).
- We considered five subjects in detail: reading, mathematics, geography, science and physical education. These deep dives included discussions with senior leaders and subject leaders, lesson visits, review of pupils’ books, discussions with pupils and discussion with teachers where inspectors completed lesson visits.
- We considered a range of safeguarding information and documentation provided by the school and available on the school’s website. We held discussions with a range of staff to consider their understanding of the school’s safeguarding procedures. A range of pupils told us how the school helps them to stay safe. I met with the school’s safeguarding officer to review safeguarding records. I

reviewed the single central record alongside the school business manager.

- We considered arrangements for pupil drop-off and collection at the start and end of the school day. We observed pupils' behaviour across the school day, including at playtime and lunchtime. An inspector reviewed responses to the staff, pupil and parent surveys. We met with some parents at the start of the day and reviewed correspondence by email and letter.

Inspection team

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