

Inspection of Red House Academy

Rutherghlen Road, Red House Estate, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR5 5LN

Inspection dates: 14–15 January 2020

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Red House Academy has improved rapidly. Pupils and staff can all feel the difference. Leaders have done an excellent job of raising everyone's expectations.

Leaders have successfully recruited the teachers they needed. Teachers are well organised. They know what knowledge they need to teach. They work together to prepare interesting lessons. Pupils take their studies seriously. They take pride in their work. The level of attendance has improved considerably. Leaders have introduced subjects, such as French, music and drama, that were not available in the past. Pupils are enjoying the broader curriculum now on offer.

The vast majority of pupils behave well. This is because the staff and pupils are respectful of one another. Pupils applaud each other in lessons. The staff have created a positive culture in which it is OK to try hard. Incidents of bullying have reduced dramatically. It still happens occasionally, but pupils report it and the staff sort it out. Pupils feel that the staff really care about them. Teachers are going the 'extra mile' to help Year 11 pupils in the run up to GCSE exams. They know these pupils were not taught well enough in the past and are trying to put this right.

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

The leadership team has addressed the weaknesses and instilled a new sense of pride in the school. It has appointed new teachers, broadened the range of subjects available and transformed behaviour. The leadership team has begun to introduce a new, more demanding curriculum. Pupils are thriving.

Older pupils received a poor education in the past. They are now getting lots of extra help as they prepare for GCSE examinations. Teachers provide extra classes at lunchtime and after school. They are using assessment well. They know what knowledge pupils are uncertain about. Sharply focused teaching is helping pupils to grow in confidence. This approach, coupled with a good careers programme, has raised pupils' aspirations. Many older pupils now want to go on to a sixth form and to university.

Trust leaders knew that the curriculum they offered needed to improve. They have developed new planning within each subject that is more ambitious. Teachers' planning identifies the knowledge they will teach. Subject content has been well sequenced. The curriculum is therefore in a transitional phase. The school has introduced their new curriculum into key stage 3. Although it is early days, pupils are seeing the difference. Pupils' workbooks show that more knowledge is being taught. Pupils are more able to connect new information with what they already know. Teachers start each lesson by getting pupils to remember things they learned in the past. For example, in mathematics, pupils start each lesson by recalling

important facts. In English, teachers make sure that important concepts are threading through topics.

To date, pupils have not been able to choose the suite of subjects that makes up the English baccalaureate. This means that the school's most able pupils have not achieved as well as they should. Under the new curriculum, pupils will be able to do so. To encourage this, leaders have decided to give pupils more time to deepen their studies in key stage 3. Leaders expect more than half of pupils to study the English baccalaureate in the future.

The culture in the classroom is much improved. Teachers give lots of praise. Most pupils are keen to take part. Pupils are encouraged to work in groups, to discuss ideas and develop solutions. But some pupils still struggle with basic arithmetic and need more practise at times tables. Some pupils need more opportunities to develop their confidence in speaking aloud to others. Pupils who struggle to behave are supported appropriately. Many improve their attitude. The use of exclusion has fallen sharply.

Although the school is small, the staff provide a good range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils can pursue their interests in sewing, Spanish or netball, for example. The school recently put on a production of Cinderella. The trust has ambitious plans to provide more trips out of school to places of interest.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Thorough checks are made on all adults who work in or visit the school. All of the staff are trained in safeguarding. They all understand the duty upon them to act if they have a concern about a pupil's safety. Staff and pupils know who to report concerns to because there are numerous posters around the school. When leaders need to act, they take prompt action. They keep detailed records. They work well with social care and other agencies, as required.

Leaders systematically identify and check on the school's more vulnerable pupils. They are methodical. As the school is small, the school's safeguarding leader knows these pupils well. Parents have much more confidence now in the support the school provides for pupils who are struggling.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum has not been ambitious enough. Although leaders have begun to introduce their new, more ambitious curriculum, it is still at an early stage. Currently, no pupils in Years 10 and 11 are following the suite of subjects in the English baccalaureate. This means that the school's most academically able pupils may not fulfil their potential. Leaders need to ensure that an extended key

stage 3 provides a strong foundation for pupils to choose this suite of subjects when they opt for GCSEs. As the new curriculum is in the early stages of being adopted, the transition arrangements have been applied in this case.

- Some pupils are not sufficiently fluent in basic arithmetic. Others need more opportunities to practise speaking to others with confidence. These weaknesses are undermining pupils' readiness for the next stage of their education, employment or training. Teachers should develop more opportunities for pupils to practise mental mathematics, times tables and presentation skills.
- Despite considerable improvements in the overall attendance, absence remains above the national average. Missing too much schooling is negatively affecting some pupils' learning. Leaders must sustain their efforts to engage pupils in education, particularly those who are most at risk of becoming disaffected.

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 are the school and you are 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	135878
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10110611
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	433
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Colin Ferguson
Principal	Hijab Zaheer
Website	https://rha.northerneducationtrust.org
Date of previous inspection	25 September 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a new principal and new executive principal have been appointed. There have been several changes of other leaders, including the heads of department for English, mathematics and science.
- Currently, the school places 10 pupils with alternative education providers. The providers used are Cumbric, Evolve Sports Academy, The Beacon of Light and Hopespring School. Most pupils attend these provisions on a part-time basis.

Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- We met the principal, executive principal and other senior leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator. We also met the trust's chief executive and the chair of the local academy council.

- We focused on the quality of the curriculum in mathematics, English, science, geography and art and design. We looked at these subjects across the full age range. We met the curriculum leaders for each subject, visited lessons, talked to pupils, looked at pupils' workbooks and talked to teachers.
- We looked at other information about behaviour, attendance, extra-curricular activities and wider enrichment events.
- We looked at pupils' punctuality, behaviour and conduct across the school day. The team held discussions with groups of pupils. We also spoke to different members of staff, including a newly qualified teacher, a teaching assistant, an education welfare officer and a learning manager, to gauge their views about how well pupils behave and conduct themselves. We also met some pupils who have received sanctions in the past.
- We looked at the vetting checks that leaders make on adults who work in the school. We also talked to the leader in charge of staff safeguarding arrangements. We looked at records of the actions taken by leaders to protect pupils at risk. The team spoke to pupils to check how safe they felt. We also checked whether members of staff understand and abide by the school's safeguarding policy.

Inspection team

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