

Inspection of Rye Hills Academy

Redcar Lane, Redcar, North Yorkshire TS10 2HN

Inspection dates: 28–29 January 2020

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Despite an overall effectiveness judgement of inadequate, there are some aspects of the school's work that have seen improvement more recently. In lessons, pupils usually behave well and do as their teachers ask them. Staff say that this was not always the case. Additionally, the curriculum in subjects, including science, mathematics and geography, is starting to improve. This is leading to pupils achieving more lately.

However, the views of some pupils are at odds with one another when they describe the quality of education they receive or how safe they feel at the school. Too many pupils do not feel confident that staff take bullying seriously or act quickly enough to 'nip it in the bud'. Some pupils have concerns about behaviour at breaktime and in the corridors. Furthermore, the school's own information, collected recently, suggests that too many pupils do not feel safe.

In lessons, some teachers really push pupils to do well. Nearly all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities study the full curriculum. Teachers have high expectations for this pupil group.

Pupils enjoy sport, languages and the creative arts. The number of pupils who participate in sporting clubs, art, music and drama is high. Some of the artwork on display around the school is of a high standard.

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

Leaders from the school and the multi-academy trust have not had a close enough eye on the school's safeguarding procedures and curriculum. Furthermore, leaders have not responded to pupils' concerns well enough. For example, in October 2019, leaders sought the opinions of pupils on a range of matters. Despite 343 out of 688 respondents stating that, in their opinion, staff did not deal effectively enough with bullies, leaders have not acted swiftly enough to address this issue. As a result, some pupils say they do not report bullying issues any more. Inspection evidence highlights that bullying is common. This undermines the effective work leaders have begun to enhance the quality of education in some subjects.

The number of pupils who are excluded for a fixed period is high. Following a reduction last year, analysis of recent exclusion data highlights that the number of fixed-period exclusions is rising. There are a small minority of pupils who consistently misbehave. Fixed-period exclusions are not helping these pupils to behave more appropriately.

There are gaps in some pupils' subject knowledge. This is, in part, due to pupils' absence, poor curriculum planning in the past and some teachers not giving pupils enough time to fully understand a topic before moving on to the next one. In the last six months, some subject leaders have started to decide what the most important subject content is to ensure that pupils learn it inside out. As a result,

leadership of most subjects is improving. Subject leaders have a greater understanding of what makes a successful sequence of lessons or scheme of work. Recently, more thought has gone into what pupils learn and when. Across the school, pupils now have regular opportunities to recap their prior learning and to test their own understanding. Pupils say that this is helping them to remember more over time.

The progress made by pupils at the end of key stage 4 in science and mathematics has been in the lowest 20% of schools in the country for two years in a row. However, pupils are achieving more in English now. In 2019, pupils' attainment and progress in languages were in the top 20% of schools in the country. Additionally, pupils attain well in drama and music over time.

The learning of some pupils is often held back due to their high rates of absence. Pupils' attendance is below the national average. A higher-than-average proportion of disadvantaged pupils continue to be absent from school for lengthy periods of time. Disadvantaged pupils achieve well below other pupils nationally and have done so for some time.

Chances for pupils to learn about other people's different beliefs and opinions are limited. Pupils' understanding about radicalisation and extremist views are not strong. Some parts of the personal development curriculum are effectively planned. Many pupils in key stage 4 say they know what they want to do in the future because of the careers events they have attended in the school. Nearly all pupils go on to further education, employment or training when they leave. There are regular opportunities for pupils to understand what it means to be British. For example, pupils learn about democratic processes when electing school council members. Pupils, staff and the community appreciate the annual Remembrance service. Pupils can describe clearly why they feel it is important to remember the fallen during special occasions.

The vast majority of staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey say they are happy working at the school. Staff understand the need for leaders to make changes to the way they have been doing things, for the benefit of the pupils. Most staff say that leaders have been considerate of their increased workload and well-being so that new ways of working are manageable. Support for teachers who are new to the profession is strong. Newly qualified teachers receive regular professional development opportunities, including training to help them improve pupils' behaviour in the classroom.

Leaders have recently started working with a local outstanding school as part of the 'One Vision' programme of support, led by the Department for Education. This is allowing leaders and staff to visit other schools and trial new ideas in their own school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Many pupils do not feel safe. Leaders have not acted quickly enough to understand why pupils feel this way. School and trust systems to check the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures are not tight. A significant number of staff have not received appropriate safeguarding training. Some staff do not have proper awareness of safeguarding procedures in the school or the risks pupils may face in the local area.

The school's system to record, track and act upon safeguarding and/or child protection issues lacks precision. Record-keeping and actions are not detailed enough to ensure that safeguarding leaders reassess concerns when situations do not improve.

The pupils we spoke to during the inspection were unclear about the dangers of grooming, child sexual exploitation and extremism. Leaders confirm that pupils have not had the opportunity to learn about the risks associated with county lines drug trafficking or 'upskirting'. As a result, pupils do not know how to keep themselves safe from similar situations.

During the inspection, leaders were unable to evidence fully that pupils who attend alternative education provision are safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's arrangements to keep pupils safe are inadequate. Quality assurance processes to ensure that policies and procedures are fit for purpose are not good enough. Pupils' understanding of grooming, exploitation and extremism is poor. There is too much bullying in the school. Some pupils lack confidence in staff when it comes to dealing with bullying. Leaders and trustees must ensure that they develop an accurate understanding of pupils' perceptions of bullying and behaviour and they must act urgently to ensure that bullying and poor behaviour are reduced. Leaders must respond with sufficient resolve and rigour to ensure that all statutory safeguarding activities are improved, including safer recruitment and child protection procedures, risk assessments for pupils who attend alternative education provision and safeguarding training for all staff. School and trust leaders should review their quality assurance processes so they can be satisfied that the safeguarding activities they expect to take place regularly are concluded effectively. Leaders must ensure that the safeguarding curriculum is reviewed and amended so that pupils learn about the risks they may face in life and how they can stay safe from harm.
- Rates of absence and persistent absence have been high for too long. Pupils miss large parts of their curriculum. There are no consistent systems or expectations

across the school to ensure that pupils catch up on missed work. Consequently, pupils' learning and achievement are variable. Disadvantaged pupils are more likely to be persistently absent than their peers. Leaders must ensure that rates of absence and persistent absence reduce swiftly and that disadvantaged pupils attend more often.

- The quality of education pupils receive varies across the school. This is because some subject leaders have only recently started to review the effectiveness and scope of the curriculum in their subjects. This, in addition to a legacy of weaker teaching over time, has led to some pupils demonstrating significant gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding. These pupils find it difficult to deepen their understanding of new content and concepts because they do not have a broad knowledge base on which to build. Leaders must continue to ensure that the curriculum in all subjects is reviewed and amended to ensure that the scope, content and sequencing of schemes of work contribute to pupils achieving more over time.

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	144027
Local authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	10121664
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	930
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Allan Mansfield
Principal	Lee Brown (executive principal) Caroline Waugh (head of school)
Website	www.ryehills.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Rye Hills Academy converted to become an academy school in March 2017. When its predecessor school, Rye Hills School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement overall.
- The school is part of the Nunthorpe Multi-academy Trust, along with one other secondary school. Responsibility for the school rests with the board of trustees.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- We undertook deep dives in mathematics, science, geography and English. To do this, we met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons in these subjects and listened to pupils read. We also scrutinised pupils' books and other kinds of work produced by pupils who were part of the classes we visited. In addition, we had discussions with teachers and a group of pupils from the lessons observed.
- We met senior and subject leaders, teachers, the executive principal of the trust and administrative and support staff.
- I spoke on the telephone with a parent.
- We scrutinised pupils' work during lessons and with subject leaders.
- We held informal and formal discussions with many pupils and observed interactions during social times.
- We observed the work of the school and scrutinised a wide range of evidence, including the school's planning documents, behaviour and attendance records, accident and bullying logs, safeguarding files, pupil surveys and recruitment checks.
- We took into account the 70 responses from parents and carers who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. There were 195 responses from pupils to the pupil survey and 83 responses to the staff questionnaire.

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