

# Inspection of Rainhill High School

Warrington Road, Rainhill, Prescot, Merseyside L35 6NY

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Inspection dates: 4–5 February 2020

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Sixth-form provision

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5  
of the Education Act 2005

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Most pupils are happy to attend Rainhill High School. The pupils that inspectors spoke with said that behaviour is usually good. Pupils are keen to come to school. They arrive promptly to their lessons.

Pupils feel safe in school. They are well looked after by their teachers. They said that sometimes bullying does happen. When it does, teachers usually sort it out well.

Teachers, across most subject areas, have high expectations of their pupils. The curriculum for some subjects needs to improve further. In these subjects, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Pupils' personal development is strong. There are a variety of clubs available at lunchtime and after school. Pupils participate in a range of performing arts and sports activities, for example dance clubs, trampolining and script writing. There are also clubs to help them keep to a healthy lifestyle or to improve their computing skills.

The 'Rainhill Experience' encourages pupils to engage in a wide variety of activities. Participation in extra-curricular activities is very high as a result. There are opportunities for sixth-form students and pupils to engage in several leadership activities. Many pupils participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme across key stage 4 and into the sixth form.

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

Leaders have brought improvements in several areas since the school became an academy. Improvements are evident in pupils' behaviour, personal development and the quality of education. Despite this, the quality of education is not good.

Leaders have implemented a new curriculum across all key stages, including the sixth form. They have worked with primary school colleagues to ensure that the curriculum builds on pupils' learning at key stage 2. In most subject areas, the curriculum has the depth and the breadth of the key stage 3 national curriculum. However, the curriculum in some subjects has not ensured that pupils gain the knowledge that they need at key stage 3. Leaders ensure that pupils have a broad range of subjects to study at key stage 4. The proportion of pupils that take the full suite of subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate is above the national average.

Leaders have identified the knowledge that pupils need to learn in each subject area. In most subjects, teachers deliver the curriculum in the right order so that new knowledge builds on pupils' previous learning. Where this is the case, teachers identify links across learning that help pupils and students to remember more.

In some subjects, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. In science, for example, pupils do not gain the depth of learning that they need to apply their knowledge appropriately. This is because the curriculum moves through new learning too quickly. Pupils have difficulty remembering information that they have already learned. When this happens, pupils have difficulty understanding new learning. Some pupils lose interest as a result. These pupils sometimes stop working, and occasionally they disrupt the learning of others.

Published data shows that by the end of Year 11, pupils' progress in science has been well below the national average for the last three years. In the sixth form, very few pupils take physics or chemistry. Those that took biology in 2019 did not make as much progress as other students nationally.

In English, leaders have chosen to enter pupils for their GCSE literature paper in Year 10. This has led to weak outcomes for some pupils. Many pupils have not had the opportunity to fulfil their potential in this subject.

Work in pupils' books showed that pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation are not well developed across the curriculum. For example, pupils sometimes had difficulty using apostrophes, and subject-specific words were often spelled incorrectly. Pupils were unable to spell 'badminton' in physical education, 'arteries' in science or 'worshipping' in religious education. This is because the curriculum has not been developed well enough to help pupils to know and remember their literacy skills.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported in their learning, including in the sixth form. The special educational needs coordinator gives teachers training and advice on how to help these pupils during their learning. Teachers have high expectations of these pupils. These pupils are well represented in the sixth form. They are supported in selecting courses that lead to appropriate further education, training or employment after school.

The personal development curriculum is good. Across the school, pupils and students are given the opportunity to engage with views, beliefs and opinions that are different from their own. They are encouraged to become active and responsible citizens through the school council. They participate in the local youth council. They are taught about healthy relationships through age-appropriate activities.

Pupils behave well around the school. They move purposefully to their lessons. Pupils told inspectors that sometimes teachers do not use the behaviour policy correctly. When this happens, some pupils do not behave as well as they should. Pupils usually enjoy school and their attendance is high. Few pupils are regularly absent from school.

Students in the sixth form say that teachers help them to do well in their learning. The careers advice that they receive helps them to decide on their future career. They stay to finish their courses. Almost all move on to appropriate destinations at the end of Year 13.

Leaders use alternative local providers to support the learning of pupils that have difficulty coping in school. In the past, leaders have removed a small number of these pupils from the school register in Year 11. This was not done with the pupils' best interests in mind. Leaders ensure that this does not happen any more.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have worked with the local authority to ensure that the safeguarding procedures that are in place are of the highest quality. All appropriate checks are made to ensure that all staff in the school are safe to work with pupils and students.

Annual training, together with updates through the year, ensures that all staff know the signs of a pupil in need of help and support. The systems introduced by leaders help staff to report concerns easily and promptly. Leaders have made links with several outside agencies to ensure that they can act swiftly to provide appropriate help and support for pupils and their families.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Teachers do not help pupils to improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar. Consequently, pupils frequently misspell subject-specific vocabulary. Leaders must improve literacy across the curriculum. They should ensure that all teachers, regardless of the subjects that they teach, support pupils' literacy by developing correct spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Leaders have entered all pupils for English literature at the end of Year 10. This has not helped pupils to achieve well in this subject. Leaders must stop entering pupils for this examination before they are ready. This will give pupils the best opportunity to achieve their full potential in this subject.
- The curriculum in most subjects is well planned and sequenced effectively. However, this is not the case for all subjects. This leads to teaching that prevents pupils from building effectively on what they already know. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum in every subject enables pupils to learn new knowledge at the right pace and in a well-sequenced order. This will enable pupils to build on their prior learning, learn more and remember more.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	144326
<b>Local authority</b>	St Helens
<b>Inspection number</b>	10122024
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1535
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	215
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Mr John Boyer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Josie Thorogood
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.rainhillhighschool.org.uk/">http://www.rainhillhighschool.org.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school became an academy in March 2017. It is part of the Stephenson multi-academy trust.
- The school currently uses alternative provision at the Launchpad Centre to contribute to the education of a small number of pupils.

## Information about this inspection

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

- During the inspection, we spoke with pupils about their work and school life. We held meetings with trust leaders, senior leaders, governors, subject leaders and a representative from the local authority.

- We reviewed documentation, which included leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, and the school development plan. We scrutinised information about attendance and behaviour.
- We considered the views expressed by parents and carers in the 256 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as parents' comments received via the free-text facility on Parent View. We considered the 77 responses to a questionnaire for staff. We also considered the 123 responses to the questionnaire for pupils.
- We reviewed a range of documentation about the school. This included information about safeguarding, including the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff and support for pupils. We also spoke to representatives from the alternative provision used by the school.
- During the inspection, we did deep dives in these subjects: English, science, geography, history and art. We met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with pupils, met with teaching staff and looked at pupils' work. We also considered other subjects as part of the inspection.

## Inspection team

Erica Sharman, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sheldon Logue	Ofsted Inspector
Paula Arrowsmith	Ofsted Inspector
Garry Stout	Ofsted Inspector
Jean Tarry	Ofsted Inspector

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