

# Inspection of Rayner Stephens High School

Yew Tree Lane, Dukinfield, Cheshire SK16 5BL

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Inspection dates: 10–11 March 2020

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**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 we spoke to said that they felt safe in school. Many pupils feel happy and valued. The culture in the school is changing. Pupils are more tolerant of each other and of difference. Instances of reported bullying are dealt with by teachers.

Pupils have seen frequent staffing changes since the school opened. Until recently, pupils had experienced little stability or high enough expectations from their teachers. This has made it harder for leaders to improve pupils' learning as much as they have with other aspects of the school's work.

Classrooms are now calmer and more orderly. Pupils are more respectful to each other and to their teachers. Pupils' behaviour outside of lessons is not always as positive.

During their time in the school, pupils do not make enough progress. They do not achieve well by the end of Year 11. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make particularly poor progress.

Pupils have started to benefit from a broader set of opportunities to enhance their personal development.

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

Leaders have had to contend with significant challenges since the school opened. Despite this, they have been successful in making much-needed improvements to pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning. In doing so, leaders have established the bedrock for future improvement.

Constant staff turnaround has made it more difficult for leaders to improve the quality of education that pupils receive. Pupils who left the school in the last two years did not achieve well in their GCSE examinations. They made poor progress in many subjects, including English, mathematics and science, during their time at the school. Disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND made particularly poor progress.

The current school curriculum is not ambitious for all pupils. In some subjects the curriculum is not well thought out. As a result, older pupils have many gaps in their learning. Teachers do not do enough to identify and address these gaps. Consequently, there is little evidence to indicate that older pupils are benefiting from a better education.

Despite this, leaders' efforts to improve the education for younger pupils are beginning to gain momentum. This, in part, is because the trust now provides the school with more effective support. Leaders have thought deeply about how they can improve the curriculum for pupils in Years 7 and 8. They have re-planned the

curriculum for these pupils, so that it is sequenced more carefully to improve their learning.

Although younger pupils are beginning to benefit from leaders' clearer curriculum plans, there is considerable variation in the way that teachers implement these plans. Some teachers do not understand these newly introduced plans. They have not received the subject-specific training that they need to improve the delivery of the subjects that they teach. As a result, many pupils are still not benefiting from the improvements that have been made to the design of the curriculum.

Pupils with SEND have not had their needs identified or met well in the past. As a result, the attendance of these pupils is low. They are also more likely than other pupils to be excluded from school for a fixed period of time. Pupils with SEND have left the school in recent years having made weak progress across the curriculum. However, there are clear signs that leaders are beginning to address these issues.

Leaders have made significant improvements to pupils' behaviour. Lessons are much less likely to be disrupted by poor behaviour than in the past. However, in a minority of lessons, some pupils do not show positive attitudes to their learning. There also continues to be too much boisterous behaviour outside of lessons.

Leaders have started to focus on broadening the programme to support pupils' personal development. Although this has led to clear improvement, the scope of the school's work in this area is currently limited. There are opportunities for pupils to take part in a range of sports. Beyond this, the range of clubs and societies open to pupils is limited.

Pupils' moral and cultural awareness is developed well. For example, pupils learn about the work and impact of key figures, such as Martin Luther King and Greta Thunberg.

Pupils' attendance has improved significantly since the school opened and is now broadly in line with the national average. Most pupils attend regularly, and few are absent from school for long periods of time.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Teachers receive appropriate safeguarding training. The leaders responsible for safeguarding are experienced. They have created a positive safeguarding culture. The school carries out appropriate checks on new staff.

Leaders have improved the support that pupils receive to maintain their mental health.

Teachers work well with other agencies. Pupils learn about the dangers present in their local community. For example, the police have delivered sessions to pupils on

the dangers of antisocial behaviour. Teachers help pupils to manage risk and act sensibly, including when online.

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

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

- The current curriculum lacks ambition for all pupils. Some subject curriculums are not well planned. As a result, pupils do not learn as much as they should and they develop gaps in their knowledge. This limits their success in gaining the qualifications of which they are capable. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum in all subject areas is ambitious and reflects high expectations of what all pupils can achieve.
- Some staff do not fully understand the recent changes that have been made to the curriculum. Staff have not received the subject-specific training that they need to improve the delivery of their subjects. This contributes to the weaknesses that remain in the delivery of the curriculum. For example, teachers do not routinely provide pupils with the key knowledge that they need to be able to learn more complicated concepts in the future. They do not identify and address the gaps in pupils' knowledge that prevent them from learning more. These weaknesses continue to limit pupils' learning. Leaders must ensure that teachers receive the training and support that they need to improve the delivery of their subjects.
- Pupils with SEND have not had their needs identified or met well since the school opened. As a result, these pupils have not attended regularly or learned well. They are more likely to receive a fixed-term exclusion than their peers. Leaders have begun to address these weaknesses. However, this work is in its early stages. Leaders must ensure that their work in this area continues to improve so that staff become better at identifying and meeting the needs of pupils with SEND.
- The range of extra-curricular activities offered by the school is limited. There are few opportunities to nurture pupils' talents outside of lessons. Leaders have not ensured that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, benefit from the opportunities that are provided. Leaders should extend the range of opportunities to develop pupils' talents and interests. They should also ensure that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, benefit from this broadened offer.
- Pupils do not behave consistently well when moving around the site and at break and lunchtimes. Some behaviour is boisterous, particularly when corridors are congested between lessons. This makes some pupils feel uncomfortable. Leaders must make sure that the behaviour policy is applied consistently throughout the whole school day, so that pupils' behaviour outside of lessons improves.

## 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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 144622  |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Tameside  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10135027  |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Secondary comprehensive   |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Academy sponsor-led   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 11 to 16  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed   |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 636   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | Board of trustees   |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                      | Carol Thomas  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Fay Beach   |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.raynerstephens.org.uk/">http://www.raynerstephens.org.uk/</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | Not previously inspected  |

## Information about this school

- Rayner Stephens High School converted to become an academy as part of AspirePlus Educational Trust on 1 July 2017. Before this date, the school was known as Astley Sports College and Community High School. It was judged to be inadequate at its last full inspection in May 2016.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at the following providers: Works 4 U, Tameside College and Active Medlock.

## 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 held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders. We also met with the chair of the local governing body and held telephone

conversations with staff from alternative providers and the chair of the trust board.

- We checked safeguarding documentation, including the school's appointment checks on staff.
- We considered the views of the pupils who completed the Ofsted survey and the 44 staff who responded to Ofsted's online survey. We also considered the views expressed by parents in the 58 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including the comments received via the free-text facility.
- We spoke with groups of pupils to gather their views, particularly on behaviour and safety.
- As part of the inspection, we did deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, science and history. In these subjects, we met with subject leaders, pupils and teachers; we visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. We also visited lessons and looked at pupils' work in other subjects.

### **Inspection team**

|                               |                  |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| David Hampson, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Elaine Parkinson              | Ofsted Inspector |
| Barbara Dutton                | Ofsted Inspector |
| Colin Bell                    | Ofsted Inspector |

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