

Inspection of The Radclyffe School

Hunt Lane, Chadderton, Oldham, Greater Manchester, OL9 0LS

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 October 2021

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected five years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel happy and safe at The Radclyffe School. They said that they enjoy coming to school to learn with their friends. The pupils who spoke with inspectors said that adults are always on hand to listen, and to provide support, if they have any concerns or worries.

Pupils are polite and courteous. They do their best to follow 'The Five Respects'. Pupils use these rules to underpin how they behave towards one another.

Most pupils do not think that bullying is a problem. They said that should bullying occur, staff deal with it quickly and effectively.

Not all pupils achieve as well as they should. This includes some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Even so, recent improvements to the curriculum mean that a greater number of pupils are now learning more than they have in the past. Most teachers' expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour are rising. Overall, pupils said that behaviour in lessons is calm and this allows them to learn.

Pupils appreciate the range of different experiences on offer that contribute to their wider personal development. For example, they enjoy learning about different cultures. Pupils were also enthusiastic about the various extra-curricular activities on offer, such as the drama club and the choir.

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

The previous curriculum did not provide pupils with the necessary breadth, depth and ambition to acquire a rich body of knowledge across subjects. Not enough pupils had the opportunity to study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects. Recently appointed senior leaders have taken the right actions to ensure that the curriculum is increasingly broad and ambitious. Nevertheless, a few teachers continue to have lower expectations of what some pupils can and should achieve.

For the most part, subject leaders have thought carefully about the order in which to teach the overarching topics within each subject. They are now defining the exact knowledge that pupils must know and remember within these topics. However, planning remains at an early stage in several subjects. This means that when teachers deliver the curriculum, sometimes they are not clear about exactly what they want pupils to learn. Added to this, older pupils who experienced the previous curriculum have missing subject knowledge. Consequently, not all pupils are progressing through the curriculum as well as they should.

Leaders' approach to assessment lacks clarity. Some teachers do not know how to check whether pupils have retained new knowledge. Furthermore, some teachers do

not address pupils' misconceptions swiftly enough. As a result, pupils are not provided with sufficient opportunities to correct their mistakes or misunderstandings.

Leaders have taken appropriate steps to identify those pupils who are at an early stage in learning to read. However, leaders have not identified the gaps in pupils' phonics knowledge carefully enough. This means that some pupils are not as fluent or confident in their reading as they should be.

Leaders are effective in identifying pupils with SEND. However, the lack of precision in curriculum planning means that some subject leaders are not able to check how well teachers deliver the intended curriculum for these pupils. Added to this, senior leaders are in the process of making sure that all pupils with SEND have access to the full range of subjects.

Leaders and staff have raised their expectations of pupils' behaviour. They have clear systems in place to ensure that pupils behave well. As such, disruption to learning has reduced considerably. Leaders have worked tenaciously to ensure that most pupils have high rates of attendance.

Pupils learn how to become responsible and respectful citizens at The Radclyffe School. They receive an appropriate range of careers education and guidance. Pupils benefit from an appropriate range of extra-curricular activities. Assemblies provide pupils with suitable opportunities to consider issues such as current affairs.

Until recently, governors have not consistently challenged leaders robustly enough. However, leaders' and governors' actions are starting to have a positive effect on the education the school provides. Staff appreciate the support provided by leaders in relation to workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that there is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. They take their responsibilities very seriously. Leaders ensure that all staff and governors receive up-to-date, relevant safeguarding training. Should a safeguarding-related incident arise, staff are confident in how to deal with it.

The records that leaders keep relating to safeguarding are clear and accurate. Records demonstrate that leaders take timely actions, in the best interest of pupils. Leaders work effectively with external agencies. Pupils know who to speak to if they have any concerns or worries.

The curriculum helps pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe. This includes the use of external visitors to provide more specialised guidance on more sensitive topics.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Despite the recent changes to the curriculum, it continues to lack the necessary depth, breadth and ambition for pupils, including some pupils with SEND. Older pupils continue to be negatively affected by the previous curriculum. As a result, these pupils have insecure subject knowledge. Leaders should ensure that they continue to plan the curriculum so that it is appropriately ambitious for all pupils. They should also consider more carefully how the revised curriculum will help older pupils to catch up with lost learning.
- In some subjects, leaders have not identified with sufficient precision what they want pupils to learn. Where there is less precision, some teachers do not know how to ensure that pupils, including those with SEND, learn and remember the curriculum as well as they should. Leaders must improve how the curriculum is planned and delivered by teachers.
- Leaders have not designed assessment systems that enable teachers to check where pupils have missing or insecure knowledge in their learning. As a result, some teachers do not adapt the curriculum effectively enough to enable pupils to catch up, or to address pupils' misunderstandings. Leaders must strengthen their assessment systems so that teachers can check precisely what knowledge pupils have learned.
- Subject leaders do not routinely check how effectively teachers are implementing the curriculum for pupils with SEND. This is because some subject leaders have not finalised their curriculum plans. They are unclear about exactly what should be taught. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not achieve as highly as they should. Leaders need to ensure that all subject leaders have appropriate curriculum plans in place so that they can check how well the curriculum is being delivered for pupils with SEND.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	105738
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10199467
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,501
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Susan Webb
Headteacher	John Cregg
Website	https://theradclyffeschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 November 2015, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher and two new deputy headteachers have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- A small number of pupils in Years 8 to 11 are taught on site at The Radclyffe Outreach Centre, known as the 'ROC'. The Radclyffe Outreach Centre is a temporary provision for pupils, run by the governing body. This centre provides pupils with specialist support and enables them to catch up with any learning that they have missed.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 11 receive information about the full range of education and training options open to them. This includes opportunities for a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, middle leaders, teachers and members of the support staff.
- The lead inspector met with the representatives of the governing body. The lead inspector also considered the minutes of the governing body meetings.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority and the school improvement advisor.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: design and technology, English, geography, modern foreign languages and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited several lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also considered other curriculum areas, including art and design, computing, mathematics, music and physical education.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding leader and other staff responsible for safeguarding. They considered a range of documentation in relation to safeguarding, including leaders' pre-employment checks on staff and staff training records. Inspectors spoke to staff, pupils, governors and trustees about the wider aspects of safeguarding. They also considered survey responses from staff, parents, carers and pupils around safeguarding.
- Inspectors examined other documents, including the whole-school development plan, the school self-evaluation summary and records about pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes, in corridors, during registration and in lessons. They also spoke to pupils about bullying, behaviour and leaders' expectations of pupils' behaviour. Inspectors also discussed pupils' programme of wider personal development.
- Inspectors reviewed the responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. This included the comments submitted via the free-text facility. Inspectors also considered the views represented in an email from a parent.
- Inspectors considered the 238 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire and the 82 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Alyson Middlemass, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Rachel Goodwin	Her Majesty's Inspector
Emma Gregory	Her Majesty's Inspector
Michael Pennington	Her Majesty's Inspector
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