

Inspection of a good school: Ryburn Valley High School

St Peter's Avenue, Sowerby, Sowerby Bridge, West Yorkshire HX6 1DF

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 July 2022

Outcome

Ryburn Valley High School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Ryburn Valley High School provides a strong, vibrant and welcoming community. Pupils swell with pride when they talk about their school. They told inspectors about the opportunities they get to develop their confidence and resilience. They look forward to showcasing their school to visitors. Pupils know the ethos of the school is based on 'everyone matters and every dream counts.' Leaders have fostered the values of kindness, honesty, respect and endeavour, which is brought to life by the everyday interactions of pupils and staff.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils are exceptionally courteous and respectful to staff and visitors. There is a calm and orderly environment at all times in the school day. Relationships between pupils are harmonious. In lessons, pupils are attentive and focused on their learning. They work without any disruption. Pupils say that bullying is rare. Pupils know what they would do if they had any issues that upset them.

Pupils take part in many different activities, including sports clubs and teams, science, technology, engineering and mathematics activities, as well as performing and creative arts. Parents are highly complementary about the school's work, saying how their child has 'thrived and has been provided with many varied ways to grow and develop'.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious and inclusive curriculum to reflect the needs of the pupils and the community the school serves. Leaders regularly review and evaluate the curriculum, making the necessary adaptations in response to pupils' needs and aspirations. They have high ambitions for all pupils. In many subjects, pupils achieve well.

Curriculum plans are carefully sequenced and supported by credible research. Subject leaders have considered the order in which topics are taught. Leaders have ensured that

any gaps in pupils' knowledge, caused by the pandemic, have been identified and closed. Pupils who need support with developing their reading skills catch up quickly.

Teachers have the subject expertise they need to be able to plan learning activities. They share their expertise and strong practice with colleagues. They ensure pupils can recall important information and apply their knowledge to new learning. This helps pupils to tackle their learning with confidence. Teachers use assessment with precision to identify any misconceptions pupils may have, before moving on to new topics.

Teachers have received the training they need to effectively support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Resources are carefully chosen so that pupils with SEND can access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Leaders recognise there is more work to do to refine the support they provide pupils with SEND. A very small number of pupils access alternative provision as part of their learning. However, leaders do not check on the progress of these pupils with enough rigour. As a result, leaders do not know if these pupils are benefiting from the alternative curriculum they receive.

The school has a well-planned approach to personal, social, health and citizenship education. This is a strength of the school. It is highly valued by pupils. The school has been recognised for the quality of their work by different awarding bodies. Teachers use scenarios with pupils during form time to explore different situations and challenges pupils may face. They discuss ways to solve any problems.

Pupils have many opportunities to contribute to the life of the school. Roles, such as sports ambassadors, student council, peer mentors and charity leaders, are valued by pupils. The active student body plans annual school events, such as 'Pride', student awards ceremonies, fundraising for charities and raising awareness of climate change and the environment.

Sixth-form leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for the students in their care. The programmes of study are wide ranging and support learners to reach a number of destinations, from Russell Group universities to graduate apprenticeships, as well as work. The quality assurance of sixth-form provision is strong. Leaders have a forensic approach to tracking students and their progress. Students say that they can get extra help where needed. They receive positive support in their independent learning and talk highly of the support for their well-being. They say that teachers really care about them and that there is a strong focus on respect and tolerance.

Staff are extremely positive about the way leaders support their workload and well-being. They say leaders are approachable and recognise when they need help. There is a culture of looking out for one another and checking colleagues' well-being. All staff appreciate this.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure safeguarding is a high priority by providing regular training for staff and governors. Leaders provide regular updates on the latest government guidance. This means that all staff have the knowledge they need to identify pupils who need help.

Staff know how to raise any concerns they have. Leaders take swift action to address problems when they are identified. The support provided to pupils is timely. This includes supporting pupils with their mental health.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through the well-planned curriculum. This includes topics such as online safety, respectful relationships and healthy living. Leaders share a monthly e-safety update with staff and parents so they can monitor pupils accessing various sites online. This includes 'trends' and 'challenges' young people may see online and feel obliged to imitate.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all staff provide the support pupils with SEND need to access learning, as effectively as they could. As a result, in some subjects, misconceptions are not addressed quickly. Leaders should make additional checks on the support teachers provide for pupils with SEND to ensure that it fully meets their needs and maximises their progress.
- There are a very small number of pupils who access off-site alternative provision. Information about these pupils' progress is unclear. As a result, leaders do not know the extent to which these pupils are learning their alternative curriculum. Leaders must strengthen and enhance their systems to quality assure the effectiveness of the alternative provision they use.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour, or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school to be good in May 2013.

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	141307
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	10226900
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1595
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	234
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Jeff Tinkler
Headteacher	Katherine Parker
Website	http://www.rvhs.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	9 May 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is the founding school of the Together Learning Trust, which now consists of five schools.
- The number of pupils on roll is well above the national average.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils is close to the national average.
- The school has higher than average numbers of pupils with SEND.
- A small number of pupils access alternative provision with Bradford College, Calderdale College, Focus Training and Read the Question. All pupils who attend these do so on a part-time basis.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors focused on the following subjects: English, computing, mathematics and design technology. Inspectors met with curriculum leaders to consider their subject plans, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about the way these subjects are taught.
- Inspectors held meetings with representatives of the trust, the chief executive officer and governors, including the chair of the governing body. Inspectors also met with the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders with responsibility for safeguarding, scrutinised the single central record and safeguarding training records for staff. Inspectors spoke to pupils and staff about any risks to safety and how issues are dealt with.
- Inspectors observed pupils during social time, lesson changeover and at the end of the day.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's staff survey and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Louise Greatrex, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Manina Tyler-Mort	Ofsted Inspector
Marc Doyle	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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