

Inspection of an outstanding school: Ravenscliffe High School

Skircoat Green, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX3 0RZ

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 October 2022

Outcome

Ravenscliffe High School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff have high expectations and are committed to every pupil achieving their absolute best. Leaders continuously check on whether they are 'getting it right' for pupils. They are relentless in searching for ways in which they can continue to improve further. Crucially, staff share these high expectations, and work tirelessly to understand and meet each pupil's special educational needs.

Parents speak very highly of the support that staff provide for pupils. One parent, echoing the views of others, commented 'The work this school have put into making appropriate adjustments for my son is astounding. Nothing is too much to ask.'

Pupils love attending school, they work hard in lessons. Pupils are supported to concentrate for long periods of time, completing their work with care. Pupils told inspectors that they felt safe and well looked after in school. Pupils are respectful towards staff and to each other. True friendships are in place across all groups of pupils, and playtimes are joyful occasions.

Pupils seldom do or say anything unkind. However, on the rare occasions that they do, staff are quick to offer help. Staff support pupils to put right any problems.

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

Leaders took the decision to fully review the curriculum two years ago. This review has resulted in a highly bespoke curriculum that fully meets the needs of all learners. The full range of national curriculum subjects are taught and delivered well. Subjects such as English and mathematics are taught in ability groupings. These subjects have been carefully planned to ensure teachers are clear about what to teach and when. The subject plans are underpinned by detailed assessment documents that enable teachers to check on pupils prior learning and identify clearly the next steps in learning. As a result, pupils are extremely well supported and make strong progress. Students leave school with a good range of entry level qualifications, life skills accreditation and for the first time last year a pupil achieved a GCSE in mathematics.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have made huge strides in developing pupils' reading. Leaders have introduced a new phonics programme. It is helping pupils make strong progress in learning to segment and blend sounds. The English leader carefully monitors how well pupils are doing. Additional intervention is put in place where needed. Pupils understand the importance of reading and value the additional help. One pupil told inspectors that the extra support she receives helps her to feel more confident when she is reading in lessons.

The Sensory curriculum is sequenced well. Over time, this is building the knowledge and skills that pupils in this group need in order to flourish. Pupils learn to communicate their needs and wants well.

Leaders have rightly identified the need to further develop the provision for a group of pupils with autistic spectrum disorder and severe communication difficulties. They have targeted additional resources and have a strong development plan in place to ensure these learners continue to do well.

The work-related learning curriculum is exceptionally well planned and sequenced. It builds up at a pace pupils can cope with. It is highly aspirational and ensures all learning is linked to pupils' future independence and employment. A large number of post-16 students participate in high-quality work experience opportunities both at external placements, such as local supermarkets, and internally at the community café or within the site management team. Students are supported by job coaches and a successful independent travel programme is also in place. School leaders are rightly proud that over the past three years, six students have successfully secured paid employment.

Pupils behave consistently well across lessons and in unstructured times, such as play and lunchtime. They actively support one another and have made strong friendships.

Leaders have made some bold choices regarding the curriculum organisation and delivery. This has resulted in a highly inclusive learning environment. Leaders have taken time to embed pupils' personal development into all aspects of the curriculum. They ensure pupils have access to a rich set of experiences, such as trampolining, character-building workshops and off-site visits. Subjects such as PE and drama are taught in mixed ability groups. There is a magical atmosphere in these lessons with pupils of all levels of ability learning together. Most-able pupils are excellent role models and it is clear to see their pride and pleasure in supporting their peers.

Governors are forward-thinking and highly effective at both supporting and challenging the leadership team. They place a strong value on continual improvement. They take an active role in all aspects of school life.

Since the last inspection, the numbers of pupils at the main school site has continued to increase. This is placing extreme pressure on what was already a crowded building. Despite this, the excellent work of the highly committed staff team means that outcomes for pupils remain exceptional.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that the whole school community know the importance of keeping children and young people safe at the heart of everything they do. The designated safeguarding leader (DSL), and the wider staff team hold a deep knowledge of the safeguarding support that each pupil needs. The DSL plans a comprehensive programme of staff training. This training focuses on the safeguarding issues that may affect pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The leader designated to working closely with families, also plays a pivotal role in keeping pupils safe. Leaders are tenacious in securing the best support and services possible to ensure the ongoing well-being and safety of pupils.

Background

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

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in October 2017.

How can I feedback 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.

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	107588
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	10242235
Type of school	Secondary and Sixth Form Special School
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	243
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	72
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mr David Peck MBE
Headteacher	Dr Chris Lingard
Website	http://www.ravenscliffe.calderdale.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Ravenscliffe is a Secondary and Sixth Form Special School in Calderdale Local Authority.
- The school caters for pupils with the full range of special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- All pupils have education, health and care plans.
- The current headteacher was appointed in 2020.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has expanded and now has a site for sixth form students at Springhall. This is a short drive from the main site.

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 the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Meetings were held both together and separately with the headteacher and deputy headteachers, one of whom is also the DSL.
- Inspectors also met with curriculum leads both separately, and along with the deputy headteachers.
- Inspectors held a telephone meeting with the communication lead that works across the school.
- Inspectors conducted a telephone interview with the local authority representative who is also the school improvement partner
- Inspectors met with the vice-chair of the local governing board, along with two other governors.
- Inspectors spoke with a mixed group of boys and girls, and separately with a small group of girls.
- They also spoke informally with pupils, at play times and lunchtimes and with parents dropping off and collecting pupils from school.
- Inspectors visited the sixth form at Springhall with one of the deputy headteachers.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, including the early stages of reading, Mathematics, and the sensory curriculum. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors reviewed documentation relating to the school's curriculum, including the post-16 curriculum, along with the school's own evaluation and its development plans.
- Inspectors reviewed planning and assessment documentation linked to pupils education and health care plans, including behaviour support plans.
- Inspectors reviewed responses to the staff survey and the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. This included the free-text comments from parents.

Inspection team

Berni Moorcroft, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Angela Spencer-Brooke

Ofsted Inspector

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