

Inspection of Rossett School

Green Lane, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG2 9JP

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

For the most part, Rossett School is a warm, friendly and welcoming school. Leaders, governors and staff are deeply committed to the pupils who attend the school. A strong determination to be inclusive and supportive permeates the school. Leaders and staff have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. As a result, virtually all pupils move on to positive next steps at the end of their time at Rossett.

Most pupils behave well, founded on strong relationships. A large number of parents reported to inspectors how well supported their child has been by members of staff, especially those in welfare teams. A notable minority of pupils, however, do not behave well. These pupils sometimes disrupt the smooth running of the school around the site and between lessons. Most pupils who communicated with inspectors feel safe at school, but the conduct of the minority makes some pupils feel unsafe at times.

The majority of pupils think that bullying either does not happen, or that staff deal with it effectively if it does occur. Some pupils and parents who communicated with inspectors, however, do not think it is well handled.

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

The curriculum is ambitious, broad and balanced. Across subjects, leaders have thought carefully about what content to include and how to assess what pupils have learned. Units of work build from one to the next in a reasoned order. On a minority of occasions, some curriculum planning is relatively less precise in its content. Most teaching is engaging. The curriculum in the sixth form is ambitious and meets the requirements of government guidance. Leaders have acted successfully to improve the rate of retention on certain sixth-form courses.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well for the most part. Leaders are ambitious for these pupils. To a high degree, staff use the pupils' 'individual provision maps' effectively, although at times this is not as consistent as it needs to be.

There is an impressive school-wide programme in place to support pupils with their reading. This includes phonics-based support for the weakest readers. High-quality training for staff underpins the programme.

The behaviour of students in the sixth form is of a high standard. Pupils' behaviour in the main school is mixed. Many pupils are routinely polite and well behaved, with respectful relationships between most pupils and staff. A minority of pupils, though, are not as well behaved. Some pupils' conduct out of lessons is variable, with overly boisterous behaviour. Some pupils ignore staff requests and instructions. Some staff do not apply the school's behaviour policy consistently. A minority of pupils are regularly late to lessons, or have to be rounded up by leaders and escorted to class.

Leaders are taking action to improve the behaviour of the challenging minority of pupils, including the implementation of the 'Learning Support Centre'. While leaders keep records of which pupils are sent to the 'Reflections Room', leaders do not analyse this information to identify patterns and take appropriate action. The records of pupils' attendance in lessons are unclear, and are not analysed by leaders. As a result, leaders do not have an accurate picture of whether pupils are late, trying to avoid going to lessons, or both, and consequently this limits their ability to deal with the problem as sharply as required.

The attendance of some pupils is poor. Leaders' attendance data for the term to date shows that approaching half of all disadvantaged pupils are persistently absent. Leaders follow the school's policy in attempting to improve this situation, but it lacks the necessary drive and urgency to bring about the required step change in some pupils' rate of attendance.

There is a strong programme for pupils' personal development. In particular, pupils learn about the principles of inclusivity, tolerance and respect. The programme in the sixth form is not as consistently strong as the main school, with some students not able to confidently describe what topics they have covered.

There is no question that governors and leaders are committed to the pupils. Leaders have built an inclusive culture and they want the best for all pupils. Governors have listened to the views of staff about workload and have supported leaders to make some well-received changes to help staff in their teaching.

However, governors do not have a fully accurate understanding of the school's performance. They have a more positive view of behaviour than is the case. They have not been enabled by leaders to rigorously explore those aspects of pupils' outcomes at key stage 4, which are less strong than others.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There are minor weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements that are easy to put right and do not leave children either being harmed or at risk of harm.

Arrangements for identifying and helping pupils who may be in need of support are secure. Leaders are effective in keeping these pupils in sight. The checks on staff joining the school meet requirements. Leaders know what to do should there be allegations against members of staff. Appropriate programmes are in place to raise pupils' awareness about, and how to get help if affected by, sexual violence and harassment.

The process for managing students' absence in the sixth form is not sufficiently tight. Students can self-certify absence, but this is not routinely followed up. Consequently, students could be at risk, but neither school nor parents might know for some time.

Staff know to pass on any concerns about the conduct of other adults, but some are unclear about the correct procedure to be followed.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A notable minority of pupils do not behave well. They ignore staff instructions, conduct themselves inconsiderately around the site, and are habitually late to lessons. This is disruptive to the smooth running of the school day. Most of the pupils causing this disruption have been at Rossett for the duration of their secondary education. Leaders should take action to ensure that staff are fully supported in managing pupil behaviour; ensure that all staff are enabled to implement the school's behaviour policies with consistent rigour, including the consistently effective support for pupils who report bullying and improve the analysis of behaviour and attendance-at-lesson data, so that more precisely targeted action can be taken.
- The attendance of some pupils is poor. This is particularly the case for pupils who are disadvantaged. Improving the rate of pupils' attendance was an area for improvement at the previous section 5 inspection in 2019 and at the section 8 No Formal Designation inspection in 2021. Although leaders are following the school's policy for pupil attendance, this is not bringing about the necessary improvement. Leaders must act with a greater sense of strategy, urgency and creativity to do things differently, so that there is a step change in pupils' rate of attendance.
- Arrangements for checking sixth-form students' attendance when they self-certificate by email are not tight enough. Under the current system, a student's self-certification might not be checked for a lengthy period. This means that the student may be at risk and/or be missing from education, but neither school nor parents would be aware. Immediate action must be taken to close this loophole, so that students' self-certified absence is checked daily.
- Some staff are not fully aware of when to report to the headteacher, chair of governors (chair) and the local authority designated officer (LADO) if concerned about the conduct of other staff members. While these staff know that such concerns must be passed on, leaders should ensure that all staff understand the process and circumstances for reporting concerns as appropriate to the headteacher, chair or LADO, rather than reporting a concern to the school's human resources team.

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.

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	136896
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10244635
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	1,205
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	190
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	John Hesketh
Headteacher	Helen Woodcock
Website	http://www.rossettschool.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	15 September 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there has been a substantial turnover of staff, with 20 new staff joining the school in September 2022.
- The school is part of the Red Kite Alliance, a collaborative partnership of schools and a university across Yorkshire.
- The school uses three unregistered alternative provisions: Strive for Education, Bilbrough Country Classrooms and Youth Employability Scheme.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- Concerns raised by children during the inspection are being examined by the appropriate bodies.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and members of the senior leadership team. An inspector met members of the governing body. The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with the steering group chair of the Red Kite Alliance.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, design technology and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum, visited lessons and spoke to pupils in religious education and philosophy and computing.
- Inspectors spoke with numerous groups of pupils informally and formally, in class and around the school.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors met with leaders responsible for the leadership of safeguarding. These meetings included the sampling of 'live' case files. Inspectors checked leaders' safeguarding processes when placing pupils in alternative provision and on work experience. Inspectors discussed safeguarding with the headteacher, governors, staff and pupils. An inspector checked the school's processes for ensuring the safer recruitment of staff.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff, pupils and parents, and emails from parents.

Inspection team

Steve Shaw, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Angela White	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Featherstone	Ofsted Inspector
Aejaz Laher	Ofsted Inspector
Jonathan Ferstenberg	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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