

Inspection of The Ryes College

Pump Farm, Bures Road, Assington, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 5NA

Inspection dates: 8 to 10 March 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Insufficient evidence

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils receive effective support at The Ryes College. They have missed large parts of their previous education. The carefully planned transition programme helps pupils settle quickly. Most now attend school regularly. Pupils value and trust staff. As a result, pupils like school. They benefit from leaders' high expectations of what they can learn. Pupils re-engage with learning and do well.

Clear routines mean that pupils are calm and safe. Pupils who have struggled to behave in the past learn to manage themselves well. If they become upset, staff support them to understand why. There is little bullying, and leaders resolve any issues well. Pupils concentrate well and are positive about their learning.

Pupils quickly learn to understand the ethos of the school. The regular assemblies assist with this. The 'Community' gatherings teach them to listen to each other and express their own views and feelings securely in front of others. They develop respect and resilience.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of opportunities. These are closely linked to the curriculum. For example, pupils visit the Suffolk coast and Roman ruins in Colchester. They learn citizenship and readiness for the world of work through activities such as helping at the local food bank.

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

The curriculum meets pupils' needs. Leaders have identified what they want pupils to learn. Leaders check what pupils already know and then plan the learning to address any gaps. Pupils mostly achieve well. In a few areas, leaders have not considered how in the long term new content builds on what pupils have learned previously. This means pupils do not fully develop the detailed knowledge they might.

Teachers deliver the curriculum effectively. They ensure that learning is broken into small steps so that pupils understand what they need to do. Teachers check effectively on what pupils understand and remember. They use this information to correct any misconceptions. Consequently, pupils develop their confidence in learning. They enjoy learning new things and articulate their knowledge enthusiastically.

Staff know how to support the weakest readers. They ensure that pupils build their knowledge of phonics to improve their reading fluency and confidence. This ensures that pupils are able to access the curriculum.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have improved how staff use the education, health and care plans (EHC plans) to support pupils' needs. For example, there is a daily review of what pupils know about literacy. This means pupils quickly move on to new learning. However, in a few areas, there is inconsistency in how teachers

apply leaders' approach. Pupils occasionally get confused about what they are learning and so do not achieve as well as they could.

Leaders have high expectations of behaviour. They have put in place a clear policy that staff apply consistently. When leaders have needed to use physical restraint, they have done this appropriately and as a last resort. As a result of leaders' work on behaviour, incidents and suspensions have reduced over time.

Leaders' actions to support pupils' attendance are successful. They liaise closely with parents and agencies to make sure pupils get the help they need. When pupils need to learn from home, leaders manage this effectively. This leads to pupils with previously high absence attending more frequently.

The curriculum supports pupils' personal development effectively. Pupils build up their understanding of areas such as democracy and the rule of law. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn about how to be successful in the workplace. They get the guidance they need to make informed choices about their next steps. Pupils move into appropriate further education and employment opportunities.

Staff value the collaborative way of working. Leaders support them well, and this creates a shared purpose.

The new proprietor body has the knowledge to support and challenge leaders. Through regular checks, it understands the strengths and weaknesses of the school's work. Leaders keep close oversight of safeguarding, ensuring that pupils are kept safe.

The proprietor body and leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met. All the necessary information is on the school website or available for parents and local authorities. This includes a suitable safeguarding policy. Regular health and safety checks mean that the site is safe. Leaders use risk assessment effectively to ensure all aspects of provision are suitable for pupils' learning. The relationships and sex education and health education policy provides pupils with the information they need in an age-appropriate way. The proprietor body has ensured that it fulfils statutory responsibilities such as with regard to careers.

Leaders comply with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders create a robust culture of safeguarding. They keep their own knowledge up to date and train staff well. Staff know how to spot and log concerns. Safeguarding records show that leaders respond promptly and thoroughly to concerns. They liaise with agencies quickly when they need to.

Leaders make sure they follow safer recruitment practices. They carry out all the required checks for staff who are employed to work at the school.

Pupils learn to stay safe through the curriculum. For example, they know a lot about online safety. The effective pastoral work of caring staff helps pupils feel safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- A few areas of the curriculum are not as precisely planned as they could be. This means that pupils do not routinely build their learning on what has come before as well as they might. Leaders need to ensure that all areas of the curriculum build up pupils' learning in an incremental way over the whole of their time in the school.
- Leaders have not ensured that all teachers fully understand how to plan for the learning needs identified in pupils' EHC plans effectively. Because of this, pupils are sometimes not getting the support they could. Leaders should review the strategies teachers use to support pupils' learning needs and make sure these are used consistently and effectively.

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.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 143911 |
| DfE registration number | 935/6004 |
| Local authority | Suffolk |
| Inspection number | 10254677 |
| Type of school | Other independent special school |
| School category | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 23 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 4 |
| Proprietor | The Ryes College Ltd |
| Chair | Nicola Kelly |
| Headteacher | Daniel Lawrence |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £37,705 to £67,457 |
| Telephone number | 01787 228344 |
| Website | https://education.keys-group.co.uk/school/the-ryes-college/ |
| Email address | admin.ryescollege@keys-group.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 7 to 9 July 2021 |

Information about this school

- A new proprietor body took over the running of the school in December 2022.
- There are no students in the sixth form, and leaders do not intend to take students in that age group in future. Insufficient evidence and amnesty are granted for the judgment of sixth-form provision.
- The school provides education for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, including autism spectrum disorder, Asperger syndrome, attachment disorders, anxiety, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and specific learning difficulties.
- The previous standard inspection was on 7 July 2021. All the independent school standards were met.
- The school uses three unregistered alternative provisions for a small number of pupils.
- Leaders do not use agency staff.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held meetings with the chair of the proprietor body, the chair of governors and other representatives of the proprietor body. They met with the headteacher, senior leaders, other leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector had a conversation by telephone with a representative of Essex local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, information technology and personal, social, health and economic education. 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 also evaluated the curriculum in some other subjects, notably science

and history.

- As part of the evaluation of safeguarding, inspectors checked the school's single central record of recruitment and vetting checks, considered its safeguarding policy and procedures and spoke to leaders, staff, parents and pupils.
- As part of checking compliance with the independent school standards, and evaluating other areas of provision, inspectors met with leaders, staff and pupils and scrutinised a range of policies and documents. They checked the safety and appropriateness of the school site.
- The lead inspector had conversations by telephone with several parents.
- Inspectors reviewed the three free-text responses submitted by parents during the inspection. There were too few responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, for inspectors to consider. Inspectors considered the 14 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Charlie Fordham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tessa Holledge

His Majesty's Inspector

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