

Inspection of Rigby Hall Day Special School

Rigby Lane, Aston Fields, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B60 2EP

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 February, and 21 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a time of change at Rigby Hall. Leaders, staff and governors are committed to pupils achieving the most from their time at school. Their actions show a determination to make the necessary improvements quickly. All know there is more work to ensure the new curriculum is well implemented in all classes.

Pupils have a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff work hard with families to gain a clear understanding of these needs. However, staff do not use this information consistently to adapt the curriculum to help pupils learn more and do more over time.

Leaders have created a unique and engaging environment for pupils to learn in. The outdoor gym, forest school, and the life skills village enrich pupils' learning and experiences. Pupils learn to cross the road on the school zebra crossing. Regular trips into town to buy things from a local shop enriches what they learn in school lessons.

Rigby Hall is a calm and purposeful environment. Consequently, behaviour is generally positive in lessons and at other times, such as breaktimes and lunchtimes. Leaders follow up on any incidents of bullying. Pupils feel confident that an adult will listen to any concerns they may have.

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

Since the previous inspection, in February 2022, leaders have been tenacious and driven to improve the curriculum and provision for pupils. They, supported by a strong governing body, understand the relative strengths and weaknesses of the school. Leaders' current actions are positive and focused on what is needed.

Leaders have set high expectations for what should be taught and when. Sequences of learning across all subjects are well planned. However, the curriculum is not always delivered consistently or as intended. Staff do not always use the detailed information they have about the needs of the pupils to adapt lessons to make learning more understandable. In these instances, pupils do not engage fully in their learning and do not do as well as they could.

Over the last few years, the profile of the pupil population at Rigby Hall has changed. More pupils than in the past now have additional needs, such as autism spectrum disorder. In some cases, this includes sensory processing needs. Leaders have proactively updated aspects of the provision to meet these needs. For example, many pupils access programmes to support their sensory integration needs through movement breaks.

Leaders want pupils to 'have a voice'. Staff work with speech and language therapists to identify pupils' communication needs and implement appropriate

strategies to meet these needs. Staff receive training about the communication tools that pupils use. However, some staff do not use these consistently in all lessons and around the school to ensure that all pupils can communicate their wants and needs. Leaders are aware of this and are taking appropriate action to improve this aspect of their work.

Leaders in the early years prioritise identifying each child's individual needs when they join the school. Where needed, they involve other professionals, such as educational psychologists and occupational therapists. Well-considered environments are designed to help pupils learn in different ways. For example, inspectors saw the use of forest schools to develop early learning skills, such as following instructions. At times, staff use signing and symbols well to support communication with pupils. However, in other cases, staff do not use this useful information about pupils' specific needs well enough to plan and deliver their lessons.

Leaders prioritise reading. They have put in place a suitable phonics scheme. There are clear plans for those pupils who are not yet ready to learn phonics and those who are just starting. This includes recognising sounds in the environment and exploring 'indestructible' books. However, this is not yet being consistently delivered effectively by all staff. This means that some pupils struggle to decode words. In contrast, others are not challenged enough to develop more confidence, fluency and understanding in reading. Leaders have recently made changes to the organisation of the implementation of the reading curriculum at Rigby Hall to better address these issues.

Sixth-form students follow a well-thought-out curriculum, which takes account of their views and preferences, as well as their needs. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, are prepared well for adulthood. There is an extensive careers programme, which gets pupils ready to think about work and about future learning. Older pupils sample vocational courses, so they understand the opportunities they may have.

Pupils contribute their ideas about the school through the six pupil councils. Older pupils and sixth-form students work with the local community. They do charity work and volunteer in places such as local charity shops, with British Waterways and in school. Pupils and students are proud of the contributions they make.

Leaders want the best for their pupils. Recent changes to expectations for how pupils should behave in school have led to improvements, particularly among the older pupils. However, these have meant that suspensions have recently risen considerably. Leaders are currently considering how they support pupils who may display challenging behaviour more effectively so they can develop appropriate alternatives to repeated suspensions.

Governors discharge their statutory duties well. They have recently commissioned external reviews of many aspects of the school's work. These reports and their visits to the school have deepened their knowledge of what is a strength of the school and what needs further development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are knowledgeable about safeguarding. They know pupils and families well. Staff receive thorough training, so they understand the risks pupils may face. Staff report any concerns they have, and leaders act on these quickly. Leaders make sure that pupils get the help they need. Leaders follow up on staff concerns and ensure all recruitment checks are carried out.

Pupils are taught about healthy relationships and keeping themselves safe online. They are learning how to communicate effectively about whether they consent to actions that affect them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum implementation is well adapted for pupils with SEND in all classes and lessons, including the early years. This means that activities and interactions are not always focused on how pupils need to learn. This limits the progress that pupils make across the school. Leaders need to ensure that the planned curriculum is consistently implemented and adapted appropriately for pupils with SEND so that they can make the best possible progress during their time at the school.
- Recent changes to the behaviour policy and procedures in school have led to an increase in suspensions and other sanctions. This means that some pupils with education, health, and care (EHC) plans are repeatedly spending time away from school and the support that will help them learn and prepare for their next steps. Leaders should bring together all available information about pupils' behaviour and analyse this carefully and regularly to evaluate the extent to which the new behaviour policy and strategies have the desired impact on pupils' behaviour, developing appropriate alternatives to repeated suspensions.

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	117049
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10256848
Type of school	All-through special
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	15
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing	Mark Tabbernor
Headteacher	Tracey Smith
Website	www.rigbyhallschool.com
Date of previous inspection	15 and 16 February 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Rigby Hall Day Special School is for pupils with moderate and severe learning difficulties or complex needs.
- All pupils at the school have an EHC plan.
- The school does not use alternative provisions.
- 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

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

- Inspectors initially inspected the school on 14 and 15 February 2023. On 21 June 2023, two of His Majesty’s Inspectors returned to the school to gather further evidence. The evidence gathered from all three days was used to inform the final judgements.
- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have considered that in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders. Inspectors also met with some governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with the school’s own school improvement partner.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: mathematics, physical education, personal, social and health education and early reading. For each deep dive, inspectors met with leaders, looked at curriculum plans, spoke to teachers, talked to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work. Inspectors listened to some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors visited other lessons and spoke to pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors scrutinised the responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, and the responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors met with some parents and with drivers and escorts who provide transport to and from school.
- Inspectors looked at behaviour, bullying, attendance, and safeguarding records.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding arrangements by checking the school’s approach to staff recruitment, scrutinising policy documents and meeting with the designated safeguarding lead.

Inspection team

Claire Price, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
Jane Edgerton	Ofsted Inspector
Alexander Laney	His Majesty’s Inspector
Chris Pollitt, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
Sue Morris-King	His Majesty’s Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

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

© Crown copyright 2023