

Inspection of an outstanding school: The Ruth Gorse Academy

Black Bull Street, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS10 1HW

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 October 2023

Outcome

The Ruth Gorse Academy continues to be an outstanding school.

The principal of this school is Ben Mallinson. This school is part of The Gorse Academies Trust which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), John Townsley, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Anne McAvan.

What is it like to attend this school?

At The Ruth Gorse Academy, there are no barriers to pupils' success. This includes pupils who are disadvantaged. Pupils are encouraged to be ambitious and confident. The school has set extremely high academic expectations for what pupils can achieve. Pupils meet these expectations with pride. This results in exceptionally strong academic outcomes.

Pupils flourish in this school where everyone nurtures and celebrates individual differences. The school's annual 'Culture Day' encourages pupils to attend wearing cultural dress. Visiting speakers teach pupils about different faiths and cultures. Pupils take part in wide-ranging activities that raise their cultural awareness even further. Pupils are proud to be part of a diverse and welcoming school community.

Pupils display exemplary behaviour. They move around the building in a calm and orderly manner. In lessons, they are focused and resilient. Pupils go out of their way to support one another. Their relationships with staff are very positive. A respectful culture pervades the school. Pupils enjoy their education. They feel safe and highly valued.

Pupils appreciate the school's vibrant and varied 'enrichment ++' programme. This provides rich educational experiences beyond the academic curriculum. Clubs include sports, drama, languages and areas of special interest. These extra-curricular activities help to develop pupils' talents, teamwork and social skills.

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

The quality of education at The Ruth Gorse Academy is exceptional. Leaders have ensured a broad and ambitious curriculum is in place across the school. The 'Gorse Code' underpins the school curriculum extremely well. The code makes the school's expectations for pupils' learning clear. All lessons include tasks where pupils apply knowledge independently. They transfer existing knowledge to new contexts as a matter of course. Pupils have high levels of resilience when faced with difficult tasks. For example, Year 8 pupils demonstrated intense commitment when mastering new skills in a volleyball lesson.

Teachers are highly skilled and well trained. They bring the aims of the curriculum to life. Teachers know their pupils well. They check pupils' understanding with precision. Any gaps that pupils have in learning are swiftly addressed. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make highly effective progress through the curriculum.

Pupils are intensely committed to their learning. Their excellent behaviour supports the effective delivery of the curriculum. Pupils' learning is rarely interrupted. All staff act in accordance with the school's clear and embedded policies. Staff focus on what pupils do well. Pupils are highly motivated by the school's reward and recognition strategies. The school dedicates lesson time to reviewing and celebrating pupils' successes. Pupils strive to live up to the school's high expectations. As a result, a culture of pride and ambition spreads throughout the school.

Leaders ensure there is a detailed and creative approach to supporting reading. Experienced staff deliver precisely matched intervention packages. As a result, pupils, who are below age-related expectations in reading, catch up with their peers rapidly. The school's 'forensic reading' programme provides all pupils with the opportunity to read challenging texts widely and often. This develops their reading skills and encourages the use of sophisticated vocabulary. The carefully chosen reading materials also help pupils to debate important topics such as misogyny.

The school places a high priority on the extensive personal development of pupils. Opportunities for pupils to discover their unique talents and interests are plentiful. Pupils are encouraged successfully to focus on their physical health. For example, all pupils take part in 'Gorse Gets Healthy' lessons. Pupils also receive professional coaching in the 'Big 3' sports of volleyball, karate and rowing. Pupils in all year groups enjoy a rich and diverse careers programme. This results in pupils who are highly ambitious and optimistic about their future.

The Gorse Academies Trust encourages a collaborative approach to teaching and learning. This sharing of resources reduces staff workload. Staff enjoy working in the school. They are proud of the difference they are making for pupils. They are well supported by leaders who listen to their views. Staff, governors and trustees

are deeply committed to pupils and the local community. They are passionate about ensuring any barriers to pupils' success are overcome. Leaders ensure the school is continually improving. Parents highly value the education the school provides.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 July 2017.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	140565
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10268017
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1280
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Anne McAvan
Principal	Ben Mallinson
Website	http://ruthgorse.leeds.sch.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 July 2017

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Gorse Academies Trust.
- The principal of the school has changed since the last inspection.
- The school uses three registered alternative providers of education.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- 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 and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal and other senior leaders over the course of the inspection. The lead inspector also met with the CEO of the multi-academy trust.

- The lead inspector held a meeting with the chair of the board of trustees and three trustees. They also met with three members of the local governing body. They reviewed documentation relating to governance, including minutes from trust board meetings.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, science, physical education and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector met with leaders responsible for the reading curriculum and visited reading interventions.
- An inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator and considered the support given to pupils with SEND during lesson visits.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for personal development and visited registration sessions.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and students formally throughout the inspection and spoke with them informally at social times and in lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and the school's improvement plans.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, parents and staff gathered through Ofsted's questionnaires, including Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Hannah Millett, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sam Broome

Ofsted Inspector

Angela White

Ofsted Inspector

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