

# Inspection of Rowhill School

York Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 3JG

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Inspection dates: 3 and 4 October 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Inadequate**

Personal development

**Inadequate**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Previous inspection grade

Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Rowhill School does not offer pupils an acceptable standard of education. The quality of pupils' learning experiences and opportunities can be widely different. This is because decisions made about pupils' educational offer are not always made in response to an individual's particular needs. Consequently, the majority of pupils do not learn the key knowledge and skills they need in readiness for the next stage of their education.

Many pupils struggle to engage positively with staff and with their peers. This results in poor behaviour across the school. To manage this, the school has reduced the amount of time pupils attend. Instead, many pupils are offered online remote education. This learning, however, is poorly designed and pupils rarely participate. Consequently, they disengage even more from education and they fall even further behind in their learning.

When pupils do attend school, their learning is frequently disrupted by noisy corridors and interrupted lessons. Pupils do recognise that staff will try to help them if they can. However, staff do not follow a shared approach to support pupils who struggle to regulate their behaviour. This often results in lengthy outbursts of loud and aggressive behaviour, which adds to the noise that disturbs the learning of others.

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

The majority of pupils currently do not learn the school's intended curriculum. Most pupils are expected to learn through a mix of online education at home and in-school lessons. However, attendance at school and remote learning is very poor. The school knows this but are not taking sufficient action to make the much-needed improvements. Therefore, pupils are not acquiring the knowledge and skills they need to be confident learners.

The school has developed a curriculum to provide pupils with the important knowledge they need for adulthood. Pupils can study a core curriculum of English, mathematics and science and physical education. This is delivered alongside subjects and qualifications such as finance, art, personal, social and health education and catering. When pupils attend school, teachers teach lessons that help pupils to make connections to previous knowledge. As a result, these pupils begin to develop confidence in exploring new ideas. Some go on to achieve suitable qualifications in these subjects. However, this is not the case for the majority of pupils, who do not come into school regularly to learn. The teaching of the remote curriculum is varied. Pupils experience a disjointed series of lessons, exacerbated by pupil's individual special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) not being supported.

The majority of pupils go to the school because they have difficulties in managing their social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. Detailed plans are in place

to support those pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan). These plans are regularly updated and shared with staff. Teachers have regular training to help them meet the complex SEND of these pupils. However, the same systematic approach is not in place for those pupils without an EHC plan. Information about the needs of these pupils is often out of date. This means staff rely on pupils attending school to identify how to plan for individual needs. As a result, teaching is often not designed to support these pupils to learn well.

Poor behaviour regularly disrupts pupils' learning. The school has not embedded a joined-up approach to manage pupils' SEMH needs. The school uses suspensions regularly. When pupils return from suspension, plans to reintegrate them back into learning lack detail. This often means pupils do not get the support they need, which leads to further suspensions and even more disruption to their learning.

The support to help pupils learn to read is not in place. The school has not yet agreed on the best way to check for gaps in reading knowledge. Therefore, everyone gets the same help. This means pupils who need additional help, do not get the specific practise they need to be a confident reader. Every day, teachers do read to pupils who attend the school a range of ambitious texts, such as Shakespearean plays. These have been specially selected to widen pupils' appreciation of cultural texts.

The school recognises the different risks that some of their pupils may face. Detailed safeguarding records demonstrate the regular contact the school has with external services, like the police and local youth teams. Regular checks on pupils' well-being are made when they do not attend school. Additionally, the school has designed a personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education to reflect these risks. Pupils learn about the dangers of criminal exploitation and the legalities of antisocial behaviour. This helps pupils be aware of how to keep themselves safe. However, the pupils who do not attend school, miss out on this vital education.

The school offers specialist careers advice and guidance. This is helping those pupils who engage to be ready to apply for colleges and apprenticeships. The school takes steps to engage those pupils who do not attend regularly. This means an increasing number of pupils are going on to remain in post-16 education and employment training.

Currently, the school does not focus enough on the right actions to make essential improvements to pupils' education. In addition, governors are also not ensuring the school fulfils their statutory duties around equalities, as not all pupils receive a broad and balanced, equitable education. Urgent improvements are, therefore, needed to significantly improve the education on offer.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Too many pupils do not attend school regularly. This means that they miss out on the essential education they need to prepare them for the future. The school must continue to work with all agencies to ensure that the attendance of pupils significantly improves.
- There is not a clear or effective strategy in place to teach the school's remote education provision, including the online teaching of PSHE. Pupils receiving this provision are not gaining the essential knowledge and skills they need. The school must urgently review the arrangements for remote education. This should include making much-needed improvements to the remote education curriculum and to put in support to help pupils attend online lessons.
- The school does not have a clear process to successfully reintegrate pupils who are frequently suspended. This means too many pupils are regularly suspended and, therefore, miss even more of their education. The school must take swift action reduce the number of repeat suspensions by ensuring pupils receive the support they need to positively engage with their education.
- Staff do not have the knowledge they need to support the individual needs of all pupils with SEND. This means learning is not always adapted to help pupils learn well or engage positively with lessons. The school must ensure that there is a shared understanding of the most up-to-date strategies needed to support individual pupils learning and behaviour, to help pupils learn effectively and behave well.
- The school does not have strategic oversight of the weaknesses of the school. Therefore, actions are not being taken to make the important improvements needed. The school must ensure that leaders at all levels use accurate information to strategically monitor and evaluate the impact of the work of the school.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	115836
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10267982
<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	44
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Local authority
<b>Chair</b>	Jane Pratt
<b>Headteacher</b>	Urmilla Choubae
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.rowhill.hants.sch.uk">www.rowhill.hants.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school offers up to 88 places for pupils, including those that have been permanently excluded from mainstream school.
- All pupils who attend have SEND. Around a quarter of pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The number of pupils joining the school who have been permanently excluded from mainstream school has significantly increased over the past year.
- The school makes use of two registered and two non-registered providers of alternative providers to support the education of a small number of pupils.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons

responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also met with the representatives of management committee, including the chair. Inspectors also met with representatives of the local authority.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, PSHE and science. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, teachers and pupils, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors visited lessons that were taught online through the remote education provision. Other subjects were considered as part of this inspection.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including the free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff survey and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- 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 reviewed and scrutinised a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' plans for improving the school, minutes of governor meetings and records of attendance and behaviour incidents.

## Inspection team

Michelle Payne, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Alan Johnson	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Ellison	His Majesty's Inspector

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