

Inspection of The Rowan School

4 Durvale Court, Furniss Avenue, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S17 3PT

Inspection dates:	22 and 23 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils receive high-quality nurture and support. The school is aspirational for what pupils can accomplish. There is a strong and genuine desire to ensure that pupils achieve the school's aim to 'build a secure foundation for learning and life'.

Pupils are exceptionally well cared for by highly skilled staff in a supportive environment. The ambitious curriculum has been thoughtfully designed around the needs of pupils. Pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans are used effectively in order to inform their individual learning and support. Pupils attend well and achieve well. The school constantly strives to offer the very best for pupils. This includes close and effective work with specialist therapeutic professionals.

Pupils enjoy an extensive range of enrichment activities, such as swimming, cooking, musical performances and outdoor education activities. Pupils benefit from the school's many connections with external specialists and other schools within the local area.

Relationships are excellent. Staff quickly get to know pupils' different needs and requirements. Pupils develop their resilience and become increasingly independent. They learn ways to recognise their emotions and develop strategies to manage their behaviour. They learn to communicate their needs and feelings. Pupils behave well, feel safe and have caring staff to turn to when they need help.

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

The curriculum is clearly set out across four different pathways. It is designed to grow pupils' knowledge and skills from the 'roots' to the 'leaves' pathways. It is broad and ambitious. From the early years, content for different curriculum subjects has been carefully chosen. Learning is personalised to each pupils' stage of development. The school plans with precision to meet pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively.

Learning and support are linked well to pupils' EHC plans. Targets for pupils to achieve are broken down into small manageable steps. The school gains an in-depth knowledge of pupils. Pupils are encouraged to do well. Those with high anxiety and sensory needs learn in a way that is suitable for them. Staff are excellent role models for pupils. They promote respectful relationships and positive interactions with others.

There is necessary focus on the development of pupils' communication and language skills. The school continues to work in partnership with speech and language therapists. Changes to the way pupils are taught to communicate are having an increasingly positive impact. The school is proficient in teaching pupils to use signing, pictures and 'core board' symbols to communicate effectively. Some pupils use digital devices at home and in school with growing independence.

Reading is prioritised. Phonics is taught well from the early years and 'roots' pathway. The school makes suitable adaptations. Staff provide extra support for pupils to access the

phonics programme and gain the knowledge and skills they need to become fluent and confident readers. Curriculum topics foster a love of reading. Pupils, including children in the early years, enjoy listening to stories. Staff are skilled in delivering sensory stories. For example, pupils particularly enjoy rattling the skeleton and making the 'mouse' squeak in the story of 'The Hairy Scary Castle'.

Currently, the school's checking of pupils' learning in some curriculum subjects is not as precise as it should be. The school is in the process of making necessary improvements to ensure that teachers have a secure understanding of pupils' learning in all curriculum subjects.

Pupils' personal development is at the very centre of everything the school does. All at the school have a passionate ambition for pupils to be involved and included in their local and wider community. For example, the school's work with a national charity, focusing on improving pupils' life chances and promoting inclusion, has provided an admirable extension of opportunities for pupils, including a recent visit to learn about the work of a local hospital.

Pupils enjoy caring for the school's allotment. They take part in different sports. They visit the theatre and enjoy whole-school trips. They relish drinking hot chocolate around a campfire in the school's own woods. Pupils learn about online safety, fundamental British values and different relationships. Whole-school events and visitors to school help pupils to develop respect for different cultures and to appreciate diversity.

The governing body provides excellent support and challenge to the school. Governors know the school very well. Leaders at all levels continually seek ways to improve. They act as advocates for pupils with SEND not just at this school but more widely for the Sheffield SEND community. This includes through the school's outreach work with other schools.

Staff benefit from high-quality professional development. They appreciate the consideration they receive for their workload and well-being. They are proud to work at the school. Most parents and carers typically praise the 'huge difference' the school has made to their children's lives.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school is in the process of redeveloping the school's assessment system. In some curriculum subjects, assessment is not aligned well to the knowledge and skills that pupils learn. Teachers cannot be sure that pupils are knowing more and remembering more of the curriculum in these subjects. The school should ensure that assessment

checks precisely what pupils learn of the curriculum and that teachers can use this information effectively in order to inform teaching.

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 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	107171
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10346164
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	99
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Paul Sharpe
Headteacher	Carla Ribeiro
Website	www.rowanschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 July 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides education for pupils with autism, speech, language, communication and interaction needs, and a range of associated and complex learning needs. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.
- At the time of the inspection, there were three children in the early years.
- The school provides specialist outreach support to other schools within Sheffield.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth-form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school’s education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher, the special educational needs co-ordinators, leaders with responsibility for safeguarding, the senior attendance champion, the attendance officer, the pastoral leader, leaders with oversight for behaviour management, several curriculum leaders, the school business manager, the school business support manager and members of the pupil well-being team.
- The lead inspector met with two members of the governing body, including the vice-chair, and spoke on the telephone with a school improvement partner for Learn Sheffield.
- The inspectors focused inspection activity on the following groups of subjects: early reading, mathematics and sensory and physical education. For each group of subjects, the inspectors visited a sample of lessons and looked at samples of pupils’ work.
- The lead inspector spoke to leaders about the school’s approach to teaching communication and language skills and the curriculum for relationships, sex and health education. The lead inspector also scrutinised a sample of pupils’ English books.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 spoke to some parents informally at the start of the school day and met with some staff. Inspectors met with some pupils with the support of an adult.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted’s surveys for pupils, parents and staff and the responses to the school’s own surveys for parents.

Inspection team

Stephanie Innes-Taylor, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Andrea English

Ofsted Inspector

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