

Inspection of Rhyddings

Haworth Street, Oswaldtwistle, Accrington, Lancashire BB5 3EA

Inspection dates:	8 and 9 January 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The interim headteacher of this school is Dave Lancaster. This school is part of the LET Education 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), Steve Campbell, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jennifer Woodward.

What is it like to attend this school?

With help from the trust, the school has raised its expectations of pupils' behaviour. This has helped to foster a more respectful culture than in the past. Typically, the relationships that pupils have with their teachers and peers are positive. Most pupils enjoy school.

The trust has high expectations for pupils' achievement. Recent improvements in staffing and leadership at the school have helped to raise pupils' achievement in key stage 3. However, in some subjects, the key stage 4 curriculum is not designed and delivered successfully. This limits how well older pupils learn. Furthermore, a small minority of pupils' high absence rate means that they miss vital learning. This hinders some pupils from achieving as well as they should.

Some pupils have begun to benefit from the recent improvements that have been made to the programme to promote their wider development. The school has started to organise activities that help pupils to learn about life in modern Britain. For instance, pupils celebrate and mark faith events at relevant times of the year. Some pupils relish their roles on the junior leadership team. These positions help pupils to feel heard and valued. Reading ambassadors enjoy supporting their younger peers to develop confidence when reading. However, these opportunities are not as rich or as broad as they could be to enable more pupils to take advantage of such experiences.

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

The work to develop a broad and ambitious curriculum is further developed in key stage 3 than in key stage 4. Where the curriculum is better designed, the school has identified the key knowledge that pupils should know and remember to develop their learning over time. However, this work is not complete in key stage 4. As a result, older pupils struggle to access new learning, as their previous learning is insecure.

In the main, staff have strong subject expertise. This helps them to choose teaching activities that engage pupils with their learning. However, at times, staff do not check that pupils have learned the subject content in sufficient depth. This results in some staff moving on to new learning before pupils are ready. Consequently, some pupils do not learn as well as they should.

The school has effective systems in place to identify the additional needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, for some pupils, staff do not implement strategies effectively enough to ensure that pupils can access the curriculum well. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they could.

The school is increasingly prioritising reading. Recently, it has strengthened the support for younger pupils who struggle to read. However, the school's processes to identify deficits in older pupils' reading knowledge are not well developed. This means that some pupils do not receive the support that they need to read with confidence and fluency.

The school has worked with the trust to reshape its behaviour policies. Most pupils behave well and live up to the school's expected standards of conduct. The school has begun to support pupils who continue to repeat unwanted behaviours better than in the past. This means that pupils can, at most times, learn without interruption. The school has sharpened its focus on raising attendance rates. However, the absence rate for a small minority of pupils is still consistently high. This is because, at times, the school does not monitor why pupils are absent closely enough. Consequently, the support that pupils receive to encourage them to attend school regularly does not have the desired impact.

Pupils learn about age-appropriate topics through the personal, social, health and economic education curriculum. They know how to keep safe online and in the community. The careers programme is designed to give most pupils sufficient insights into different career pathways. Some pupils benefit from opportunities that are designed to promote their wider development. For instance, some pupils enjoyed visiting Madrid to practise their Spanish language skills. However, for many pupils, the extra-curricular opportunities are not broad and rich enough. This hinders aspects of pupils' personal development.

The trust has recently made substantial changes to governance arrangements at the school. This is helping the school to refine its policies and practices to ensure that weaknesses in the curriculum and behaviour are better addressed. Staff value the increasing support that they have received to raise pupils' standard of education. They also appreciate the consideration shown for their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the curriculum at key stage 4 is underdeveloped. For instance, the essential knowledge that pupils should learn is not identified clearly. This limits how well some pupils secure their understanding of the subject content. The school should ensure that the key stage 4 curriculum identifies what pupils need to learn, and when this will happen, so that pupils can build on their knowledge well over time.
- Some teachers do not check and remedy gaps in pupils' knowledge as well as they should. This means that some pupils do not build a deep enough understanding of subject content. As a result, they are unable to understand more complex ideas as they progress through the curriculum. The school should ensure that teachers are equipped to design activities that help them to check and support pupils to gain a deeper understanding of the subject so that they can achieve well.
- The school does not diagnose and address older pupils' reading knowledge gaps as well as it should. This limits how well some of these older pupils access the curriculum. The school should strengthen its support for older pupils who struggle to read to

ensure that pupils develop their reading knowledge so that they can access the curriculum and achieve.

- At times, teachers do not adapt teaching activities well to meet the additional needs of pupils with SEND. This means that some pupils do not access the curriculum as well as they could. The school should ensure that lesson activities are suitably adapted to meet pupils' additional needs so that they can achieve as well as they should.
- The programme to promote pupils' wider development is not as rich and broad as it should be. As a result, some pupils do not gain sufficient opportunities to expand their interests and talents. The school should ensure that its extra-curricular programme is strengthened so that more pupils take advantage of wider enrichment activities.
- The school does not identify and analyse the reasons for some pupils' absences closely enough. This means that, for a small number of pupils, absence rates remain high. The school should improve how it monitors and analyses the absences for these pupils so that the barriers that stop them from attending school are removed more 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.

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	148921
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10348386
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	697
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jennifer Woodward
CEO of the trust	Steve Campbell
Headteacher	Dave Lancaster (interim headteacher)
Website	www.rhyddings.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Rhyddings converted to become an academy in June 2022. When its predecessor school, Rhyddings, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged as requires improvement for overall effectiveness.
- The school is part of the LET Education multi-academy trust.
- The interim headteacher was appointed in November 2024. The deputy headteacher was appointed in December 2024. There have also been some substantial changes to other areas of leadership and governance arrangements of the school. An interim governing body was appointed in January 2025.
- The school uses the provision of four registered alternative providers and one unregistered alternative provider for a small number of pupils.
- 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

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). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 held meetings with the CEO of the trust, the interim headteacher and senior leaders. Inspectors met with a range of other staff and leaders during the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke with representatives of the interim governing body and the board of trustees, including the chair of trustees. Inspectors also spoke with a representative of the local authority and the alternative providers.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour across the school, including at social times.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, science, mathematics, art and design, history and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, they held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with subject leaders and looked at pupils' work in some other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with the leaders responsible for pupils' personal development, behaviour and attendance, early careers teachers, alternative provision, careers, the provision for SEND and reading.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and records relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- 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.
- The inspectors considered the responses of parents and carers to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.

Inspection team

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