

Red House Academy

Rutherglen Road, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR5 5LN

Inspection dates

12–13 April 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- GCSE examination results in 2015 were not good enough and reflected some underachievement.
- Pupils in Year 11 in 2014/15 did not make the progress they should during their five years at the academy.
- The academy does not give enough assistance to temporary teachers to enable them to secure pupils' good progress.
- Teaching is not leading to rapidly improving outcomes for pupils and requires improvement, particularly in mathematics.
- Some marking and assessment do not help pupils to make better progress.
- Some staff do not apply the academy's behaviour policy consistently.
- The use of pupil premium funding is not resulting in a significant narrowing of the gap in the progress made by disadvantaged pupils in comparison to their classmates in both English and mathematics.
- Leaders do not have a clear enough view of the progress groups of pupils are making to enable them to close progress gaps successfully.
- Senior leaders did not act quickly enough to stop the decline in standards and progress in 2014 and 2015 and governors were too slow to spot this.

The school has the following strengths

- The new leaders for English and mathematics are starting to make a difference to the quality of teaching in these subjects.
- The current Year 11 pupils are doing much better than the 2015 cohort.
- Attendance is much higher than in previous years.
- Pupils are safe, happy and punctual to lessons. They look after their work, which is usually well presented.
- The governing body is now sharply focused on pupils' outcomes across the academy. Governors are challenging senior leaders appropriately.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and improve the outcomes for pupils, especially in English and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring all teachers follow the academy’s marking and assessment policies
 - developing the skills of staff so that they take into account the needs of all groups of pupils, and plan lessons that inspire and challenge pupils to achieve their very best
 - embedding the teaching of literacy and numeracy across all curriculum areas to increase pupils’ success in all subjects
 - ensuring all staff apply the academy’s behaviour policy consistently in order to ensure any low-level disruption is eradicated
 - developing teachers’ skills to accurately assess the quality of pupils’ work
 - sharing the good practice that already exists within the academy to effect more rapid improvements in the quality of teaching and outcomes
 - ensuring that the gaps in both standards reached and the progress made by disadvantaged pupils are further reduced so that they make the same progress as non-disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve leadership across the academy by:
 - ensuring temporary supply staff are supported in delivering lessons that result in good progress for pupils
 - ensuring leaders at all levels have a regular, accurate and unambiguous view of the progress pupils are making over time
 - further developing opportunities for teachers to build on their skills through targeted and appropriate professional development and training
 - regularly challenging staff to account for the performance of their pupils through rigorous analysis of assessment information
 - being swift in identifying and tackling underachievement so that this is reversed and outcomes improve.

An external review of the academy’s use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Since the last inspection senior leaders and governors have not acted quickly enough to stop the decline in standards and progress. Recent support from Northern Education Trust is proving effective in helping the academy to make more rapid improvements, for example through training for governors.
- The leadership of teaching and learning has been strengthened and the work of new leaders in English and mathematics is starting to have an impact. In addition, staffing in both these subject areas is more stable after a period of difficulties with recruitment of staff
- New leadership in this academic year of both English and mathematics is already beginning to show clear improvements. Both English and mathematics now have clear direction, staffing and vision leading to structured approaches to teaching and improvements in outcomes.
- Early GCSE entry for English this year shows that the academy has already improved on the overall 2015 results in that subject using just half of the cohort. This early entry is appropriately allowing those pupils to develop their progress in English and other subjects to raise standards further.
- There is insufficient challenge by leaders to check the quality of marking in order to ensure that teachers follow the academy's marking and assessment policies.
- Leaders have not ensured a consistent approach to the application of the academy's behaviour policies. Pupils say that on occasion teachers do not follow through on agreed sanctions, increasing the chances of low-level disruption to classes.
- Leaders have not gained an accurate view of expected outcomes in GCSE examinations due to inaccurate predictions. This has now been rectified with the use of external exam board examiners to check the accuracy of internal academy examinations and increased moderation by subject leaders from other schools.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils well by effectively promoting equality of opportunity and giving pupils a wide choice of courses to follow at GCSE. Pupils enjoy the choices they have in their GCSE options and say that these choices are supporting their future career aspirations. Pupils are clear about what they want to do when they leave the academy as a result of good advice and guidance.
- Leadership of the academy's internal support unit for pupils who have difficulty in coping with normal academy life is effective. The support is successfully helping pupils to reintegrate into the mainstream academy. Use of this facility is reducing over time as behaviour is improving.
- The leadership of teaching is strengthening and there is evidence of the positive impact of performance management in developing the skills of teachers.
- The effective management of attendance and exclusions is reducing absence so that it is now average and further reducing exclusions.
- There is a very strong culture of care and respect. This is mutual between pupils and teachers and is consistent across the whole academy. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is also strong in pupils, as is their grasp of British values, which are promoted well across the academy.
- The support from the relatively new sponsor, Northern Education Trust, is beginning to make a positive impact on school leaders, helping them to both identify areas of need and take appropriate actions to improve outcomes.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Since the last inspection, governors have received training and support from the trust so that they are now better placed to understand pupils' progress, and to challenge senior and middle leaders and ensure their accountability for standards. They recognise the urgency with which change needs to happen in order to ensure outcomes are at least good.
 - Governors demonstrate a clear moral purpose for the academy and are determined for it to succeed.
 - Governors ensure performance management is effective and that teachers do not automatically rise through the pay scale without their performance being checked.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement because outcomes for pupils are not as high as they should be. The quality of teaching, while improving, is too variable to secure good achievement, particularly in mathematics.
- Some activities do not take into account the needs of learners, and the work is sometimes too hard or too easy for the pupils. This arises where teachers make limited use of assessment information that tells them where individual pupils are in their learning.
- Not all teachers follow the academy's marking policy and as a result pupils are not always clear about how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve their work.
- Assessment is becoming more robust. For example, the academy moderates the work of pupils through dialogue with leaders in other schools and checks its internal exam performance using external qualified GCSE examiners. This is leading to a far better understanding by teachers of the progress pupils are making.
- In vocational areas such as manufacturing and sport, teachers plan well for all abilities and make sure that pupils are clear about what is needed to achieve high results. Clear verbal and written guidance is provided and pupils respond well to the advice given.
- Pupils say that they receive appropriate homework but that it varies between teachers. They say that when it is given it supports their work in the classroom.
- Pupils identified to inspectors with accuracy the subjects where they learn more effectively and can explain with clarity why this is the case. For example, they say the teaching of English is much improved and that they now enjoy the subject.
- The records of the checks made on pupils' learning are robust and allow leaders to get a clear picture of the performance of both staff and pupils. This is strengthening accountability and ensuring that intervention to support any gaps in learning is timely.
- In a few lessons, not enough attention is given to developing literacy and numeracy skills, and this is hindering pupils' progress. For example, incorrect spelling of technical words in some subjects is not helpful preparation for examinations.
- The use of learning support assistants in the classroom is effective. They speak to the lead teachers before the lesson and are deployed carefully to maximise their impact for individual students.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The academy's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are dressed smartly in full uniform, properly equipped for learning and punctual to lessons.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors say that they are cared for by their teachers and are very supportive of the academy.
- Pupils' folders and books are generally neat and, when pupils are given the opportunity, they respond to teachers' marking quickly and develop their understanding further.
- Pupils visibly become more mature as they move through the year groups, with older children displaying confidence and a strong sense of who they are and where they want to be in the future.
- The academy teaches pupils to be safe online and helps them to develop safety awareness. Pupils describe how the academy helps them to understand how to be healthy and fit and they are confident to report any issues they have to staff.
- Pupils and staff are sensitive to all forms of bullying, including stereotyping and homophobic or racist language. Staff deal with any issues quickly and effectively.
- Pupils welcome and participate in a range of extra-curricular activities.
- Since the last inspection, attendance has increased markedly. Exclusion, although still higher than typically found in secondary schools, is declining.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils move around the academy with purpose and care and show an obvious respect for each other and staff.
- Pupils say that behaviour is generally not a problem and that teachers help to keep them interested in their studies so that they are not distracted.
- Use of the academy's own internal support unit has ensured good nurture and support of the few pupils who find mainstream education difficult. These programmes of support have been successful at reducing issues of poor behaviour over time.
- Although rare, some low-level disruption does occur in lessons, particularly where staff are temporary to the academy. Some pupils say that this is not helping them to learn effectively on the occasions when this does happen.
- Pupils say that on occasion a very few staff say they will use agreed behaviour sanctions but do not follow through, which introduces an element of inconsistency.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- In 2015, GCSE examination results did not represent good progress over the five years the pupils had studied within the academy, particularly for English and mathematics. Pupils enter the academy with attainment below the national average and leave with standards well below the national average.
- Current progress and attainment, as evidenced by early GCSE entry in English and externally validated mock examination results in mathematics, alongside inspectors' observations of teaching and scrutiny of pupils' work, show that attainment gaps for disadvantaged pupils are narrowing.
- Both attainment and progress across the academy are inconsistent. Outcomes are typically much stronger on work-related, compared to academic, courses. The academy is acutely aware of the reasons behind this contrasting picture and current assessment information suggests that actions are having an impact.
- The picture of improvement across the academy this year is as a result of the now swifter interventions by the new heads of English and mathematics alongside the improving stability of staffing in other areas.
- The most-able pupils currently in Year 11 are making better progress than historically has been the case. Their work is of a high standard, neat and demonstrates clear gains in learning over time. Pupils express themselves with confidence and are articulate in their explanations to inspectors.
- Across the rest of the year groups, progress is showing improvement. Teachers are more aware of the standards their pupils are at, particularly in key stage 3. Most-able pupils make similar progress as their peers in school.
- Reading interventions in Year 7 are successfully improving the reading ages of less-able pupils and are ensuring that they are able to access the secondary curriculum. The use of pupil premium funding is not always maximised to make the fullest impact on progress, so that while gaps are closing they remain too wide.

School details

Unique reference number	135878
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10012015

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	551
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Callaghan
Principal	Thérèse Quincey
Telephone number	0191 5615511
Website	www.redhouseacademy.org
Email address	rha@redhouseacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	16–17 January 2014

Information about this school

- The academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Since the previous inspection the academy has appointed two new vice principals, one responsible for standards and the other for pastoral support. In addition, there are now permanent heads of English and mathematics.
- The academy is part of the Northern Education Trust.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the pupil premium is available, which is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority, is well above average.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan in receipt of special educational needs support is less than the national average; the proportion with special educational needs is well above the national average.
- The academy does not meet the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The academy makes no use of external alternative provision.
- The academy makes use of early entry to GCSE examinations in English.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons and parts of lessons, two of which were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Formal discussions were held with three groups of pupils, the governing body, the academy sponsor, the principal, senior and other leaders.
- Inspectors carried out a formal scrutiny of work in pupils' books in English and mathematics as well as scrutinising pupils' books and folders as part of lessons observed during the inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of supporting documents in regard to safeguarding and child protection, minutes of governors and interim executive committee meetings, performance management, progress data and external reports.
- Inspectors also took into account a range of published data about pupils' attainment and progress, school data regarding attendance and exclusions and school policies.
- Inspectors took account of the online responses to questionnaires by parents, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Colin Scott, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Nicholas Horn	Ofsted Inspector

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