

Rothwell Church of England Primary Academy

Queensway, Rothwell, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS26 0NB

Inspection dates

17–18 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' previous underperformance continues to impact on their progress over time from their starting points. Outcomes in key stages 1 and 2 are not yet consistently good.
- Despite a shared drive to improve teaching and learning, between Years 1 and 6 teaching is still not consistently strong. Pupils make variable progress across the curriculum.
- The progress that middle-ability pupils make is not consistently good. Work is not always well matched to their needs and lacks challenge.
- Systems for leaders to check pupils' progress lack rigour. Pupils and groups of pupils in need of further support are not always swiftly identified as a result.
- Pupils' awareness of the diversity of modern Britain is not well enough developed. There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of different faiths and cultures.

The school has the following strengths

- This is a rapidly improving school. Leaders have worked hard and successfully to tackle pupils' past underachievement.
- The principal has created a strong sense of community. Staff morale is high and there is a shared determination to further improve teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- Behaviour has improved rapidly under the principal's leadership. Leaders ensure that work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare and to safeguard pupils is effective. Pupils behave well, show good attitudes to learning and are kept safe.
- Pupils' progress is speeding up quickly. Since September, many pupils have made good progress in writing.
- As a result of effective provision, children in the early years get a good start to school life.
- Effective leadership, teaching and support enable pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to achieve well.
- Leaders and governors know what is working well and what is needed to ensure that pupils make the best possible progress. Difficulties within the trust have not affected the focus on driving improvements swiftly forward.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive, recognising the many improvements made. They appreciate the regular communication and care provided for their children. Parents would recommend this school to others.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, especially in key stages 1 and 2, in order to improve pupils' outcomes so that they are good by:
 - ensuring that pupils, particularly middle-ability and most-able pupils, are continually set challenging work across all curriculum subjects
 - developing and deepening pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding across a wider range of curriculum subjects
 - making sure that pupils in all classes know how to check their own learning and know what they need to do next to improve
 - ensuring that younger pupils are taught to form letters in line with the school's handwriting policy.
- Strengthen the rigour of the school's systems to check pupils' progress so that any pupils or groups of pupils in need of additional support are swiftly identified.
- Make sure that pupils develop a good understanding of life in modern Britain and are provided with opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding of different faiths and cultures.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- School leaders have had a positive impact on driving improvements across the school from a very low baseline. The impact of the principal's vision to build positive relationships across the school community is clear to see. Staff, parents and governors are very clear that this is a supportive learning environment for all.
- Leaders have a strong commitment to ensuring that teaching and learning are at least good. Where teaching is less effective, support for teachers is focused and frequent. There has been considerable progress towards this aim; however, the principal has rightly identified that some inconsistencies remain.
- Leaders have put in place a number of well-thought-out strategies and interventions to support pupils in making stronger progress. The delivery of these strategies, however, is still variable.
- The vice-principal, who is also the assessment leader, has a good understanding of the 2016 outcomes for pupils and the resulting areas for improvement. She works effectively with other leaders and teachers to bring about improvements. While the classroom assessment systems enable teachers to plan next steps, leaders know that a more robust and manageable system to frequently check pupils' progress is needed. They know this will provide a more effective way of ensuring that those in need of further support are identified swiftly and that all pupils are challenged to reach the highest standards they can.
- Leaders have ensured continued progress against plans for improvement through significant changes in staffing and despite challenges within the trust. The trust's circumstances have meant that support for school leaders has been limited. However, the partnership with the other primary school in the trust has been valuable in sharing good practice across the two schools. This helps to drive improvement.
- Middle leaders are increasingly involved in checking the impact of actions to develop the quality of teaching and learning. They observe pupils' learning, look at their work and check improvements they are making. They support staff well in putting in place effective systems and strategies for improvement.
- Leaders are successful in improving the progress pupils are making in their writing. The English leader has an accurate view of where strengths and weaknesses lie and effectively supports teachers in improving their practice.
- The leader for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities works closely alongside the leaders for mathematics and English to check the progress these pupils are making. Teachers can now carefully check the progress of these pupils and put actions quickly in place, due to the leader revising the system of pupil assessment. As a result, these pupils are making good progress. Leaders target the additional funding for these pupils successfully.
- Leaders have already identified that most-able pupils need further challenge in their learning across subjects. Some impact of this work can already be seen. For example, older key stage 2 pupils are now producing high-quality work in an additional writing group and making good progress, reaching greater depth in their learning.

- Leaders use the pupil premium effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. Leaders pay careful attention both to pupils' emotional and academic needs and successfully address any potential barriers to learning. Monitoring and evaluation of the support in place, a good understanding of the progress disadvantaged pupils are making across the year and focused teaching to pupils' needs result in pupils' good progress.
- The primary school physical education and sports funding has been used well to increase opportunities for participation in sport and clubs and to increase teachers' skills in delivering high-quality lessons.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development well and pupils show a good understanding of the Christian faith. However, pupils are not as aware of different faiths and cultures. They demonstrate respect for others and know why respect is important in society, but do not have the same understanding of other British values, such as tolerance and diversity.
- Leaders have done much to provide opportunities for wider experiences across the curriculum, such as an extensive range of after-school activities and memorable visits. However, in class, there has not been as strong a focus on developing learning across different aspects of the curriculum. The progress pupils are making in subjects such as science and religious education is not as strong as in other subjects.

Governance of the school

- The chair of the governing body has an excellent understanding of the huge journey of improvement the school has been on and the challenges tackled on the way. She knows that there is still much to do, but has confidence in the school leadership team to continue these improvements.
- The governing body is currently operating under capacity. Governors are rightly focusing their governor recruitment on building governor expertise, for example within finance. Governors know that this will further strengthen their collective skills and, consequently, their support and challenge for the school.
- Governors monitor provision and outcomes well. They support and challenge school leaders appropriately. Their visits to school are frequent and focused on key aspects of school improvement work, such as safeguarding, leaders' evaluations of performance information and pupils' work and the promotion of the school's values. Each visit is well planned and highlights actions for further development.
- When difficult decisions are needed, for example in finance or the change in academy sponsor, the governing body maintains a strong focus on improving outcomes.
- Governors understand how leaders use the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and the positive impact this has on their learning. They check that leaders use the sports funding well to develop learning and provision in physical education.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have put in place effective policies and practices to ensure that all pupils are safe. They have made sure that they keep staff up to date with training and

information. Leaders make sure recruitment checks are carried out carefully and there is a clear induction process for new staff.

- Leaders have made sure that there are clear systems, understood by all, for reporting a concern. There are good links with other agencies when supporting and following up concerns.
- Pupils say that they feel safe because they take part in a range of learning experiences about keeping themselves safe, which include themes such as online safety and bullying.
- Care for the welfare of the pupils is strong.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Although teaching in the early years is good, in key stages 1 and 2 it requires improvement. Middle-ability and the most able pupils do not yet make good progress across the subjects of the curriculum. Work sometimes lacks the challenge needed to enable them to reach the standards they are capable of. Leaders have introduced a system of three-layered targets in lessons so that pupils of different abilities are better supported. However, the way teachers use this is too variable.
- Teaching has improved since the school opened. Leaders use the findings of their regular checks on the quality of teaching to provide effective training and development for staff. Teachers' better understanding of the national standards, for example, means that pupils' progress since September is much stronger. This is helping to address the previous underperformance of pupils.
- The school's focus on improving writing is having a positive impact. Pupils have opportunities to build their skills through extended pieces of writing, timely checks and next steps from teachers. They are given time to redraft and improve their work. In the best examples, pupils know how to check their own learning and what they need to do next to improve. However, this is inconsistent across the classes.
- Pupils' formation of letters and the quality of their presentation vary across subjects and classes. Incorrect letter formation is not always picked up. For younger pupils, poor letter formation sometimes slows and interrupts the flow of their written work.
- Teaching in phonics is good due to focused and effective whole-staff training and appropriate support in lessons and out of class. Pupils apply their phonics skills successfully in reading and writing. Pupils of all abilities generally enjoy reading and are eager to read aloud to others.
- In mathematics, pupils' work is not always well matched to pupils' needs. Sometimes, pupils do not have enough opportunities to deepen their understanding or develop mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills. Middle-ability pupils, in particular, are not always challenged to extend their learning.
- Recent changes in the systems for checking the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have resulted in clear next steps that are understood by all staff that work with these pupils. This is very important as, sometimes, these pupils are taught a curriculum outside of their chronological age. Teachers carefully match learning to the pupils' individual needs. These pupils are

making good progress from their starting points.

- Teaching assistants provide well-planned, effective support, for example developing phonics, writing and mathematics skills in small group sessions.
- Classrooms are calm and purposeful. Productivity in English and mathematics lessons is high.
- Homework activities have recently seen an overhaul. Early indications show this careful matching of tasks to the learning that has taken place in class is having a stronger impact in consolidating pupils' learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The ethos of the school is one of care, guidance and support and this is apparent through all aspects of school life. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive and create a safe and welcoming culture.
- The school thinks carefully about developing learning for life and encourages high aspirations. Key stage 1 pupils were very eager to talk about what they would like to be in the future and the skills they would need to be successful. For example, one child said, 'I really want to be an astronaut. First, I will need to learn how to fly a rocket, but I also need to be good at maths to check everything.'
- There is an emphasis on carefully addressing pupils' emotional needs. Learning mentors and behaviour leaders support concerns well and celebrate successes.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. The thorough safeguarding procedures, policies and everyday practice make sure that they are safe. Pupils speak confidently about their learning experiences, which include themes such as online safety and bullying.
- The responses received in Parent View were very positive about the school's work in promoting personal development and good behaviour. Many responses acknowledged the school's commitment to pupils' well-being, the good communication and the positive, welcoming environment created.
- Pupils take their roles as play leaders and peer mediators seriously. They are excellent ambassadors for the school. Other pupils know that pupils in these positions will help them resolve problems or will involve an adult if they need to.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Parents, staff, governors and pupils are clear in their view that behaviour has improved considerably under this leadership.
- Attitudes to learning are good. In lessons, pupils generally show sustained concentration. They listen well to adults and follow instructions the first time they are asked.
- Pupils are polite, show consideration to others and speak with confidence.
- Pupils cooperate well and know the consequences of their actions. A member of staff

explained that pupils do not expect rewards for good behaviour because there is an expectation that they will behave well. Staff acknowledge that there is a consistent approach to encouraging the best behaviour – it is seen as everyone’s responsibility.

- Pupils’ attendance compares favourably to that of pupils nationally. Where there are any instances of persistent absence, the school takes effective action to address these.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The school inherited a legacy of pupil underperformance. However, leaders are rapidly improving the progress of pupils. Children in the early years make a good start to learning and achieve well. Although the progress pupils now make from their varying starting points in key stages 1 and 2 has improved, it is still not consistently good.
- Year 2 pupils in 2016 did not make good enough progress through key stage 1. At the end of Reception, the large majority of these pupils reached the level of skills and understanding typical for their age. However, by the end of Year 2, overall, their attainment was below that of other pupils nationally in reading and writing. The progress of middle-ability pupils was weak in reading and writing and no pupils reached greater depth from this prior attainment group in reading, writing or mathematics. Decisive actions by leaders are reflected in pupils’ current work in key stage 1, which is much improved. Pupils are now building successfully from their starting points.
- In 2016, the attainment of Year 6 pupils was similar to other pupils nationally in writing and mathematics and above average in reading. However, these outcomes did not reflect good progress from their starting points in writing.
- Progress for current pupils in key stage 2 is also now improving and, for some, it is good. In writing, for example, most pupils have made strong progress since September. In mathematics, data shows good progress overall, although some pupils’ work shows too few examples of using their mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- Pupils are now doing better in reading. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has continued to rise and is in line with other pupils nationally. Progress for disadvantaged pupils in phonics is also improving. In 2016, all disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard in Year 2. The achievement of current pupils shows good progress towards achieving the standard.
- Displays and pupils’ work show that learning across the other curriculum subjects is still varied. Learning in some subjects, for example science and religious education, is not as strong as it is in others, such as music and physical education.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their various starting points as a result of effective support.
- Middle-ability pupils and the most able pupils are starting to do better, for example in writing. However, these pupils do not make consistently good progress. Teaching for these pupils still lacks challenge and this hinders their progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils are now generally making good progress across the school, reflecting more effective use of the pupil premium funding.

Early years provision

Good

- The enthusiasm and focus of the early years leader and staff team have a clear, positive impact on teaching and learning. Children get a good start to school life.
- Children make good and sometimes better progress from their starting points, which are generally below what is typical for their age.
- Adults provide good care and support for children's welfare, creating an environment where children feel safe and are confident in trying new things. They know each child's needs well and plan exciting activities to motivate and support children's learning.
- Children's behaviour is good. They take turns, respond quickly to adults and work successfully, independently and alongside each other.
- Adults have introduced challenges that successfully encourage children of all abilities to develop their thinking and practical skills across the areas of the early years curriculum. Children are supported to take part in challenges at their particular stage of learning. For example, a child was fully engaged in a challenge to flip words in a frying pan. She needed to try to read the words and put them onto two plates – one labelled 'yes' if they could read the word, and the other labelled 'no'. She looked at the words and said, 'I can't read those yet. But it doesn't matter, I can count them.'
- Adults check children's progress very carefully and have a good understanding of their next steps. They ensure that children working below what is typical for their age are very well supported in achieving their next goal. All adults use questioning effectively to encourage children to think for themselves and to solve problems.
- The thought and care that have gone into the relocation of the Reception classroom and the development of the outdoor area have provided an engaging environment in which children learn and explore. Inside, activities are inviting. Clear tasks entice children to take part and develop their independence skills. Outside, adults have created areas to promote all areas of learning, but these are not always set up to entice and challenge children to develop their own learning. Leaders have identified this as an area for further development. Adult-led activities in both the indoor and outdoor areas fully engage the children and support them effectively in making good progress.
- Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make strong progress in the early years. Adults carefully and subtly adapt the curriculum to make sure that they can develop their learning in all activities alongside their peers.
- The school has diminished the previous difference that existed between the achievement of boys and girls. The environment is well organised and focuses on engaging both boys and girls in every aspect of learning. Boys and girls can be seen happily working alongside each other, developing their skills, in each area of the indoor and outdoor environment.
- Leaders use the early years pupil premium funding well to support children's emotional and social needs. These children consistently make good progress. A large majority achieved a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year, preparing them well for learning in Year 1.
- Adults are proactive in developing their own practice, working alongside each other to

share and develop ideas, as well as working with other settings and updating their skills through training. They share their good practice with other schools across the authority. This prompts regular evaluation of the learning on offer and a culture of continued improvement, and results in improved outcomes for children.

- Partnerships with parents are strong and this is something the school are developing even further. There is a smooth transition to school. Adults invite parents to see and contribute to the records of their child's progress and there are regular opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's learning.

School details

Unique reference number	140399
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10023792

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Mary Tailby
Principal	Mr Darren Foulke
Telephone number	01132 739 190
Website	www.rothwellcofe.org.uk
Email address	rothwell.info@leafacademytrust.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school became a sponsored academy in 2014 and is part of the LEAF Academy Trust. A decision has been made to rebroker the school to a new sponsor, the Abbey Academy Trust. When its predecessor school, Rothwell Church of England Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- There is one Reception class in the early years.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is above the national average.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The school runs a daily out-of-hours school club.

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in a range of lessons, some alongside the principal of the school.
- Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' work across the curriculum. For English and mathematics, some of this work took place alongside middle leaders.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including assessment information, school improvement planning, school self-evaluation, minutes of meetings of the governing body, external reports, information about the performance of teachers, documents relating to behaviour and safety and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Meetings took place with representatives from the school, the principal and vice-principal, middle leaders, staff, representatives from the governing body and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors spoke to parents and considered the 46 responses and comments on Ofsted's Parent View.

Inspection team

Kate Rowley, lead inspector

Alison Ashworth

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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