

Ryecroft Primary Academy

Kesteven Close, Holmewood, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD4 0LS

Inspection dates

30–31 January 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- A strong, united and determined leadership team has made substantial and sustained improvements since the last inspection.
- Considerable improvements in the quality of teaching mean that pupils make increasingly strong progress. Teachers' assessment of pupils helps them plan work that is just right to challenge most pupils well.
- Outcomes are not yet good. This is mainly because, despite the quickening progress of pupils, progress is not consistently strong across a wide range of subjects. Attainment remains low, but is improving.
- Leaders have put in place a well-planned English and mathematics curriculum. The planning and teaching of other subjects is less well-developed. As a result, although pupils acquire increasingly broad knowledge, activities do not often enough deepen this knowledge.
- Very effective leadership ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive high-quality support to help them make good progress.
- Well-trained and well-organised teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning and development.
- Provision in the early years, including for two-year-olds, gets children off to a good start.
- The teaching of early reading is effective. Pupils across the school enjoy listening to quality literature. They read more often, but too many older pupils do not read fluently and with good comprehension. This is because of weaker teaching and curriculum provision earlier in their school journey.
- Leaders have brought about an enormous improvement in pupils' behaviour. The vast majority of pupils work hard and behave well at all times and in all parts of the school.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are being well-prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils demonstrate tolerance, respect and a growing understanding of people who are different from themselves.
- Caring adults are watchful and scrupulous in ensuring the welfare and safety of pupils.
- An exceptionally well-led sports and physical education (PE) programme helps pupils to understand the value of being healthy and builds pupils' resilience.
- Senior leaders direct and support middle leaders well. Middle leaders have made a promising start to improving the quality of the curriculum, but there is more to do.
- Despite the tenacious work of leaders, attendance remains low.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment, by:
 - ensuring that the effective teaching and assessment is sustained and further polished, so that more pupils reach at least the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and Year 6
 - making sure that work in subjects other than English and mathematics, especially geography, history and science, deepens pupils' knowledge, particularly for the most able pupils
 - continuing to build pupils' vocabulary knowledge and understanding so they are able to better comprehend what they read.
- Improve the quality of the curriculum so that the progress of pupils is consistently strong across a wide range of subjects, by:
 - continuing to train and support middle leaders to help them improve teaching and outcomes in the subjects for which they are responsible
 - reviewing curriculum content and making sure that content is sequenced in a way that brings about progressive acquisition of knowledge.
- Raise attendance by continuing to:
 - build strong, trusting relationships with parents
 - draw on every available resource to reduce persistent absence.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The trust has been successful in securing a highly effective headteacher and senior leadership team. These leaders have brought about the much-needed improvements that have led to a good quality of education and the positive behaviour of pupils.
- Leaders have not balked at the difficult tasks. They have challenged poor teaching. They have improved teachers' knowledge and expertise through training, coaching and mentoring. Leaders have rallied staff, who value this support. The whole school community is on board and committed to continuing improvement.
- Leaders have turned around the behaviour of pupils. They have cultivated positive relationships and ensured the consistent application of the behaviour policy. As a result, pupils have learned to moderate their behaviour and have developed positive attitudes to learning.
- Teaching, learning and assessment have improved, primarily because leaders regularly check the quality of teaching. Leaders are strategic in their direction of each key stage team. They are clear about what pupils need to learn because they keep a close eye on each pupil's progress. They ensure that teachers plan effectively to address pupils' missing knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Leaders have made increasingly effective use of the pupil premium funding. The appropriate allocation of funds and the development of effective systems and processes support teachers to help meet the needs of pupils, especially of disadvantaged pupils.
- Leadership of SEND is very strong. Effective use is made of additional SEND funds. The special educational needs coordinator ensures the early identification, and careful diagnosis, of pupils' needs. Leaders are tenacious in securing expertise from professionals from outside school. Sharp planning, and small group and one-to-one teaching from well-trained teaching assistants, helps these pupils to learn what they need to learn.
- A highly effective sports and PE leader makes good use of additional government funding for sports and PE. Yorkshire Sport has recently recognised the excellent work by designating the school the first in Bradford to be a Centre of Excellence for PE and school sport.
- Senior and middle leaders have ensured a more broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils acquire knowledge in a wide range of subjects. However, improvements to the curriculum are too recent to have had a substantial and sustained effect on pupils' progress over time. Activities do not often enough help pupils, particularly the most able, to deepen their knowledge and understanding. Although a few middle leaders are early in their development, they have made a promising start to improving teaching in subjects such as science and religious education.
- Leaders enrich the curriculum through a programme of visits and visitors. Outdoor learning in the wooded area is a strong feature. The school has recently been awarded the Woodland Trust Green Tree Schools bronze award. Activities such as international week, brass instrument tuition and involvement in Young Voices singing events

broaden pupils' horizons and enhance their enjoyment of school.

- Leaders have substantially improved those aspects of the curriculum that help to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result, pupils are developing open-minded attitudes to diversity that are helping them to prepare well for life in modern Britain.
- The school's sponsor, Northern Education Trust (NET), has improved the effectiveness of its support and challenge over the last year. School leaders have made effective use of the available support. For example, professionals from the trust have contributed to improvements in mathematics and in the early years.

Governance of the school

- The NET board of trustees has ensured that a scheme of delegation informs local governors of their duties. These local governors, who form the academy council, are small in number, but suitably qualified and committed. They fulfil their duties diligently. The academy council offers effective support and challenge to school leaders. It ensures, on behalf of the trustees, that school leaders fulfil their statutory duties, such as keeping pupils safe.
- Trustees hold executives of the trust to account, who in turn hold school leaders to account, for the quality of education. However, it is not clear how trustees check that the academy council fulfils its duties.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Following the last inspection, when safeguarding was found to be ineffective, the trust and school leaders took immediate action to ensure that all statutory duties were met. Over the last two years, leaders have continuously sharpened and refined their practice.
- A thorough system of checks is in place to ensure safer recruitment of adults. A record of these checks is kept, as required by law. A member of the academy council also regularly checks this record is complete.
- Leaders have ensured that all adults are properly trained. Adults are vigilant. They report their concerns to the designated persons and record these concerns properly. The safeguarding leaders keep a meticulous record of all matters relating to pupils at risk of harm. Leaders are tenacious in getting pupils the help they need.
- Leaders are aware of the potential for harm specific to the local community. For example, leaders have worked with the police to help identify pupils who may be at risk of exposure to criminal gang activity.
- Above-average rates of absence pose a potential risk to a small minority of pupils. However, leaders check each day to find out why pupils are absent. They regularly visit pupils' homes to check that pupils are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The instability in staffing, that plagued the school for a considerable time, has been addressed. Teachers have been well trained and supported. This has resulted in strong consistency in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders are vigilant in identifying any weaknesses in teaching. They help teachers to improve these aspects quickly.
- Teachers plan activities that challenge most pupils well. This is because teachers have good subject knowledge. Also, they clearly identify what pupils already know and can do and move them on to the next step. Furthermore, teachers, during lessons, check pupils' understanding and make sure pupils get the help they need.
- The strongest teachers give especially clear instructions and explanations, so pupils know precisely what teachers expect. Teachers ask questions that get pupils speaking and thinking.
- Effective management of pupils' behaviour keeps pupils on task. Pupils have learned to work hard and are developing resilience. Teachers build confidence in pupils, who are not afraid to make mistakes. Pupils try their best to present their work neatly. They work together well.
- Leaders and teachers deploy teaching assistants well so that they make a strong contribution to pupils' progress, especially the progress of pupils with SEND and those who fall behind. For example, in the afternoons, teaching assistants regularly support individual pupils who have struggled in their morning lessons. This helps these pupils to better understand how to complete their learning activities the next day.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are very effective at teaching phonics. Teachers make sure that pupils' reading books are well matched to their developing phonic knowledge, so pupils build speed and confidence. Consequently, the very large majority of pupils, over the last two years, have met the required standard in early reading by the end of Year 1. Pupils use their knowledge of phonics well to attempt spellings of familiar and unfamiliar words.
- In reading lessons, pupils concentrate well and have plenty of opportunities to discuss their ideas. Teachers help them to build vocabulary knowledge and get them thinking about what they are reading. A recently introduced scheme is getting pupils more interested in books and reading. The scheme is helping them to improve their fluency and comprehension. However, despite effective teaching, too many of the older pupils, because of earlier weak teaching, limited vocabulary and weak general knowledge, are struggling to catch up.
- Mathematics teaching is effective and helps most pupils to make strong progress. This is because teachers help pupils to develop good understanding through the use of practical equipment and visual images. Teachers help pupils to practise their reasoning skills and to solve problems. Teachers help the least able pupils to become more confident with using numbers and recalling their multiplication tables. The least able pupils do not get as much opportunity to practise solving problems as other pupils.
- Teachers are effective at helping pupils to use their grammatical knowledge to make better sentences. Teachers and teaching assistants use the agreed style of handwriting and expect pupils to do the same. Weak teaching of spelling, in the past, means many pupils in key stage 2 do not spell accurately. A new scheme is helping pupils to catch

up. However, occasionally, teachers do not ask pupils to correct their spelling mistakes.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning have improved tremendously since the last inspection. Leaders have successfully cultivated a calm, ordered environment so teachers are able to get on and teach. In lessons, pupils work well together, show interest in what they are learning and complete their tasks. School has become a pleasant and safe place to be.
- Pupils exhibit good manners. They are polite and friendly towards visitors. Pupils make eye contact and smile. Several pupils shook hands with inspectors and were keen to chat. They do this because adults routinely act out the behaviours they expect to see from pupils.
- The personal and social aspects of the curriculum are exceptionally well planned and implemented. Pupils learn how to stay safe, for example when crossing the road. They learn about the risks associated with online activity, including gaming and social networking.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is strong. Pupils learn about people from a range of cultures and faiths. They get to meet people who are different from them through visits, such as a trip to the Bradford Grand Mosque and visitors to school. Pupils learn about influential leaders past and present, such as Rosa Parks, Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Adults supervise pupils well. Adults actively and consistently apply the behaviour policy. Pupils value the rewards they receive for their positive behaviours and understand the sanctions. The vast majority of pupils have learned to behave well with less direct supervision. Pupils move around the school calmly, with little need for adults to remind them of the rules.
- At breaktimes and lunchtimes, a large number of adults organise activities that keep pupils active and engaged. Pupils develop tolerance and respect for each other and conflict in the playground is minimised.
- A small minority of pupils continue to have difficulty behaving well. They occasionally respond to their peers and adults inappropriately. However, leaders have considerably reduced incidents of poor behaviour. Leaders record behaviour incidents meticulously. They use this information effectively to plan for pupils' needs and to check for trends and any patterns of inappropriate behaviour. They know the pupils exceptionally well.
- Exclusions are above average but not excessively high, given the very challenging behaviour of a small number of pupils. Leaders have in place a successful programme

that makes regular use of the outdoor environment for part of each day. This is used to build pupils' resilience, confidence and self-esteem. It particularly helps pupils who would otherwise be at risk of exclusion to remain in, and benefit from, school.

- Leaders work with great tenacity each day to improve attendance. Daily routines are rigorous. Leaders hold regular meetings with parents and often visit homes to check on pupils. Nevertheless, attendance remains below average. The proportion of pupils who, on average, miss more than half a day of school each week, remains above average. However, leaders monitor each child closely and have successfully improved the persistent absence of the disadvantaged group by 4% this year.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Overall, while teaching over the last year has been helping pupils to make generally good progress, outcomes are not yet good. Pupils do not make consistently strong progress in a wide range of subjects.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1 in 2018 improved when compared with 2017. The percentage of pupils achieving the expected standards in mathematics was, encouragingly, slightly above the 2017 national average.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 has improved substantially from the very low levels at the time of the last inspection. Nevertheless, even though the previous two Year 6 groups made broadly average progress from low starting points, considerably fewer than half of these pupils were well enough prepared for learning in Year 7.
- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are currently making good progress. However, progress for too many pupils has not been rapid enough to help them catch up sufficiently to reach expected standards by the end of Year 6. Weaker teaching of these pupils, earlier in their schooling, means they have limited general knowledge and understanding of vocabulary to help them understand challenging texts.
- Attainment across the school remains generally low, but is improving. Pupils currently in key stage 1 are receiving an increasingly sound foundation in basic reading, writing and numeracy. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are building on this foundation and are largely making good progress.
- There is no significant difference between the progress of disadvantaged pupils in the school and that of other pupils nationally. However, progress has not been sufficient to substantially diminish the difference in attainment between disadvantaged pupils in the school and other pupils nationally. There remains a difference in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils across the age range in school and other pupils in the school, though this is not substantial. The attainment of both groups is generally low, but improving.
- Few current Year 6 pupils are convincingly demonstrating attainment above average. There have been very few pupils over time reaching higher standards. However, numbers are rising slowly across the school.
- The strong support for pupils with SEND helps this group to make good progress.

Early years provision

Good

- Most children enter the early years with skills, knowledge and understanding well below those which are typical for their age. Very few speak and communicate well for their age. Good progress results in the very large majority of children reaching a good level of development by the time they leave Reception, preparing them well for Year 1.
- The high-quality resources and inviting activities engage children and sustain their concentration. Teachers plan purposeful activities to help children count, add and subtract. Children have plentiful opportunities to begin to write. They learn to grip their writing implements properly and form letters correctly. Adults help them to use their growing knowledge of letter sounds to attempt spelling.
- Provision for two-year-olds is effective. Those children who access this early learning receive a good start that prepares them to settle quickly in the Nursery. They subsequently make good progress.
- Adults are quick to intervene where barriers to learning are identified. Many children enter the early years with poor communication and language skills. Well-trained adults help children to begin to express themselves using full sentences. An effective speech and language programme helps children with specific difficulties to improve their communication skills.
- The assessment of all areas of children's development is comprehensive. Leaders share and discuss assessments with external professionals to validate the accuracy of assessment.
- Caring adults help children to develop positive relationships. For example, children enjoy chatting as they eat their snacks together. Adults teach children how to get on well together, to share and to take turns. Children follow routines, settle well and quickly develop confidence and independence.
- The recently appointed early years leader has made a positive start. Under the direction of the principal, effective action has involved an increasing number of parents in their children's learning. Parents have valued working with their children in the wooded area and an increasing number are attending 'stay and play' sessions. Small numbers of parents are beginning to access the online assessment tool. Nevertheless, involving parents remains a challenge.
- The statutory welfare requirements of the early years foundation stage are met. Effective whole-school safeguarding is supplemented with specific assessments of risk relating to the early years.

School details

Unique reference number	138675
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	10080707

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	253
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Carlton Midgley
Principal	Helen Pearson
Telephone number	01274 683128
Website	www.ryecroftacademy.org
Email address	ryecroftadmin@northerneducationtrust.org
Date of previous inspection	28–29 November 2016

Information about this school

- Ryecroft Primary Academy is a larger-than-average-sized primary school with provision for two-year-olds.
- The school is sponsored by Northern Education Trust. The trust board is accountable for the performance of schools within the trust. The trust board delegates responsibilities to each school's academy council to provide support and challenge to school leaders. A chief executive officer, who leads the trust, is appointed by the trust board, who hold him to account for the quality of education in each school.
- Around a quarter of pupils are of minority ethnic heritage. Fewer than one in five speaks English as an additional language.
- Two thirds of pupils are eligible for support through the pupil premium. This is substantially above the national average. The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector and one Ofsted inspector inspected the school on the first day of the inspection. Two Ofsted inspectors joined the lead inspector on the second day. In addition to evidence gathered during this inspection, evidence from recent monitoring inspections contributed to the inspection judgements.
- Inspectors observed the effect of teaching and assessment on pupils' learning and attitudes in all classes, at least once. Inspectors were accompanied by school leaders and the deputy chief executive officer of the trust on the visits to classrooms.
- Inspectors, with school leaders, scrutinised a sample of pupils' workbooks alongside pupils' assessment information. The lead inspector listened to a few pupils reading.
- Inspectors observed pupils around the school building, in the school grounds and as pupils ate their lunch. Inspectors held informal and formal discussions with pupils about what it is like to be a pupil at the school.
- Meetings took place with senior and middle leaders to discuss the impact of leaders' actions on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' learning and development.
- The lead inspector met with two members of the academy council to discuss how they oversee the work of the school. The lead inspectors also spoke with one of the trustees of NET on the telephone.
- Inspectors held brief discussions with members of staff. Brief discussions were held with parents as they brought their children to school. Inspectors also considered the responses of parents to a survey undertaken by school leaders. There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, for any analysis to be undertaken.
- A range of documents was scrutinised, including leaders' written self-evaluation and notes of leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Inspectors also looked at a range of documents and records relating to safeguarding and child protection.

Inspection team

Philip Riozzi, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mujahid Ali	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Plumridge	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Smit	Ofsted Inspector

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