

Inspection of Ryecroft Academy

Ryecroft Academy, Stonebridge Grove, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS12 5AW

Inspection dates:	18 and 19 March 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Helen Townsley. This school is part of The GORSE Academies 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), Sir John Townsley, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Anne McAvan.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school provides a positive, welcoming learning environment. This enables pupils, including those with special educational needs and / or disabilities (SEND), to flourish and grow. The school's drive to instil a sense of ambition and aspiration in pupils is at the heart of all that it does. Pupils successfully overcome many different barriers to their learning. They make full use of the opportunities that the school provides. This helps them to thrive and to achieve as highly as they can.

Pupils' behaviour across this school is exemplary. This starts in the early years where caring staff support children to quickly learn routines and listen well. Engagement with learning is high throughout the rest of school. Pupils delight in trying their best at all times of the day.

Expectations for all pupils who attend this school are high. The school priority is for pupils to secure the foundational knowledge they need in English and mathematics. High-quality teaching ensures this is the case. The low starting points for some groups of pupils means that not all pupils achieve national expectations by the time they leave the school. However, pupils do make exceptional progress through the curriculum.

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

The school has designed an inspiring curriculum that is both broad and ambitious. Content in each subject is sequenced so that pupils' knowledge builds over time. The careful and deliberate links made between subjects help pupils to practise, apply and remember key knowledge in different contexts. The curriculum also draws together pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural understanding so that they develop academic and personal skills seamlessly alongside each other. For example, in subjects such as modern foreign languages, pupils successfully learn the knowledge they need to speak Mandarin at an age-appropriate stage. This includes pupils with SEND. Alongside this, pupils are immersed in learning about wider Chinese culture.

Pupils at the early stages of reading, regardless of age, access the school's chosen phonics programme. This allows them to practise and apply the sounds they know to their reading and writing. The school makes rigorous checks, not only on pupils' ability to decode, but on their fluency and comprehension. This ensures they receive the right targeted support to address any gaps in their knowledge. Alongside this, these pupils access the school's 'forensic reading' approach. Regardless of their stage of reading knowledge, pupils take part in high level discussions focussed on specifically chosen texts. Themes for discussion include women, suffrage and misogyny. This deepens pupils' understanding of the world in which they live.

Well-structured processes ensure the needs of pupils with SEND are identified as quickly as possible. This aspect of the school's work is a strength. Many pupils with SEND also face additional barriers to their learning. The school takes a very personalised approach to establishing pupils' starting points and providing clear next steps. This ensures that their

work is exceptionally well matched to their needs. Pupils with SEND work as independently as possible alongside their peers.

The development of communication and language is at the heart of the curriculum all the way through school. Children in the early years develop early conversational skills through partner talk activities. Throughout school the development of vocabulary is at the centre of each curriculum subject. Pupils learn how to discuss, debate and share their knowledge. As a result, pupils speak maturely and respectfully to adults and each other.

Right from their time in the early years, pupils show high levels of self-control, follow rules and routines and understand how to keep themselves and others safe. This extends to behaviour at playtimes where older pupils are exceptional role models for their younger peers. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They feel safe and well cared for.

The school's offer for personal development is exceptional. Pupils take on roles of responsibility with extreme pride. For instance, conservation leaders told inspectors how much they enjoyed planting flowers and vegetables for the community. Equality leaders shared the importance of their role in ensuring equality at playtimes. Pupils have an impressive ability to understand and consider different perspectives.

Parents and carers, alongside the local community, hold the school in high regard. They value the care and education their children receive. The trust and the local governing body share a common endeavour to ensure pupils have access to the highest quality of education. Decisions are made so that pupils benefit as much as possible. There is a culture among leaders and staff of continuous reflection and improvement. Staff are proud to work at the school. They value the support that they receive for their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	140824
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10346541
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	341
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Anne McAvan
CEO of the trust	Sir John Townsley
Principal	Helen Townsley
Website	www.ryecroft.leeds.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	17 and 18 September 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school has been part of The GORSE Academies Trust since January 2015.
- The school runs its own breakfast club for pupils.

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 evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, other leaders and staff. The lead inspector met with the CEO of the trust, as well as representatives of the local governing body and the board of trustees. This included the chair of the governing body and the chair of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to pupils read with a familiar member of staff.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum and reviewed pupils' work in some other curriculum subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including behaviour logs, attendance records, pupil records, records of governing body meetings, school development plans and school self-evaluation documents.
- The inspection team considered the views of parents through the responses to Ofsted Parent View and conversations held during the inspection.
- Inspectors gathered the views of pupils and staff through Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys, as well as discussions conducted throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Sarah Gordon, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Michael Rowland	Ofsted Inspector
James Canniford	Ofsted Inspector

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