

The Ruth Gorse Academy

Black Bull Street, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS10 1HW

Inspection dates

12–13 July 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The exceptionally skilful principal and her leadership team ensure that the school's philosophy of high expectations, high aspirations and a personalised approach has top priority.
- Governors and The Gorse Academies Trust are exceptionally knowledgeable and adept at challenging school leaders. As a result, school leaders excel in their roles.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are the core businesses of the school. Through a highly personalised approach to planning, teachers expertly meet the needs of pupils. As a result, all groups of pupils make rapid progress from their varying starting points.
- The curriculum is challenging, progressively demanding and enriched by a wealth of extra-curricular opportunities. These successfully enhance pupils' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders firmly embed the whole-school approach to literacy across the curriculum. Pupils have personalised targets for their literacy development, which they work on in all subjects. Literacy improves rapidly and pupils prepare well for future challenges.
- Leaders monitor and moderate pupils' progress information with other outstanding schools within the trust. This ensures that progress information is accurate and targets are aspirational.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are superb. They work hard because they want to do well. Disruption to learning is very rare and if it does happen, teachers deal with it swiftly.
- Pupils' overall attendance is high. Where some groups of pupils' attendance is lower, such as disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, leaders act swiftly to improve it, particularly focusing on reducing persistent absence.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well cared for. They make outstanding progress because leaders ensure that they spend additional funds successfully to support pupils to overcome their barriers to learning.
- Leaders' work to ensure that pupils are prepared to face risks is exemplary. Pupils talk openly about topics such as radicalisation, child sexual exploitation and staying safe online. They are clear about how to identify these risks and know the characteristics to look out for if a friend was at risk.
- Parents say that The Ruth Gorse Academy is a fantastic school, where teachers see each child as an individual. They are delighted with the variety of opportunities that their children have.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop strategies to improve attendance so that persistent absence, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, continues to decrease.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders successfully create a culture of ambition and an ethos in which pupils 'dare to achieve beyond what they are today'. Leaders are relentless in their determination that all pupils should reach their full potential and have a bright future ahead of them, no matter what their background. Through high expectations, high aspirations and a personalised approach, all pupils are on a pathway to success.
- Leaders' careful design of the key stage 3 curriculum mirrors the skills and content of the key stage 4 curriculum that pupils will study. This ensures that pupils develop skills and knowledge to tackle the GCSE qualifications they choose.
- The rich variety of extra-curricular opportunities that leaders provide for all pupils are wide-ranging and allow pupils to experience clubs such as Kodu and rowing, which they may not have considered previously. This effectively raises aspirations and makes pupils want to experience more.
- Exceptionally skilful and targeted use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who need to catch up ensures that these pupils make the same excellent progress as their peers. Well-thought-out strategies are in place to improve literacy, numeracy, attendance and aspirations, all of which enable pupils to make very strong progress.
- Teachers value highly the opportunities that leaders provide for their professional development. There is a real learning culture in the school. Teachers and leaders want to improve and regularly discuss and share ideas about teaching. Staff value greatly opportunities to shadow other staff across the trust to support their development.
- Leaders use performance management very well to ensure that teachers focus on accelerating the rates of progress for all pupils. Consequently, teachers are clear about leaders' expectations and work hard to achieve their performance targets. As a result, pupils make substantial and sustained progress.
- Leaders ensure that British values are carefully woven throughout the curriculum. Each half term there is a different theme for pupils to explore. For example, in English, pupils learned about respect and tolerance as they sympathetically discussed and evaluated the importance of accepting differences in each other.
- Leaders fully embrace external evaluations of the school. The high levels of challenge provided by the school improvement adviser ensure that leaders constantly evaluate their practice so that they can continue to improve the life chances of all pupils who attend the school.

Governance of the school

- Governors have an excellent knowledge of the school and its work. They are active in their approach to finding out information, and leaders keep them well informed about the progress pupils make.
- Governors are absolutely committed to the work of the school and share the vision and aspirations of the trust and the principal. The governing body is highly skilled, with a

wealth of experience within it, which helps governors to play a strategic role in self-evaluation and development planning. The chair of the governing body is a national leader of governance and his knowledge and expertise are valued highly.

- Governors challenge leaders very effectively. They recognise the quality of education within the school while appreciating that leaders still have things to work on, such as maintaining high levels of attendance and engaging with hard-to-reach parents.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that all staff have appropriate training, for example in awareness of radicalisation, child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation. Staff know what to do should there be a safeguarding concern about a pupil. Staff act quickly and appropriately to share any concerns they may have. The designated safeguarding lead acts on all concerns swiftly.
- Records about safeguarding concerns and child protection are kept meticulously. They show that leaders take appropriate and comprehensive action as it is needed. Leaders work exceptionally well with external agencies to ensure that pupils receive any additional support they need. Leaders make and record thorough checks on the adults who work at the school and across the trust.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and staff support them well. Pupils feel cared for and confident that they have someone to talk to if a problem arises. Leaders ensure that risk education is part of the curriculum so that pupils prepare very well for risks they may face as they grow up.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers are extremely knowledgeable, highly enthusiastic and very passionate about providing a first-class education for all pupils. Teachers have very high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and pupils strive to meet them.
- Teachers use information about pupils' progress exceptionally well. Teachers plan learning to suit the individual needs of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are the most able. Teachers provide high levels of challenge for pupils of all abilities. Teachers help pupils to develop resilience in tackling difficult work. Consequently, pupils are not afraid to make mistakes and make excellent progress in their learning.
- Teachers use assessment particularly well and take opportunities to address pupils' misconceptions as they arise. Pupils know how to make progress because teachers structure lessons well and make maximum use of lesson time, moving pupils on swiftly in their learning. Pupils have time to practise and consolidate their skills as they work through increasingly demanding work. For example, in physical education, pupils took time to develop their throwing and catching skills before applying these skills to a competitive game.
- Teaching incorporates many opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills. The whole-school approach to literacy is firmly embedded and pupils have clear targets to

address their literacy needs, which they practise across all subject areas. This approach ensures that literacy is a key factor in every lesson.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with low starting points who need extra help with numeracy or literacy receive highly effective support from their teachers. In addition, they access interventions before school, during lunchtime or after school when required so that they can catch up and keep up with their peers.
- Parents receive regular information about their child's progress in the form of reports and during parents' evenings. Parents appreciate the information they receive. Leaders recognise that there is further work to do to support some parents who do not engage well enough with their child's education.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are very confident and have highly positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils embrace challenges and work together constructively, supporting each other to do their best. Pupils really value, and are proud of, the opportunities the school provides for them to take on responsibility, for example in becoming student ambassadors.
- Pupils take real pride in their work. They follow the rules for presentation, taking care and spending time producing neat and legible work that they present beautifully.
- The school's strong pastoral support system and, where appropriate, use of external agencies ensure that pupils receive support, as appropriate, for their physical and emotional well-being.
- Teachers ensure that pupils know how to stay safe when facing risks. Through a highly comprehensive approach to teaching personal, social, health and economic education, pupils learn about British values and develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. Pupils are confident when talking about how to stay safe online and they are knowledgeable about real risks such as radicalisation and child sexual exploitation.
- Pupils say, and school information shows, that bullying does not occur very often. When it does happen, teachers deal with it swiftly and check that it stops completely. Parents and pupils value the support of teachers and the pastoral team.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision develop their skills by completing a personalised curriculum which is appropriate to their needs. Through this, they are beginning to value their education and develop positive attitudes to learning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons and at social times is superb. Pupils are well mannered and extremely polite. They move around school from lesson to lesson quickly and calmly.

- Disruption to learning is rare. When it does happen, teachers apply the school discipline policy consistently and deal with disruption swiftly and effectively so that it does not prevent other pupils from learning.
- Leaders make use of internal isolation and fixed-term exclusions to maintain the high standards expected of pupils. Over time, as pupils recognise that they must meet the school's expectations for behaviour, the number of exclusions and isolations decreases.
- Attendance is improving and the number of pupils who are persistently absent is decreasing. Leaders recognise that as the school continues to grow in size, maintaining high standards for attendance, particularly for pupils who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, will remain a focus. Pupils' attendance, when compared to their attendance at primary school, has significantly improved; however, there is still work to do to further decrease persistent absence for these key groups of pupils.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision are improving their behaviour and attendance and are making good progress.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils make excellent progress from their different starting points across the curriculum in all subjects. This is because the school uses pupils' progress information exceptionally well to ensure that pupils access a personalised curriculum.
- Pupils who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same or better progress as their peers. This is because leaders spend additional funds wisely, and teachers are skilled in ensuring that pupils receive the right support to overcome their barriers to learning.
- Leaders place much work and effort into ensuring that careers advice and guidance are in place for pupils from Year 7 onwards. To ensure that pupils prepare fully for their option choices for GCSE, the school holds a careers fayre so that pupils gain information about a wide range of careers. Some pupils visit universities and colleges, and all pupils in Year 9 have a personalised interview with a careers adviser to ensure that their option choices match their future aspirations.
- Year 7 pupils complete baseline tests so that leaders can identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge. Teachers ensure that they use the information from these tests well so that all pupils fill in these gaps and make rapid progress.
- Pupils' books demonstrate strong and sustained progress over time, with clear examples of knowledge gain and application of knowledge. Pupils talk confidently about the work in their books and are able to articulate their learning well.
- Pupils read widely and often. Opportunities for reading are rich across the curriculum. Pupils talk openly about their reading and confidently read aloud in class. Many take part in an extra-curricular reading circle, where they have the opportunity to read alongside others and discuss what they are reading. Pupils use the library frequently and are proud of their literacy developments.

School details

Unique reference number	140565
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10031008

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	540
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Mr Terry Elliott
Principal	Mrs Rebekah Taylor
Telephone number	0113 235 1600
Website	http://ruthgorse.leeds.sch.uk/
Email address	info@ruthgorseacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- 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 is part of The Gorse Academies Trust and opened in September 2014 with its first Year 7 intake. The school currently has pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- The chair of the governing body is a national leader of governance.
- The school uses Footsteps, Southway and Grafton for alternative education provision.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is much higher than the national average.

- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a range of lessons and made some shorter visits to classrooms. The principal and senior leaders observed lessons jointly with the inspectors.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders, staff, pupils and members of the governing body and academy trust.
- Inspectors reviewed the work in a number of pupils' workbooks alongside school leaders.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons, in assembly and during break and lunchtime was observed. Inspectors also met formally with groups of pupils.
- Inspectors evaluated a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluations of the school and development plans, policies, minutes from governors and trust meetings, external reviews and monitoring information. Inspectors also looked closely at progress information provided by school leaders.
- Inspectors took into account the views of parents during the inspection, as well as 56 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also considered 35 responses to the staff questionnaire and nine responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Debbie Redshaw, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alexandra Hook	Ofsted Inspector
Marianne Young	Ofsted Inspector

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