

Inspection of Rye Hills Academy

Redcar Lane, Redcar TS10 2HN

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The head of school is Hijab Zaheer. This school is part of North East Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Lesley Powell, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Margaret Saxton. The deputy chief executive officer, who is also an executive headteacher, Toni Spoor, is also responsible for this school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Due to highly effective leadership, Rye Hills Academy has transformed in recent years. Leaders have very high expectations for pupils. They want 'every child to experience excellence every day'. They are determined to realise this vision fully. Pupils receive an education that is stimulating, ambitious and enriched by a wide range of opportunities. For example, pupils can take part in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award and they have recently enjoyed visits to the Houses of Parliament and the Northern School of Art. Pupils are successful. In the GCSE examinations in summer 2023, the proportion of pupils who achieved strong passes in English and mathematics was above local and national averages.

Pupils behave very well in school. Lessons are calm and purposeful. There is a strong culture of rewarding pupils and recognising their achievements. Pupils value this. They are motivated by the house system and earning house points. On the rare occasion that bullying happens, the school responds effectively. Pupils understand the behaviour policy in school and think that it is fair. Pupils' well-being and safety are of the utmost importance to the school.

The school offers pupils a range of ways to support their personal development. Pupils take on roles of responsibility such as pupil president, members of the student council and reading ambassadors. Pupils appreciate having a voice in school and feel like they are making a difference. Pupils enjoy taking part in the school's creative 'Culture Culture' programme. This offers them a range of ways to broaden their cultural understanding.

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

With support from the trust, the school has developed a new curriculum. It is broad and ambitious. It often takes pupils above and beyond the demands of the national curriculum. For example, pupils study three Shakespeare plays in key stage 3 so they can explore different representations of female characters. In mathematics, the curriculum is structured to ensure pupils are prepared to learn about ambitious topics, such as trigonometry, as early as Year 8. There is a wide range of subjects and qualifications on offer to pupils at key stage 4. The curriculum is sequenced over five years. It is still being embedded. Due to the timing of the trust's arrival at the school, some older pupils do not have the full body of knowledge that the school intends.

Teachers have received high-quality training. As a result, the curriculum is implemented consistently well. Teachers use their expertise effectively. They regularly use 'smart' tasks at the beginning of lessons to help pupils remember what they have been taught before. They use questioning well in order to check pupils' understanding. Activities are chosen carefully to help pupils embed their knowledge and develop their skills. For example, in English, pupils learn how to develop their analysis of books through 'quotation explosions'. They use these to develop their

ideas before completing high-quality, extended responses to the books they have read.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well in lessons. Teachers have clear information about the needs of the pupils they teach. They have received effective training on how to support pupils. As a result, pupils with SEND access the full curriculum and engage well in their learning.

Reading is prioritised by the school. Leaders have developed an impressive programme of peer support for reading fluency. Older pupils have been trained very well to support younger pupils with their reading. This helps younger pupils on the programme to develop their reading fluency. There is an appropriate phonics programme in place to support pupils at the earliest stages of reading.

Pupils are courteous and polite. Pupils pay attention in lessons and most work hard. Some pupils' resilience and skills that help them to learn independently are not as developed as they could be. This sometimes limits their academic achievement and personal development. Pupils attend well. The school works hard to support pupils whose attendance is a concern. This work is having a positive impact. The number of pupils who are persistently absent is reducing significantly.

The school has implemented a comprehensive curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE) through a programme referred to in school as 'World Ready'. This programme is effective. Pupils have a deep understanding of how to stay safe online and of healthy relationships. This curriculum is adapted to respond to local concerns that the school becomes aware of. There is an effective careers curriculum in place. Pupils are informed well about the options open to them beyond Year 11. The overwhelming majority of pupils move on to further education, employment or training.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities. Teachers experience a great deal of satisfaction working at the school. They feel very well supported by school and trust leaders. Teachers' well-being and workload are considered carefully by leaders. For example, they have recently simplified the school's marking policy, and teachers are offered 'well-being days' that can be used flexibly. Trustees and local governors have a range of skills that help them to challenge and support the school. They take their responsibilities seriously and fulfil their statutory duties well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Due to the timing of the school joining the trust, the school's new curriculum is not fully embedded. This means that the full impact of the curriculum has not been realised. The school should further embed the curriculum to ensure that all pupils learn and remember it, and make the progress through it that they are capable of.
- Some pupils' resilience and skills to learn independently are not as developed as they could be. To an extent, this is limiting these pupils' academic and social development. The school should further develop ways to build pupils' resilience and skills to learn independently, ensuring this impacts on pupils' academic and social development positively.

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	148728
Local authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	10323143
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	824
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Margaret Saxton
CEO of the trust	Lesley Powell
Headteacher	Hijab Zaheer (Head of School)
Website	www.ryehillsacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of North East Learning Trust, which is a multi-academy trust.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection team held meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers and pupils.
- The lead inspector met with trustees and members of the local academy council.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, modern foreign languages and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector met with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator.
- Inspectors met with the leader in charge of the PSHE curriculum, pupils' personal development and careers.
- An inspector met with the leader responsible for teachers' professional development.
- An inspector met with the leaders for reading and observed a sample of reading interventions.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust.
- The inspectors observed pupils during social times. They spoke with pupils and leaders about opportunities for pupils' personal development.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. He also took into consideration the responses to the surveys for staff and for pupils.

Inspection team

Dan McKeating, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Liz Cresswell	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Greenough	Ofsted Inspector
Gordon Watts	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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