

Inspection of a good school: Rawmarsh Community School

Monkwood Road, Rawmarsh, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S62 7GA

Inspection dates:

9 and 10 February 2022

Outcome

Rawmarsh Community School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The 'Rawmarsh Pledge' states that the school aims to 'send all young people into an ever-changing world able and qualified to play their full part in it'. Pupils value the fact that the school is fully committed to supporting them to achieve academically and develop the confidence to be successful when they leave school. Pupils are proud to attend Rawmarsh Community School and grateful for the opportunities provided.

Behaviour in lessons is usually calm. Adults work effectively with those who need additional support with their behaviour. A few teachers do not use the school's behaviour policy effectively. Behaviour is not as positive in these lessons.

Pupils study a curriculum that is ambitious and broad. The academic curriculum is complemented by an entitlement for all pupils to benefit from a range of additional experiences, including first-aid training, financial management and charity fundraising. Pupils have many additional enrichment opportunities beyond this entitlement. Over 200 pupils are currently involved in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

Pupils feel safe in school. Pupils say that bullying sometimes happens and hurtful language is sometimes used by pupils outside of lessons. Most pupils say that when they report it, this is dealt with well, although they would like adults to check in with them more often. However, some pupils feel there is no point reporting these things as 'that is just how society is'. Adults in school are keen to change this view.

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

Leaders are committed to providing an education that equips all pupils to be successful in the adult world. They want the school to help pupils achieve the qualifications they need and build the confidence that they can make a positive difference within their community, and beyond. Every decision leaders make is taken with these aims in mind.

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum for all pupils is ambitious. They are clear that every pupil is entitled to study the full curriculum. Leaders have looked at why very few pupils studied a modern foreign language and taken decisive steps to address them. As a result, the proportion of pupils studying language GCSEs has increased significantly.

The 'Rawmarsh Pledges' provide a framework for developing pupils' confidence. At key stage 4, all pupils are challenged and supported, within the 'British Values' pledge, to contribute to a project that improves the local community.

Trust subject directors have worked with subject leaders in school to develop curriculums that detail what pupils will learn, and when. In the strongest examples, these plans are designed so that what pupils learn in Year 7 builds on what they have learned in primary school, and what pupils learn in Year 11 fully prepares them for the next stage of their education.

Subject leaders are at different stages of implementing their curriculums. Where work is more advanced, subject leaders from across the trust have worked together to develop can-do steps within units; 'get ready' tasks to check pupil readiness for new learning; and common 'BRAG' follow-up tasks to be used after assessments. These support teachers in helping pupils to know, remember and do more of what the school intends they learn.

Pupils say that bullying sometimes happens in school. Trust leaders commissioned an external review following concerns raised by some parents. Leaders took this review seriously. They made all the changes suggested.

Pupils know that bullying is wrong. Most pupils are confident that bullying is dealt with effectively. Parents do not have as positive a view about how bullying is dealt with in school. Leaders have not developed systems to ensure that, after bullying is reported and action is taken, checks are always made to confirm the bullying has stopped. When checks do take place, parents are not always informed of the outcomes. Leaders know this is an area that they need to develop further.

Leaders are aware of the possibility of sexual harassment in school. There is a comprehensive social studies curriculum that builds pupils' knowledge and understanding about how to form respectful relationships. Hurtful language is sometimes used by pupils in school corridors. When adults hear this, they deal with it. Sometimes pupils are not aware of the inappropriateness of certain words and phrases until adults in school explain. The impact of using hurtful language is taught in social studies, but pupils do not learn enough about which specific words and phrases could be hurtful, and why.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils are aware of the risks they face and the steps that they can take to keep safe. Pupils feel that there is a trusted adult in school they could speak to if they needed to.

Leaders have ensured that all staff in school are trained on the potential risks pupils may face, and how to spot signs that a pupil may be at risk. Staff are clear about the importance of reporting concerns. There are effective systems in place to allow them to do so. When necessary, the school's designated safeguarding leads make appropriate referrals to external agencies to help support and protect pupils.

Leaders have set up systems to ensure that all required checks are carried out on adults in school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not put systems in place to ensure that checks are made on the longer-term effectiveness of actions taken to address reported cases of bullying. This means that some parents and pupils feel that bullying is not dealt with effectively. Leaders should develop systems to check that steps taken to address bullying have been effective in the longer term and that the outcomes of these checks are routinely communicated to the families of all pupils involved.
- While pupils learn about the impact language can have on others, they have a weaker understanding of which words and phrases may be hurtful. This means pupils sometimes use hurtful language around the school without realising the impact upon others. Leaders do not have systems in place to gauge the size of this issue. Leaders should help pupils to better understand how to interact with each other appropriately. Leaders should develop approaches that allow them to understand the scale of hurtful language being used outside of the classroom and monitor the impact of steps taken to improve the situation.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2017.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	140553
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	10211625
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,077
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Steve Calvert
Headteacher	Matthew Turton
Website	www.rawmarsh.org/
Date of previous inspection	4 to 5 May 2017

Information about this school

- Rawmarsh Community School is part of the Wickersley Partnership Trust.
- The school is an average-size secondary school.
- The school has a high proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals compared to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is very high compared to the national average.
- The school uses Aspire Pupil Referral Unit as alternative provision to meet the need of some pupils in key stage 4.
- A small number of key stage 3 pupils attend Aaron Hill, an internal alternative provision, at another school in the Wickersley Partnership Trust.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the Wickersley Partnership Trust and spoke to the chair of the trust on the phone.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and leaders responsible for behaviour and attendance, curriculum, careers, spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and social studies.
- The lead inspector met with a group of school governors, including the acting chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors met with six groups of pupils and spoke to others informally throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors considered 85 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, including free-text responses.
- The lead inspector met with leaders for safeguarding and reviewed records of the school's work to protect vulnerable pupils. An inspector looked at the record of vetting checks made on adults who work in the school.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in the following subjects: art, maths and science. In each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, including trust directors of subject where appropriate; looked at curriculum information provided by the school; visited a sample of lessons; met with teachers; spoke to groups of pupils about their learning; and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Additional visits were made to lessons in English, geography, history and drama.
- Inspectors observed behaviour in the corridors between lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation provided by the school, including logs of bullying incidences, social studies curriculum information, governors' minutes and notes of external reviews undertaken into the school's work.

Inspection team

Steve Wren, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Chris Fletcher

Ofsted Inspector

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