

Inspection of a good school: Rise Academy

Fountain Road, Hull HU2 0LH

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 October 2021

Outcome

Rise Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff ensure that the education they provide reinvigorates the pupils. Many pupils have experienced turbulence in their education prior to joining. Nevertheless, they thrive while attending this school. Staff across all sites put the school's motto 'Rediscovering potential, rebuilding futures' into action. They go the extra mile to make sure that pupils feel confident and optimistic about their learning. However, in some classes, pupils do not get enough help with developing their spoken language knowledge and skills.

Because all staff are very positive about what pupils can do, pupils feel that they can aim high. Pupils generally try hard in class, developing self-belief. One parent echoed the positive views of others as they said, 'My son is now thriving. He has gained skills such as resilience and the ability to regulate his emotions.'

Across the sites, pupils are well looked after and safe. They generally behave well. Staff take note of any worries or concerns that the pupils may have. They provide pupils with tailor-made support. Staff swiftly clamp down on bullying, which is rare.

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

Leaders and staff ensure that the education provided enables pupils to rediscover the joy of learning. In lower secondary, the curriculum is broad and balanced. It assists pupils well in transitioning back to their mainstream school. In some subjects, the curriculum enables pupils to be ready for more complex subject-specific knowledge taught in upper secondary. For instance, the Year 9 English curriculum enables pupils to master how metaphors work. This gives pupils the strong footing needed to analyse literary texts in Years 10 and 11. However, this is not the case across all subjects in lower secondary.

The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is ambitious and supports pupils in progressing to their next steps. It includes carefully chosen academic subjects and a wide range of vocational courses. All pupils study mathematics and English. Over half take GCSE-level

examinations in them. Leaders encourage pupils to choose vocational courses based on their own interests and future career plans. The vocational curriculum extends pupils' specialist knowledge. Pupils refine and practise specific techniques needed to succeed in external assessments. For example, pupils taking hair and beauty qualifications learn about face painting. This extends their knowledge into the area of make-up artistry. Pupils also practise methods for extending nails. This enables them to feel more confident about practical assessments.

Leaders rightly prioritise reading. In Years 7 and 8, pupils read and discuss whole works of fiction that are appropriately challenging. Pupils who struggle to match sounds to letters receive extra help in phonics. Across all subjects, the curriculum does not enable pupils to deepen their knowledge of spoken language well enough. This includes learning about standard English.

Teachers explain key subject ideas clearly, making good use of real-life examples. They are highly attuned to each pupil's needs and know the best ways to motivate them. In class, pupils behave well and follow teachers' instructions.

The school supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities effectively. Special educational needs coordinators work closely with therapists. Together they gather a wide range of assessment information. Staff use this information well. For example, they use it to choose teaching approaches that are highly suited to pupils' needs. A well-trained team of practitioners provide pupils who have social and emotional needs with expert guidance. This helps those pupils who struggle with managing their emotions to do so.

Leaders focus on supporting pupils in their journey to adulthood. Pupils learn about risky behaviours, healthy relationships, and how to make good choices. Staff take the time to nurture pupils' individual interests. Pupils' horizons are broadened through the additional cultural experiences the school provides.

The local governing body, multi-academy trust leaders and senior leaders concentrate on making improvements that are long-lasting. They prioritise developing staff and maintaining their well-being. As a result, staff feel that they can make worthwhile contributions to developing the school.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that spoken language and the way in which the key stage 3 curriculum builds readiness for the complexities of key stage 4 may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has a team of highly trained staff who work closely with pupils who have personal problems. They ensure that any safeguarding concerns are passed on to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). The DSL and deputy DSL follow up on all concerns, leaving nothing to chance. For example, where appropriate they make home visits to

meet with parents. If they refer concerns to the local authority, they monitor any follow-up actions that welfare services take. To enhance the expertise of all staff, the DSL leads extra safeguarding training on relevant issues. For example, he has led training on harmful sexual behaviours and child criminal exploitation.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, curriculum content in key stage 3, especially in Years 7 and 8, does not make pupils ready for the challenges of the curriculum in key stage 4. This means that some pupils struggle to master more complex subject-specific knowledge and skills. Senior leaders and subject leaders need to strengthen key stage 3 curriculum content in some subjects. They should ensure that it provides pupils with the subject-specific knowledge needed to master the complex ideas that they encounter in key stage 4.
- Across the school, not enough emphasis is placed on developing pupils' spoken language knowledge and skills. This includes knowledge about the difference between informal and formal language, how to express ideas clearly, and standard English. This means that pupils do not communicate as well as they could. Senior leaders should work with subject leaders to ensure that pupils acquire this important knowledge through subject curriculums.

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 predecessor school, Rise Academy, to be good in December 2015.

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	144422
Local authority	Kingston Upon Hull City Council
Inspection number	10200617
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Academy alternative provision converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	176
Appropriate authority	The Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Neil Porteus
Headteacher	Philip Mountain Wade
Website	www.riseacademyhull.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Just over half of pupils in Years 7 and 8 stay at the school until the end of Year 11. The rest transition back to their mainstream school. Most pupils who join between Years 9 and 11 remain at the school until the end of Year 11.
- In 2017, the school joined The Constellation Trust, which is a multi-academy trust consisting of seven primary schools and two secondary schools.
- Rise Academy operates across five sites. The key stage 4 site is the main site and is located close to the key stage 3 site. There are also separate sites for vocational learning, and for younger pupils with additional behavioural needs, known as 'Rise Together'. In September 2021, a new site, 'Rising Stars', was opened for Year 7 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities related to cognition and learning.
- The school is in the process of being re-designated as a special school.
- The school uses four unregistered alternative provision settings. About 30 pupils attend part-time motor mechanic courses at Motorvation Training Ltd; about 40 pupils attend construction courses at Orchard Education on a part-time basis; and approximately 40 pupils attend part-time courses at Lionheart Boxing Academy. Key stage 4 pupils who have newly arrived in the United Kingdom, and whose first language is not English, attend The Learning Sanctuary for a short period of time. This provision is run by the National Initiative for Creative Education.

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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, the chair of the local governing body, the chief executive officer of The Constellation Trust, the education psychologist commissioned to work with the school, and the deputy special educational needs coordinator. An inspector also met with senior leaders from three different schools that use the school's services, two of which are part of The Constellation Trust.
- Inspectors visited the key stage 4 site, the key stage 3 site, the vocational site, and the site for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities related to cognition and learning. Inspectors held online meetings with staff overseeing pupils with additional behavioural needs, which is known as the 'nurture group'.
- Online meetings were held with a representative from the virtual school (secondary) and the local authority's specialist services.
- An inspector made telephone calls to three out of the four alternative provision settings used by the school.
- Inspectors met separately with two groups of pupils to discuss their experiences of school, one of which was an all-girl group.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, personal, social and health education, and art/media. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors reviewed documents relating to the school's curriculum, along with the school's own evaluation and its development plans. Inspectors also sampled a selection of education, health and care plans as well as internal plans detailing the individual support the pupils require.
- Inspectors considered the 17 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, including the 12 free-text comments.
- The school's single central record, which includes the recruitment checks made on staff, was checked. An inspector also reviewed records of safeguarding concerns and referrals. A meeting was held with the headteacher, who until recently was the DSL, the deputy DSL, and the assistant headteacher who has recently taken over the role of DSL.

Inspection team

Sarah Hubbard, lead inspector

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Patricia Head

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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