

Thrybergh Academy and Sports College

Arran Hill, Thrybergh, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S65 4BJ

Inspection dates

15–16 January 2019

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Instability in staffing, particularly in the senior leadership team, has led to a decline in the quality and standards of education since the previous inspection.
- Too many pupils make poor progress from their starting points. The most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not get the support they need and make inadequate progress.
- The quality of teaching is inadequate. Too many teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. Teachers do not use assessment information effectively.
- The curriculum does not meet the needs of pupils. The primary curriculum is too narrow and focuses predominantly on English and mathematics at the expense of other subjects.
- Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are poor. This often leads to the completion of little work and poor presentation. Low-level disruption from a significant minority of pupils hinders the learning of others.
- Attendance is below the national average. Too many pupils are regularly absent from school.
- Leaders have not done enough to improve standards of literacy across the school. Poor literacy skills are a barrier to pupils' learning and progress. There is no culture of reading.
- Governors are aware of the inadequate progress made since the previous inspection. However, they have not done enough to stem the decline in standards. They do not check effectively on the use of the additional funding that the school receives to support pupils.
- Plans for improvement identify the main priorities. However, these plans do not incorporate milestones to check the effect of actions.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils receive helpful information, advice and guidance to inform their next steps in education, employment or training.
- Although the early years requires improvement, children make better progress in their learning compared to pupils in key stages 1 and 2.
- Leaders understand the school's weaknesses. Recent appointments to the leadership team are starting to halt the school's decline.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve so that all groups of pupils make good progress
 - there is a whole-school approach to the teaching of literacy
 - teachers plan effectively to support pupils with SEND and challenge the most able pupils, making sure that work is well matched to their needs
 - there are increasing opportunities for pupils to practise their written skills in subjects other than English and develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics, particularly in the primary phase
 - pupils take pride in the presentation of their work
 - there is a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics
 - teachers take account of pupils' current knowledge and understanding when planning lessons.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - developing common systems and procedures across the all-through school
 - ensuring that improvement plans incorporate interim milestones so that actions are regularly reviewed
 - further developing the skills and expertise of middle and senior leaders to drive improvement
 - urgently reviewing the curriculum so that it meets the needs of all pupils
 - monitoring the use and impact of additional funding
 - reviewing and strengthening governance so that governors play a more effective role in bringing about rapid improvement.
- Urgently improve pupils' personal development and welfare by:
 - improving pupils' attendance and reducing the number of pupils who are regularly absent from school
 - further reducing the rates of fixed-term exclusion and incidents of low-level disruption
 - ensuring that pupils treat adults and each other with respect

- fostering pupils' understanding of different cultures and the importance of British values
- developing pupils' resilience and improving their attitudes towards learning.

An external review of governance is recommended in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium is recommended in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the school's weaknesses. Their evaluation of the school is accurate. However, not enough has been done to stem the decline in the quality and standards of education since the last inspection. Procedures to review the school's work in the past have been ineffective. Leaders and governors have not addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.
- Instability in staffing, particularly in the senior leadership team, has meant that areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have not been addressed. Due to turbulence in staffing, frequent changes of senior leaders, and inconsistent application of whole-school policies, staff morale was low. However, under the leadership of the acting headteacher, staff morale is beginning to improve.
- The headteacher and the head of school for primary recently left the school. Interim leaders have brought some stability and they are beginning to address weaknesses and raise expectations. They understand that urgent action is needed to improve the quality of education. However, senior leaders recognise that there is a lack of capacity to bring about the necessary improvements.
- Although this is an all-through school, the primary and secondary campuses operate as two separate entities. This means that there is currently little collaboration between primary and secondary staff, and little joined-up planning. For example, there are two school improvement plans and no strategic overview of the all-through school. Improvement plans do not include interim milestones to judge the effect of actions taken to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Middle leaders have not been held to account in the past. They have not acted quickly enough to address the legacy of weak teaching. The rate of improvement has been hampered by high staff turnover. Middle leaders are beginning to check on the quality of teaching in their departments. However, this has not led to rapid improvement and the quality of teaching remains inadequate.
- The curriculum does not meet the needs of all pupils. In the primary phase, the curriculum is mainly focused on English and mathematics at the expense of subjects such as history, geography, the arts and technology. The primary curriculum does not enable pupils to acquire knowledge, understanding and skills in a range of subjects. Leaders also recognise that the secondary curriculum does not meet the needs of many pupils. They have plans in place to review the curriculum this term.
- Leaders have recently revised the school's personal, social and health education programme. Pupils talk positively about the range of opportunities to learn about online safety, keeping safe outside school and the anti-bullying ambassadors scheme. Older pupils spoke to an inspector about recent work with the local police to learn about gang culture. However, pupils have a limited understanding of other cultures and the importance of British values.
- It is strongly recommended that the school does not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- Over time, governors have not held leaders effectively to account to address the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Governors did not act quickly enough to secure improvements when it was clear that the quality of teaching and pupil outcomes were beginning to decline.
- Governors have not ensured that additional funding, such as the pupil premium and the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium, is used effectively. Currently, there are no plans in place for the use of the additional funding the school receives. Therefore, governors cannot check that this funding is being used effectively to support pupils.
- In the past, governors have not challenged senior leaders sufficiently. Governors now have a clear understanding of the weaknesses that need to be urgently addressed.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Governors and leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Appropriate checks are made when new staff are appointed.
- There is an increasing focus on supporting pupils' mental health and well-being. For example, pupils talk positively about the access they have to the school counsellor. Recently, a member of staff has been trained as a mental health first aider.
- Leaders work in an increasingly effective way with early help agencies. Referrals to outside agencies are now timelier, ensuring that pupils receive the support they need more quickly.
- Staff understand the important role they play in keeping pupils safe. They are alert to the risks in the local community.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teaching across the primary and secondary phases is weak. Too many teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. As a result, many pupils do not complete their work. The presentation of their work is often untidy. Teachers do not address pupils' misconceptions quickly enough, which means that pupils are unable to move forward in their learning.
- Teachers do not routinely plan to meet the needs of pupils. Teachers do not take into account pupils' prior knowledge and understanding when lessons are planned. Consequently, there is little challenge for the most able pupils and a lack of support for pupils with additional needs. Primary pupils are especially unchallenged in mathematics lessons. The lack of support and challenge leads to low-level disruption and pupils demonstrating poor attitudes to their learning.
- There is no whole-school approach to the teaching of literacy. Poor literacy skills act as a barrier to pupils' learning. For instance, pupils often make the same spelling errors after correcting their work.

- In the early years, and in key stage 1, elements of different phonics schemes are used by teachers. This has led to a lack of consistency in teaching approaches. Pupils are sometimes given books that they find too difficult to read because they are unable to use their phonics knowledge to decode words. Other pupils are given books that are too easy. There is a poor culture of reading across both primary and secondary phases.
- Pupils have limited opportunities to practise their written skills in subjects other than English. In addition, there are few opportunities for pupils to apply their problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics in the primary phase.
- Pupils with SEND are not supported well. Teachers do not have a good understanding of their individual needs as there is a lack of staff training. There is no system to review the progress of pupils with SEND. As a result, these pupils make inadequate progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Too many pupils show little interest in their learning. They do not understand how to be successful learners. Pupils give up too easily. Inspectors observed a number of pupils being passive and unwilling to engage in their learning.
- Pupils told inspectors that a small number of pupils smoke on the secondary campus. Although leaders are taking steps to address this, smoking on site has not been eradicated.
- Some pupils do not show respect to adults and their peers. Inspectors witnessed some pupils being rude and disrespectful to their teachers.
- Most pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. However, some pupils worry when there are fights and they do not like it when pupils push and shove in corridors. A few pupils said this is when they do not feel as safe. Although many pupils conduct themselves well at breaktimes and lunchtimes, inspectors did witness some boisterous behaviour.
- Some pupils told inspectors that they hear racist comments in school and staff do not always deal with this effectively. Recently, tighter systems have been introduced by the acting headteacher to ensure that there is more effective recording of racist comments, so that immediate action can be taken.
- Most pupils told inspectors that bullying is dealt with and there is an adult in school that they can talk to if they have any worries or concerns. Anti-bullying ambassadors talk positively about the training they received as part of the Diana Award to provide support for other pupils. However, some pupils told inspectors that bullying persists. Some parents told an inspector that they do not feel bullying is dealt with effectively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.

- A number of pupils told inspectors that regular low-level disruption has a negative effect on their learning. This was seen during the inspection. Leaders are addressing this with new systems and a more consistent approach to dealing with poor behaviour. Consequently, the number of fixed-term exclusions and the number of pupils withdrawn from lessons are beginning to reduce. However, fixed-term exclusions remain too high.
- The proportion of pupils absent from school is high. Pupils' absence has increased since the previous inspection. Rates of attendance are well below the national average. The proportion of pupils regularly absent from school is well above the national average. There are particularly high rates of persistent absence in Years 8, 10 and 11. Actions introduced by leaders to improve pupils' attendance have had no effect.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Historically, too many pupils have made poor progress from their different starting points. School information and work in pupils' books show that too many pupils continue to make inadequate progress.
- In 2018, only 20% of Year 6 pupils met the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This is well below the national average. No pupils achieved the higher standard. The progress made by Year 6 pupils in reading and mathematics was well below that seen nationally.
- Key stage 1 and 2 pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has declined in the past two years and shows no sign of improvement.
- In 2017, a greater proportion of pupils in Year 2 than found nationally passed the phonics screening check. However, the proportion of pupils who passed this check in 2018 declined to below the national average.
- In 2018, Year 11 pupils made weak progress across their GCSE subjects. Disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils made particularly poor progress. Pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics have declined significantly in the past two years.
- Leaders have identified that some pupils are not studying the right key stage 4 qualifications to meet their needs. Year 11 pupils have been assigned an individual mentor to provide additional support. However, poor attendance continues to hamper the progress of too many pupils in Year 11.
- Leaders do not have an established system to check the progress made by pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9. In the primary phase, leaders do not currently check the progress of different groups of pupils. As a result, there is a lack of understanding about how poorly pupils are progressing.
- Because of an improving and increasingly effective careers programme, there were no pupils in 2018 who did not move on to employment, education or training at the end of Year 11. This is an improvement from previous years, where the proportion of pupils staying in employment or education was below the national average.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for children in the early years have been variable over time. Children with SEND and disadvantaged children perform less well than their peers and others nationally.
- The early years leader has a clear understanding of strengths and areas for further improvement in the early years. There is a need to further develop the curriculum so that children have additional opportunities to learn outdoors.
- Teachers are using a combination of different phonics schemes. This is leading to an inconsistent approach to the teaching of early reading and confusion between teachers. As a result, children are not getting off to a good enough start in reading.
- A number of children enter the early years with skills that are below those typical for their age particularly in their speech, language and communication. Leaders and teachers understand the children's barriers to learning and their individual needs. As a result, children in the early years make better progress in their learning compared to pupils in key stages 1 and 2.
- The early years leader ensures that teachers and other adults regularly make observations, review their planning and carry out assessments. As a result, adults work effectively as a team to support children.
- The quality of teaching in the early years is of a higher standard than the rest of the all-through school. Teachers and additional adults have higher expectations of what children can and should achieve.
- Positive relationships ensure that children relate well to each other and respond to the routines and expectations in place for them. Most children listen carefully to adults and follow instructions. This contributes to a positive learning environment.
- Partnership with parents and carers are developing, with parent workshops to support children's learning and liaison with the local children's centre. However, there is further work to do to improve communication and parental engagement.
- Leaders ensure that the early years welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	140254
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	10087136

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	689
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Violet Chapman
Headteacher	Steven Rhodes (acting headteacher)
Telephone number	01709 850471
Website	www.thrybergh.com/
Email address	head@thrybergh.com
Date of previous inspection	25–26 April 2017

Information about this school

- The school is located on two sites. There is a primary and a secondary campus.
- The acting headteacher has been in post since September 2018. He was previously the deputy headteacher. He was also the acting headteacher at the time of the previous inspection. The acting head of school for primary had been in post for two weeks at the time of the inspection.
- A very small number of pupils attend alternative education provision at the Rowan Centre.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British families.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- This was a full section 5 inspection following the conversion from a section 8 'no formal designation' inspection.
- Inspectors visited a number of lessons on both the primary and secondary campuses. Some lesson visits took place with senior leaders. Inspectors also looked at a wide range of pupils' work across a range of subjects and year groups.
- Inspectors talked to pupils informally during breaktimes and lunchtimes to get their views about the school. Inspectors also met formally with pupils from all year groups.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in Years 1, 2, 6 and 7.
- An inspector held a telephone call with the early help quality manager for Rotherham local authority.
- An inspector met with the three governors, including the chair and vice chair of the governing body.
- An inspector talked to parents at the start of the school day at the primary campus and held telephone calls with some parents to gain their views of the school.
- Inspectors met formally with a group of middle leaders and a group of staff. Inspectors also talked informally with a several members of staff.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation relating to the school's work, including the self-evaluation document, the school improvement plan, information about pupils' progress and attainment, minutes of governing body meetings, and documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour, welfare and attendance.

Inspection team

Michele Costello, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Elaine Watson	Ofsted Inspector
Dimitris Spiliotis	Her Majesty's Inspector
Peter Cole	Ofsted Inspector
Andy Taylor	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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