

The Ryes College and Community

Pump Farm, Bures Road, Assington, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 5NA

Inspection dates

5–7 December 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Sixth form provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have made sure that all the independent school standards are met.
- The headteacher's willpower, passion and commitment to providing the very best care and education for pupils is significant to the school's success.
- Leaders, including those responsible for the governance of the school, have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas that require further development.
- Leaders, including governors, are determined to make sure that pupils are given every opportunity to succeed, both academically and personally.
- Teaching is good because staff have a good understanding of pupils' needs and high expectations of what they can achieve. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons and are motivated to do their best.
- All leaders, governors and staff ensure a strong culture of safeguarding pupils.
- The curriculum is personalised so that pupils re-engage quickly in their learning. Pupils study a broad range of subjects and take suitable qualifications appropriate to their needs and interests.
- While the attendance of many pupils is low when they arrive, it quickly improves as they begin to re-engage and enjoy learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and taught well through a range of topics and external speakers.
- Parts of the school accommodation look tired.
- Opportunities to develop the monitoring of pupils' personal, social and emotional development are not maximised.
- Teachers do not make sure that the most able pupils receive sufficiently challenging verbal questions.
- Opportunities to develop the outdoor learning curriculum further are limited.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and managers should:
 - develop the outdoor learning curriculum further, ensuring that staff obtain the relevant qualifications and/or training to be able to enhance the provision
 - monitor and evaluate the progress of pupils' personal, social and emotional development carefully so that it informs future plans, in order to meet pupils' needs more precisely
 - build the resilience and interpersonal skills of pupils to prepare them for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring the most able pupils receive the right level of questioning to enable them to make the further progress of which they are capable.
- Make sure all areas of the school accommodation are maintained to a high standard.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The new headteacher, appointed in April 2016, has provided a sharp focus to improve all aspects of the school. She sets high expectations, with the support of leaders and staff. The headteacher's passion and commitment to do everything possible to meet the needs of the pupils permeates all aspects of the school's work.
- Leaders, including those responsible for governance, have ensured that the school meets all of the independent school standards.
- A safeguarding policy is published on the school website which refers to the latest statutory guidance.
- Leaders understand the complexities of pupils in their charge. Leaders are reflective and are continually thinking of how to improve the quality of education they provide.
- The headteacher and her staff are deeply committed and highly driven to provide the very best education, care and support for each pupil. They share a determined belief that, despite the many challenges pupils face, they can achieve and succeed both during their time at Ryes College and Community and when they leave.
- The school's evaluation of its performance is an accurate representation of where the school's strengths and weaknesses lie. Leaders link school improvement firmly to their evaluation.
- Performance management is used effectively to improve staff performance. Staff are set clear and relevant targets linked to school improvement and pupils' progress.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is appropriately focused on helping pupils develop their basic skills, such as reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers plan bespoke learning activities carefully which motivate pupils. Consequently, pupils enjoy their learning and make good progress.
- College placements, work experience opportunities, furniture restoration, mechanics, animal husbandry, volunteering, charity work and fundraising are provided alongside the curriculum, personalised to pupils' individual needs.
- Learning is enhanced by a wide range of additional activities and trips. Football, bounce-ability, basketball, go-karting and climbing are among the many activities available to pupils. Trips stimulate pupils' enthusiasm, bringing their learning to life, for example, visits to Duxford Air Museum, HMS Belfast and The Tower of London.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is carefully threaded through the curriculum. The school's vision of, 'Strive to empower our young people to be better citizens who can make a positive contribution to their community, and, in turn, achieve economic well-being and the inner strength to fulfil their aspirations' permeates the school.
- School leaders use funding effectively to support the high number of disadvantaged pupils. They plan specific activities and purchase appropriate resources to support learning.

- Leaders are developing a clear programme of professional development for all staff to extend teaching and learning skills.
- A plan is in place that details how and when further improvements to the site will be made. For example, there are plans to replace the doors on classrooms and refresh areas that are looking tired.
- A new outdoor learning centre has been built. The outdoor learning centre does not yet have a fully suitable curriculum and staff have not had the relevant training to enhance the provision.
- Well-established systems are in place to check the quality of teaching, learning and assessment regularly. Leaders visit lessons, look at pupils' work and carry out a detailed analysis of pupils' progress in academic subjects. They provide support and guidance to staff when required. Regular training is planned to share good practice, which impacts positively on pupils' outcomes.
- The school is unable to provide accurate information about pupils' outcomes in relation to their personal, social and emotional progress as it is not analysed in sufficient detail.

Governance

- The chair of the governing body is ably supported by the governing body, which shares her passion, vision and determination for the school to become an outstanding school.
- Governors share the headteacher's ambitions. Governors have a wide range of expertise to support leaders in the school. They have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They hold leaders rigorously to account for the quality of education and care they provide to pupils. They routinely check that actions in the school development plan are making a noticeable difference to pupils' achievement.
- Governors carefully monitor the finances to ensure the financial stability of the school. For example, they have been instrumental in securing the finance for the recent building of the outdoor learning centre to ensure that pupils have access to a high-quality learning environment.
- Some areas of the school building are not maintained to a high enough standard and are in need of refreshing.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The single central record of the suitability of staffing meets requirements. The school's checks during staff recruitment are rigorous. Records are well kept and secure. Appropriate checks are made on visitors. Staff training is up to date with the most recent statutory guidance, including guidance about the 'Prevent' duty, stopping pupils being drawn into terrorism and radicalisation.
- Child protection matters are recorded and followed up diligently. Links with other agencies, particularly social services, the police and the youth offending teams are firmly established.

- Leaders ensure that the curriculum is constantly reviewed to meet the ever-changing needs of the pupils on how to stay safe. Pupils say they are taught how to stay safe and what to do if they have concerns and are well looked after by staff.
- The school raises pupils' awareness of leading healthy lifestyles, including about sex and relationships, and keeping themselves safe online and in their local community. Pupils are warned of the dangers of knife crime and drugs, and how to avoid harmful situations.
- Pupils know the different types of bullying and what to do if they have concerns about any safeguarding issues. The school survey results show that the overwhelming majority of pupils feel safe from bullying. Leaders use a range of strategies, including pupil group discussion, talks from the local police and personal, social and economic (PSE) lessons, to effectively support pupils' understanding of how to stay safe.
- Staff know individual pupils well and discuss any concerns about the pupils' welfare appropriately. Outside agencies are informed of concerns in a timely manner. Children missing from education protocols are followed methodically.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is securely based in building good working relationships with the pupils. Teachers and support staff know each pupil exceptionally well. They are skilful at working with pupils, restoring their confidence and self-esteem and inspiring them back into learning. This creates an atmosphere in lessons that both supports and challenges pupils to make academic and social progress.
- The teaching benefits from designated teaching rooms for art, life skills, information and communication technology, English, mathematics, science and a design and technology workshop. There are vegetable plots and the school raises poultry. Additionally, new for this year, there is a centre for outdoor learning.
- Teachers are very sensitive to the needs of pupils. They plan lessons that take pupils' academic starting points into account. This is particularly important because pupils start at the school at different times of the year. Pupils' books confirm that most pupils quickly re-engage and begin to make good or better progress.
- Initial assessments of pupils when they join the school provide staff with information about their prior learning. Staff get to know pupils well and identify what they can already do, and where they need further support. Teaching in small groups provides pupils with intensive support, matched to meet their needs.
- All staff manage behaviour in lessons effectively. They demonstrate endless patience, tolerance and resilience when dealing with challenging behaviour. They set clear expectations for pupils, and challenge any off-task or unacceptable behaviour.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan activities that stimulate pupils' interest, such as learning about the history of Christmas crackers in art and using a dart board in mathematics to promote the concept of adding up quickly.
- Pupils' books in a range of subjects confirm that they make accelerated progress. Pupils show pride in their work. Common errors such as incorrect spellings, and using capital letters, commas and full stops are challenged.

- Staff take hold of opportunities to develop pupils' social skills, emphasising the importance of personal qualities such as respect and valuing each other's opinion. For example, attendance at the breakfast club provides an opportunity for discussion, making decisions about the school day and discussing the news. Pupils liaise with their peers and adults in a sensible, mature way in a calm environment.
- Teachers do not carefully select questions which ensure that the most able pupils are challenged. They are not encouraged to think more deeply about their responses and improve their written answers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- All pupils enter the school with extremely challenging behaviour, and social, emotional and mental health needs. Staff ensure that transitions when pupils join the school are as smooth as possible.
- Leaders ensure that individual risk assessments are firmly in place and carefully followed. They clearly set out the techniques staff need to manage pupils' behaviour successfully.
- Pupils benefit from good pastoral support and this ensures that they settle into school each day and engage with their learning. All staff are well trained in observing pupils' behaviour to spot any concerns about their welfare or attitudes.
- Pupils work on enterprise initiatives and budget for these, providing skills for economic well-being in the future, for example by selling kindling and doing furniture restoration. These activities instil a sense of pride in the pupils and raise money for charity.
- Pupils understand their role as citizens in society. Pupils' cultural development is enhanced by experiencing sport, food and music from around the world. Chinese New Year, Day of the Dead and St Patrick's Day are examples of celebrations learned about. Pupils play football against another school, helping them to learn teamwork, rules and the code of conduct.
- The school works well with other professionals to ensure that pupils' needs are met effectively and that good progress is made. For example, the school works with the child and adolescent mental health service and other professionals to support pupils in their development.
- Staff receive training in physical restraint procedures. Staff are confident in how best to supervise pupils when challenging behaviour occurs.
- Significant emphasis is placed on extending pupils' understanding of risk as regards their sexual health, misuse of drugs, alcohol and smoking.
- Key speakers from Essex Fire Service, Street Pastors, Barnardo's, Only Cowards Carry (knife crime) and The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association attend the school community meetings to inform pupils of the work they do. This helps pupils to manage risk and prepares them for life in modern Britain.

- Pupils benefit from clear, impartial careers advice and guidance. They support pupils with applications for the next steps in their education or training. As a result, pupils make well-informed choices about their next steps. Almost all pupils successfully move onto college, apprenticeships or employment with training.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The ratio of staff to pupils is high, and pupils are supervised exceptionally well at all times. Staff are very skilled at reducing disruptive behaviour and respond well to pupils' needs. They recognise pupils' anxiety triggers and manage these well so that disruption to learning is minimised.
- In most lessons, pupils show an enthusiasm for their learning and engage well in the tasks they are given. Punctuality is good and pupils come ready to learn. Classrooms, corridors and outside areas are generally calm and orderly. Where incidents do occur, they are dealt with well. Break and lunchtimes particularly are seen as a social time which is enjoyed by pupils and staff alike.
- Systems of rewards and sanctions are well understood by pupils and support their learning of right and wrong. Pupils gain their reward points through attendance, punctuality, respect, learning, and individual targets which are taken from their termly progress and target plan. Pupils can gain a gold, silver or bronze pupil of the week award. Pupils are nominated by staff for outstanding support and kindnesses.
- Records are kept of all behaviour incidents. Leaders use this information to analyse trends and patterns of behaviour over time. The school has a clear understanding of the frequency of different types of behaviour, and the frequency of individual pupils' behaviour difficulties.
- Many pupils join the school with a history of poor attendance at their previous schools. Some have not attended regular education for over a year. Pupils' attendance is significantly higher than at their previous schools.
- Some pupils have difficulties in regulating their emotions and this can, at times, result in incidents of challenging behaviour.
- Short, fixed-term exclusions are given to reinforce behaviour expectations. In most cases these are successful, with pupils not needing to be excluded again. When pupils are repeatedly excluded, leaders call multi-agency meetings to review the suitability of the placement.
- Leaders and governors only use permanent exclusions as a last resort and after all other strategies have been exhausted. This is a very rare sanction at the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Most pupils arrive in school with prior attainment which is significantly below average. They have not previously made the progress expected of them because of disruptions to their secondary school education. Many pupils manage barriers to learning relating to their social, emotional and mental health needs.

- Pupils frequently arrive at the school at times other than the start of term, often because they have been excluded from their mainstream education. Leaders act quickly and effectively to personalise learning. The vast majority of pupils quickly settle into the routine of the school.
- Some pupils have a great deal of ground to make up, particularly in literacy and numeracy skills. The school focuses on developing pupils' basic literacy skills, including their speaking, listening and writing across all subjects. Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics compared to their low starting points on entering the school.
- The large majority of pupils make good or better progress in a broad range of subjects across the key stages and develop their communication, self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Children who are looked after make progress which is at least in line with that of their peers. Leaders use the extra funding provided by the pupil premium effectively so that disadvantaged pupils make good progress in their learning. There is no gap between the progress of these pupils and others. The most able pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Where pupils have the ability to study for qualifications, the school prepares them for examinations. For example, pupils work towards achieving Functional Skills Certificates, entry-level qualifications, the Gateway award and AQA Unit awards.
- The school prepares pupils well for when they leave. They develop the resilience and interpersonal skills of pupils to prepare them for the next stage of their education, training or employment. Pupils leave with a range of relevant accreditation to support their next steps in education, training or employment.

Sixth form provision

Good

- There are presently no students in the sixth form. Small proportions of pupils have attended the sixth form over the past few years.
- Leadership is good. Leaders and staff work hard to provide a curriculum that aims to nurture students' preferences and interests, so that they will grow in confidence and be successful members of society.
- The school has a very strong focus on students' academic, and personal and social achievement. All students are assessed on entry and their prior learning and aspirations established. Leaders establish clear learning plans for all students and review these regularly throughout the year.
- School leaders and staff are aware of the need to take more careful consideration of students' progress and make sure that they will have the chance to take suitable external examinations and, where appropriate, build up their confidence in English and mathematics by taking functional skills qualifications or GCSEs.
- Teachers are skilled at using a range of learning styles, which helps to keep students focused in their lessons. Students make good progress. There is a broad range of accreditation available to students, both at the school and through the close links the school maintains with other providers. The range includes GCSEs, Entry Level Certificates, AQA Unit Awards, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, first aid certificates, employability awards and awards for volunteering.

- A skilled member of staff checks the achievement of students who attend the various different off-site settings.
- Careers advice, guidance and support is available to enable students to make well-informed decisions about their futures. This includes opportunities for students to complete curriculum vitae and complete a mock interview. This prepares them well for life after the school.
- The school has robust procedures in place for safeguarding students.

School details

Unique reference number	143911
DfE registration number	935/6004
Inspection number	10038910

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	14
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	0
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	The Ryes College Limited
Chair	Kate Yarbo
Headteacher	Stephanie Jones
Annual fees (day pupils)	£39,230
Telephone number	01787 228344
Website	www.theryescollege.org.uk
Email address	office@theryescollege.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 November 2014

Information about this school

- Pupils were previously taught on two school sites, one at the Aldham School site near Colchester and the other just over the border in Suffolk at Pump Farm School in the village of Assington, near Sudbury. Since September 2016, the school has been solely at Pump Farm, operating under a different unique reference number (115427). The

Department for Education (DfE) states that the school is not a new provider, despite having a new unique reference number.

- The Ryes College and Community is a much-smaller-than-average school. It is registered to admit up to 24 pupils in the age range 11 to 19 years; there are currently 14 pupils on roll.
- The proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds is much lower than found in most schools. There are currently no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils in care is much higher than average.
- The school provides education for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, including: autistic spectrum conditions, including Asperger's syndrome; attachment disorders; anxiety; attention deficit hyperactivity disorder; and specific learning difficulties.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan and are funded by local authorities.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The building houses an English room where humanities and PSE are also taught, an art room, a science room, a sensory room, a life skills room, and an information and communication technology room. A centre for outdoor education, horticulture, enterprise and animal husbandry is also on site.
- Pupils are taught from time to time at a range of external providers including Suffolk College, The Colchester Institute, Braintree College, Easton and Otley College, and WS Training.
- Pupils complete work experience at Eden Rose, Eastern Lodge Gardens, Oak Tree Café and The Bridge Project.
- The school does not use supply staff.
- Although registered to admit pupils of sixth-form age, the school does not currently have pupils in the sixth form.

Information about this inspection

- Although the school has a new unique reference number since the previous inspection, at the request of the DfE the school is treated as the same provision as at the time of the previous inspection. Therefore, this inspection report refers to the development of the provision in relation to the previous standard inspection, in 2014.
- The inspector toured the school site, accompanied by the headteacher.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning. She also spoke to pupils formally and informally and examined the work in books. Lessons were visited jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, staff with additional responsibilities, the governing body and the proprietor.
- The inspector reviewed the checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children.
- A wide range of documentation was examined, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school's development plan and information relating to pupils' achievement and progress.
- Records relating to behaviour, attendance, admissions and attendance registers, safeguarding, health and safety, and the annual account of income received and expenditure incurred were also scrutinised.
- The school's website was examined.
- The inspector considered the 12 survey responses completed by staff. Telephone conversations took place with a representative from Suffolk local authority and Norfolk local authority. There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View and no free-text responses.
- The inspector viewed the school's own internal questionnaire responses from parents and held a telephone conversation with one parent.

Inspection team

Stefanie Lipinski-Barltrop, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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