

Inspection of The Royal Harbour Academy

Newlands Lane, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 6RH

Inspection dates: 8–9 January 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at The Royal Harbour Academy (RHA). They recognise the improvements that have been made and appreciate the care and concern that staff demonstrate for them day in, day out. Pupils speak extremely positively about the way there is always someone looking out for them. This helps them to feel safe.

There is a real sense of purpose and ambition embedding at the school. Pupils have responded well to this. They behave well and work hard. Sixth-form students are impressive role models for the whole community.

Pupils also enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular activities and work-related learning provided. For example, they enjoy enterprise tasks and learning to challenge each other in a constructive manner. Pupils show high levels of respect and consideration and say that bullying is not an issue at the school.

Leaders have improved the quality of education overall. However, these improvements are not yet secure in all subjects and for all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not receive the support leaders intend they should in all lessons. While pupils' published outcomes at GCSE remain too low, sixth-form students do well.

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

Leaders have continued to improve RHA. They have created a positive environment where pupils are confident and proud of their learning. There is an exciting focus on pupils' futures. Staff work hard to provide a wide range of meaningful opportunities. For example, ethics and philosophy lessons challenge pupils to explore moral and ethical issues and offer reasoned views about them.

Pupils display positive attitudes to their studies. They recognise the dedication of staff and feel valued. Those pupils who have struggled to manage their own behaviour in the past have been supported very effectively. They are proud of the improvements they have achieved and are adamant that their success is due to the relentless care and concern of the whole staff. Overall, a very positive and respectful culture runs through the school.

Leaders have structured the curriculum according to the needs of pupils. They have developed an innovative approach for lower-school pupils. A single teacher delivers grouped national curriculum subjects, for example English and history. This allows more emphasis to be put on improving literacy and numeracy. Leaders have made good use of the expertise of primary colleagues in the Coastal Academies Trust (CAT). This has helped staff to identify and fill any gaps in pupils' knowledge. Teachers routinely help pupils to recall their knowledge and apply it to their new learning.

Pupils in Year 9 follow a more traditional approach. Each subject is taught discretely before they pick their GCSEs for key stage 4. Historically, leaders have not ensured that pupils continue with the range of subjects that cover the breadth of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). Instead, they offered vocational and other qualifications they felt were more suited to pupils' needs. Leaders are changing their approach as the school changes. They intend for all pupils to have the broad and ambitious curriculum that will allow them to select EBacc subjects.

In many subjects, for example English and design and technology, the curriculum is well planned. Learning activities are designed so that pupils build their knowledge and skills systematically. However, this is not the case in all subjects, for example key stage 4 science. Senior leaders make good use of the support from CAT to help develop subject and other middle leaders. There is still work to do to roll this support out to secure further improvements.

Even where leaders have planned the curriculum well, it is not yet delivered as they intend for all pupils. This is particularly the case for pupils with SEND. Leaders provide a variety of support and training to develop teachers' subject knowledge and teaching skills. This development is not yet embedded consistently and so has not had the intended impact. Some teachers do not consistently use the strategies suggested by the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). Consequently, while the quality of education has improved, it is still too variable, especially in key stage 4 and for pupils with SEND.

The sixth form continues to be good. Sixth form students are ambitious and determined. They continue to do well in their studies and benefit from the well-designed programmes of study. These help them to develop detailed knowledge and gain the qualifications they need for their next steps, be they in education, employment or training. In contrast to other key stages, students with SEND do particularly well due to the well-considered support they receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The care and concern that staff show for pupils and their families are informed by ongoing training and strong communication. Staff are well informed and know about safeguarding issues relevant to the local area. They follow the agreed processes for reporting any concerns about pupils.

Pupils are confident that staff will listen to them and take them seriously if they have any worries. They learn about how to identify risk and keep themselves safe, including online and in the local community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for the quality of education for pupils at RHA. Most subjects have well-planned approaches to ensuring that pupils learn what they need to in order to achieve well. However, these good intentions are not consistently realised across each subject area, especially in key stage 4. In order to improve pupils' achievement across the curriculum, leaders need to continue to support staff to develop their subject and pedagogical knowledge. Teachers need to deliver the curriculum as leaders intend.
- Some subject and other middle leaders have benefited from training provided by CAT. Senior leaders need to support and train leaders at all levels so they deliver further changes to the curriculum and teaching quickly and securely.
- Support for pupils with SEND is too variable. The SENCo provides some information for teachers but this is not used consistently. Some staff say they need more training. Teachers need to have and use strategies to support pupils with SEND so that their needs are met across the curriculum.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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	135826
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10122206
Type of school	Modern (non-selective)
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	837
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	55
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Neil Buchanan
Headteacher	Simon Pullen
Website	www.rha.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 June–12 July 2018

Information about this school

- There have been changes to leaders at all levels since the last inspection. A new deputy headteacher and several new subject leaders have been appointed.
- The academy order enabling the Coastal Academies Trust (CAT) to bring The Royal Harbour Academy into its multi-academy trust (MAT) has still not been enacted. The school remains a foundation school, and therefore the legal responsibility of the local authority, Kent County Council (KCC). Since the autumn term 2018, KCC has contracted CAT to be accountable to them for the school's effectiveness. CAT continues to describe the school as an 'associate member' of the MAT. This relationship is recognised by the regional schools commissioner.
- Over 60% of pupils in the school are disadvantaged pupils. This is well above the national average.
- A small number of pupils attend the pupil referral unit, Enterprise Learning Alliance.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- We held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, the head of sixth form, the SENCo, subject leaders, pastoral leaders, teachers and teaching assistants.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the local authority and CAT. She also met with three members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body.
- We spoke to pupils from every year group about RHA and took into account the nine responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- We took account of the 21 responses by parents to Ofsted's Parent View, including 14 written responses.
- We considered the views of staff from conversations and the 63 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.
- We evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by reviewing leaders' knowledge, recording and actions. This included looking at documentation, including the school's single central record and a sample of case files. Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead and spoke to pupils, staff and governors about this aspect of their work.
- We did deep dives into these subjects: English, mathematics, science, history, design and technology and ethics and philosophy. This involved discussions with the leaders of each of these subjects, visits to lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work, and discussions with pupils and teachers from the lessons visited about the subjects.

Inspection team

Lucy English, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Philip Storey	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Murphy	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Roessler	Ofsted Inspector

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