

Who we are and what we stand for

- The Russett School is an academy for pupils and students with severe, profound and complex needs between 2 – 19 years, working in partnership with The Russett Learning Trust. Our vision is to promote OUTSTANDING achievement for ALL. The Trust's vision is *Challenge for Achievement*.
- All our pupils make good or outstanding progress and leave us better prepared for their onward journey in life into adulthood.
- We provide an outreach service, COaTS (Community, Outreach and Training Service), offering advice and training in the management of disability and special educational needs to pre-school settings, primary and secondary schools and other providers on request.
- We were accredited as a National Support School in March 2018, with the Executive Headteacher awarded National Leader for Education status at the same time.



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The quality of education is outstanding because:

INTENT

Strength of staff understanding of intent of the curriculum and implications for their practice

- A culture of transparency, openness and professional respect and collaboration has led to the development of a curriculum that is tightly matched and continuously adapts to the needs and abilities of our students.

Ambition and breadth of curriculum for all pupils to succeed in life

Coherence and sequencing within the school's curriculum plans, to enable accumulation of knowledge and skills

Success of curriculum design and adaptation for pupils with SEND to develop knowledge, skills, abilities and independence

IMPLEMENTATION

Degree of consistency of implementation across all parts of the school, with series of lessons and well matched, coherently planned and sequenced work delivering the curriculum intent

- Formal observations of teaching and learning, coupled with findings from learning walks, 'drop-ins', informal observations, work scrutinies and analysis of pupil achievement data – forming an exceptionally strong evidence base – all confirm that:
 - there is strong and secure pedagogical knowledge within the classroom professional teams

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- there is deep and effective collaborative team work within each class base
- there is an outstanding understanding of the individual needs of all pupils
- teaching is adapted highly effectively to match pupils' individual needs, interests and abilities

Depth of teacher subject knowledge

Clarity of teacher presentation and effectiveness of promotion of pupil discussion

Effectiveness of checking of pupils' understanding in lessons, clarity of feedback and adaptation of teaching in response

- Through skilful questioning and creative approaches – for instance, 'sabotaging' an outcome so as to check whether pupils spot this and respond – teachers regularly check on pupils' understanding and modify their teaching accordingly. We see this operating consistently to good effect in our observations of teaching.

Effectiveness of teaching in helping pupils to develop long-term memory of content and to integrate knowledge into larger ideas

Effectiveness of teachers' and leaders' use of assessment to help pupils embed and use knowledge fluently, check understanding and inform teaching

- Findings from lesson observation and from monitoring of assessment and planning records confirm that class teams effectively use assessment information, including pupil progress data, to ensure that all individuals are progressing towards their aspirational goals.

Manageability of assessment models

Quality of environment for learning, including choices of teaching materials

- Strong strategic oversight of resources, along with exceptionally effective governance, has resulted in the academy being in a strong financial position to make continuous improvements to the teaching and learning environment.

Level of demand of work given to pupils, match with aims of the curriculum and coherence of planning and sequencing

- Scrutiny of planning and observation of delivery of lessons indicate that learning follows a logical sequence and becomes progressively more demanding over time both in terms of the long- and medium-term. Plans are modified in the light of assessment and individuals' previous learning, rather than being 'fixed in stone'.
- Observation of teaching confirms that individual lessons are well paced in order to meet a range of needs, with some pupils stretched to move more quickly but with others given additional support and more time to consolidate their learning.

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Level of priority afforded to the teaching of reading

- A well-taught, clearly structured phonics programme, provision of highly effective one-to-one and group guided reading sessions from an experienced and expert HLTA, well organised class library sessions, a wide range of attractive, varied reading resources, well matched to pupils' needs, interests and abilities and relevant, effective CPD and support for staff ensure that reading is central to learning across the curriculum.

Rigour and effectiveness of sequencing of the reading curriculum in developing pupils' fluency, confidence and enjoyment in reading, with sound foundations laid down for the younger children

- Lesson observation indicates that phonics teaching is very effective in terms of the imaginative and creative teaching approaches used, the range and quality of learning resources, including tactile, the quality of the planning and the consistent use of assessment and recording to shape teaching and learning. As a result, pupils make rapid progress, enjoy their learning and are eager to participate.

Effectiveness of assessment of reading

Match of reading books to the phonics knowledge taught to pupils

Effectiveness of modelling by teachers through their own speaking, listening, writing and reading in support of pupils' development of language and vocabulary

IMPACT

Consistency of pupils' work across the curriculum

Consistency of achievement for all pupils, including the most disadvantaged and those with SEND

Achievement across the curriculum

- Termly analysis of pupil progress data, termly evaluation of progress towards achievement of annual ECHP targets, analysis of behaviour incidents, observations of learning and pupils at work, scrutiny and moderation of pupils' work, informal feedback relating to students' onward transition from academy and case studies – forming an exceptionally wide evidence base – all confirm that
 - over the course of the last full academy year, the vast majority of pupils met or exceeded their aspirational targets
 - over that same period, there were no significant differences in the performance of any identifiable pupil group, including those eligible for the pupil premium and students supported by other, additional funding
 - during the *current* academic year, the vast majority of students are on track to make or exceed their aspirational targets, with a similar level of consistency across different pupil groups

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- where students are identified as potentially not meeting their targets, early interventions are clearly making a highly positive impact on outcomes

Readiness for next stage of education, employment or training and appropriate pupil destinations for all, including those with SEND

- Direct observation, discussions with the pupils themselves and analysis of achievement data confirm that pupils move smoothly and confidently and eagerly from key stage to stage. A key contributory factor in this is the security of assessment data on prior attainment. A broad consistency of teaching approaches and strategies is maintained whilst at the same time progressively increasing demands are made of the pupils as they move through the academy.
- In terms of transition post-16, an increasing emphasis has been made over time on ensuring that parents/carers and students receive appropriate information, guidance and support to enable them to make well-informed decisions. Whereas in the past there might have been assumptions around taking up post-16 provision in the sixth form, other options are now discussed. Equally, the range of appropriate options available post-18 is now much wider.

Quality of pupils' work across the curriculum

Pupils' reading and mathematical skills

- The proportions of pupils making exceptional progress in reading have significantly increased over the last seven years.
- Pupils' numeracy skills develop well. Staff are skilful and systematic in planning for and providing a wide range of opportunities for pupils to practise and apply numeracy skills, including, for older pupils, real-life applications in shops, in the course of educational visits, work experience and college placement settings.

We will sustain excellence in the quality of education that we provide and further develop quality by:

- Continuing to assess the skills sets of our staff and the effectiveness of our curriculum and assessment arrangements in order to maintain high levels of expertise in the face of the changing cohorts nationally and locally and to build the outcomes of staff skills assessment into our CPLD programmes
- Continuing to ensure that the assessment schemes to measure progress continue to be appropriate and aspirational, given the changing national agenda
- Working to broaden the range of destinations for students



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Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are outstanding because:

Levels of respect shown by pupils to others

- Often from low baselines and starting points, pupils' attitudes towards learning improve to high levels. The vast majority of children look forward to coming to us and their attitudes and behaviours are positive in their impact both on the quality of relationships they establish with their peers and adults and on their learning and progress.

Positivity of pupils' attitudes and commitment to education, including persistence when facing difficulties

Responsiveness of school to challenging circumstances and success in creation of a safe, well-ordered environment for learning

- Rigorous recruiting and induction, as well as high-quality staff CPD, ensure that expectations for pupil behaviour are very high and that management of behaviour is consistent and skilful. The work of individual staff is very well supported by the wider infrastructure and the clarity of the policies.

Expectations for pupil behaviour and consistent and fair application of those expectations

- Our extensive evidence base, including analysis of half-termly behaviour reports, demonstrates that:
 - pupils' attitudes and behaviour within lessons are highly conducive to engaged learning and achievement
 - outside lessons and in less structured situations, behaviour is of an equally high standard
 - staff are highly skilled in managing behaviour – as a result of our high investment in CPLD – fully embracing our whole-school approach to positive behaviour support

Incidence of bullying, aggression, discrimination and derogatory language and the school's response

- Incidents of bullying are vanishingly rare, as is the use of any prejudice-based language. Parents/carers express confidence in the overall way the academy deals with any behaviour issues. Our strategy of consistently modelling appropriate behaviour for interactions and of operating a 'buddy' system is very effective in promoting positive and appropriate behaviours.
- External audits continue to show that the school maintains the highest possible standards in safeguarding; both parental and pupil surveys confirm that young people enjoy the life and work of, and feel safe in, the academy.

Pupils' commitment to learning, resilience, pride in achievements and knowledge of how to learn

- Our observations of teaching and learning – both in lessons and in other situations – and our discussions with pupils testify to surprisingly high levels of resilience, given starting points and

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challenges which they face. Pupils do demonstrate engagement and curiosity in their learning, coming up with questions to extend their knowledge.

Attendance and punctuality

- Over a period of years, our headline figure for attendance has been above the national average for special schools. There is no undue variation in attendance patterns for particular pupil groups, such as those eligible for the pupil premium grant. A small number of pupils with significant medical needs impacts on the headline figure; their hospital appointments and medical interventions are unavoidable.

Rates of fixed-term exclusions

Quality of relationships among pupils and staff: culture of respect and security

We will sustain excellence in pupils' behaviour and attitudes and further develop them by:

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Provision and outcomes for pupils' personal development are outstanding because:

Extent to which the school goes 'the extra mile' to promote pupils' personal development

Degree of coherence in planning rich experiences in the curriculum and through extra-curricular activities

Rates of pupil participation in extra-curricular activities and take-up by all pupil groups

Extent to which school's provision for pupils' character development¹ is worthy of being shared with others

The degree to which the school's curriculum extends beyond the academic, vocational or technical

- Wider work on provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development has been set within a well thought-out curriculum framework and a concise policy document.

¹ The set of positive personal traits, dispositions and virtues that informs their motivation and guides their conduct so that they reflect wisely, learn eagerly, behave with integrity and cooperate consistently well with others. This gives pupils the qualities they need to flourish in our society ☒

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This means that understanding of, and aims for, SMSC development are clearly summarised for all staff. Pupil case studies are available to illustrate the impact of work in this area.

- Our strong PHSE programme is well planned and taught, resulting in our students developing an understanding of healthy lifestyles, personal safety and safety in the community.

The extent to which the school's curriculum and wider work supports pupils' character development

- Through well-planned and well-prepared work-related learning, young people demonstrate, when engaging in discussion in lessons, a sound understanding of key behaviours and attitudes which are important in the work place and for their future lives. Feedback from work placements, for instance, regularly highlights the confidence and courtesy with which our students talk to adults, the appropriateness of the way they present themselves, their ability to listen to instructions and follow them through, their time-keeping and their overall work 'ethic'.

The extent to which the curriculum and wider work support the development of resilience, confidence and independence

The extent to which the curriculum and wider work support pupils to lead a healthy lifestyle physically and mentally

- As the pupils move through the academy, they develop increasing awareness of the reasons why it is important to make certain choices and follow certain lifestyles for their long-term health. Choices of food and drink do modify over time, with evidence of changes in attitude towards healthier options.
- Older pupils demonstrate a growing understanding of dangers around online safety – in the use of social media websites, for instance – and how to manage them, as well as taking control over their own safety in terms of travelling independently, taking on work placements and preparing and cooking their own lunches safely and hygienically.

The effectiveness of the school's work to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain and to understand British values

- Key elements within our curriculum (PSHE, RE, history, English and geography) – supported by our overall ethos – promote fundamental British values, with the aim of ensuring that our students leave us as confident individuals who are able to get on well with each other and live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives, acting as respectful and responsible adults who are well prepared to play their part as law-abiding citizens in modern Britain, valuing equally different faiths and beliefs.
- Despite challenging and sometimes turbulent circumstances in their lives, a number of pupils are supported to develop responsible attitudes and behaviours that equip them well for the future. Over time, they develop an appreciation of our academy's culture and recognise the values they need to espouse, particularly tolerance and respect for adults, their peers, the fabric and the environment.

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The success with which the school ensures pupils understand, appreciate and respect difference in the world and people

The availability of opportunities for pupils to understand how to function as positive, participatory citizens

- We provide many opportunities for students to see themselves as full and active members of, and contributors to, society. These include participation in the student council (Pupil Voice) and opportunities to support charity fund-raising. Our school's culture recognises, supports and helps the students to develop the values they need to be tolerant and respectful citizens.

The effectiveness with which secondary schools provide high-quality careers guidance and opportunities to encounter the world of work

- Strengths in our provision include the highly personalised nature of the guidance, support and advice which we offer and the high level of effectiveness of our job coach in engaging with employers to ensure a wide range of opportunities for work experience, very well matched to individual students' aspirations and abilities.
- We are also highly effective in supporting pupils themselves to communicate their views, interests and preferences with regard to decisions about their future, striking a judicious balance between high aspiration and ambition on the one hand and realism on the other when future opportunities are being discussed and planned for. We maximise as much involvement from parents/carers and pupils/students as possible in this crucial decision-making process.

We will sustain excellence in provision and outcomes for pupils' personal development and further develop them by:

- Strengthening our arrangements for students to make their views known, so that we can take account of them when shaping our provision and plans.



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The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding because:

The extent to which professional development arrangements build and develop teachers' expertise over time, translating into consistent improvements in the teaching of the curriculum

- Well-judged, significant investment in continuous professional and leadership development (CPLD), well-matched to the needs of the academy, mindful of national priorities and context, and continuously adapting to both the changing demands of our students and building on the potential of staff has delivered continuous improvements in teaching quality over time. This is confirmed by records of observation and evaluation of teaching, as well as by other evidence.

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- The premium set on providing high-quality CPLD has also resulted in high staff retention rates, strong recruitment and strong succession planning. This has ensured that the capacity of the academy for sustainable growth and development has been enhanced year-on-year.

The effectiveness with which school leaders engage with staff at all levels and respond to issues raised, in particular about workload

The extent to which staff report strong support for well-being issues

The clarity and ambition of leaders' vision for high-quality, inclusive education

- Well-developed structures ensure that leaders and managers at different levels consistently, systematically and rigorously communicate expectations and check that they are being achieved through a range of rigorous, systematic monitoring and evaluation activities.
- The Russett *Performance Wheel* sets out a clear, well thought-out vision for the academy's future achievements, building on its 2014 and 2018 Ofsted judgements of outstanding overall effectiveness.
- Systematic, detailed and challenging self-evaluation runs throughout the academy which results in clear identification of ambitious future priorities and provides confirmatory evidence of current outstanding provision and outcomes. The evidence base for self-evaluation judgements is extensive, including highly effective use of external professional evaluation and reportage.

Degree of focus on improving teachers' subject, pedagogical and pedagogical content knowledge, enhancing the teaching of the curriculum and the appropriate use of assessment

The effectiveness, sharpness of focus and sense of purpose in leaders' engagement with pupils, parents, employers and local services, as relevant

- Home-school links are exceptionally strong as a result of the work of our family liaison worker and other leaders, developing consistency between behaviour and communication strategies used in the academy and at home, with clear benefits as a result to pupils in terms of behaviour, engagement in everyday life, independence, confidence and future life outcomes.
- Regular feedback to parents/carers through home-academy contact books, telephone conversations, termly reports, two parent consultation meetings and the annual review ensure that accurate and concise information is conveyed both with regard to children's achievement and their progress and to strategies which can be shared between the academy and at home. Feedback from parents confirms that this is the case.
- Ongoing work to develop provision of parental/carer workshops is supporting the promotion of very effective working relationships with parents and supporting them in helping their children.
- Annual parental questionnaires testify to a high level of parental support for the academy and a very positive view of our provision.
- The high impact of the work of the job coach, particularly in terms of the development of high-quality relationships with employers, has resulted in placements very well matched to individual

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students' aspirations and abilities which, in a growing number of cases, have continued in the form of paid and voluntary employment post-academy.

The effectiveness of leaders' engagement with staff and awareness of pressures facing them

The extent to which staff are managed realistically and constructively, including their workload

The extent to which leaders protect staff from bullying and harassment

The clarity of governors' understanding of their role and their effectiveness in discharging their three principal functions

- The quality of debate in board and LGC meetings is reflected in the evidence of challenge recorded in minutes. LGC/Directors do not just accept assertions from staff regarding standards, quality and data but ask for evidence in substantiation. Examples include challenge around personnel issues and discussion around levels of financial delegation.
- Strong strategic oversight of resources, along with exceptionally effective governance, has resulted in the academy being in a strong financial position to make continuous improvements to the teaching and learning environment.

The effectiveness of those responsible for governance in ensuring the school's statutory responsibilities are fulfilled

The extent to which the school's culture for safeguarding facilitates effective arrangements for identification of need, securing support or making timely referrals, managing safe recruitment and allegations regarding adults

- Safeguarding is a standing item in the reporting to the LGC; records and minutes show that policy and practice are robustly challenged. Updating for staff and directors/governors takes place through regular and systematic CPD. The effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, including our work to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism, was confirmed by an in-depth, external safeguarding audit in March 2018, undertaken by an independent consultant.

We will sustain excellence in leadership and management and further develop effectiveness by:

- Strengthening the interactions between senior and middle leaders, so as to develop the capacity of middle leaders to diagnose complex issues, identify solutions and deliver actions, building on existing best practice
- Sharpening even more finely the focus for CPLD, so that there is even greater consistency and synergy between whole-school, departmental and individual improvement/development.



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The overall effectiveness of the school is outstanding because:

- The quality of education is outstanding.
- All other key judgements are outstanding.
- Safeguarding is effective.