

Inspection of a good school: The Ridgeway School & Sixth Form College

Inverary Road, Wroughton, Swindon, Wiltshire SN4 9DJ

Inspection dates:

3–4 March 2020

Outcome

The Ridgeway School & Sixth Form College continues to be a good school.

There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a section 5 inspection now.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils really enjoy their lessons at the school. There are excellent relationships between staff and pupils that foster trust and cooperation.

The school has given much thought to the organisation and structure of its curriculum. This is evident in both its design and delivery, for example in the way that languages separate the lessons into speaking and writing. The curriculum builds upon previous learning and provides a well-judged level of challenge. As a result, pupils are motivated, work hard and learn well.

The school has high expectations of its pupils and, consequently, they behave very well, both in lessons and during social times. Pupils say that the school has a strong family feel. Older pupils mentor and support the younger ones and this helps to create strong bonds between them. Bullying is a very rare occurrence and is dealt with quickly and effectively by staff should it occur.

The school provides an exceptionally wide range of activities, trips and special events for pupils. There are high levels of participation.

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

The school has completed much work on developing its curriculum. The curriculum has a wide scope and provides a depth of challenge. Its impact is shown through the strong progress that pupils make, particularly at key stage 4. For example, in history, there is a well-developed structure that enables pupils to make connections across time. The curriculum prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. It provides challenge and encourages pupils to read and study.

Pupils in the sixth form are very well motivated, value the school and the quality of teaching that they receive. They appreciate the improvements made to their study areas and the resources made available to them. Pupils from the sixth form are very successful in achieving their preferred destinations. However, the curriculum does not always meet the needs of some pupils well enough. This limits the progress these pupils make.

Pupils behave very well. Both in lessons and at social times, they are courteous and polite. They move around the school with consideration for others. They have very positive attitudes towards school and are well motivated to learn and succeed.

The school is highly inclusive and all pupils are very well supported. The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (specially resourced provision). These pupils access the whole of the curriculum and receive any extra help that they need to succeed.

The personal development of pupils is central to the school's vision and is delivered very effectively. The personal, social and health education curriculum ensures that pupils learn to be tolerant of others. As a result, pupils can be themselves and be open about issues such as their gender identity. The school has well-organised and effective support services for pupils, which they appreciate. The school listens to pupils and acts upon what it hears. The school provides a large and comprehensive programme of activities, events and trips. These include the arts, sports, culture, business and industry, subject trips, visits to places of interest and museums. Participation rates are very high.

Staff feel that leaders have created a very supportive climate in which to work. The headteacher, senior leaders and middle leaders understand the pressures upon staff and are very supportive. They make sound decisions that help staff to meet their responsibilities.

Staff feel that the trust has brought significant benefits to the school. The opportunities for networking and professional learning have increased. Staff feel that there are excellent opportunities for their career development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has high-quality policies and systems in place which provide detailed guidance to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Staff training meets statutory requirements and training records are comprehensive. There is a strong culture of safeguarding and pupils feel very safe within the school. Governors and leaders have received training to ensure that the school recruits suitable staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in the sixth form has not been sufficiently well matched to the needs of all pupils. As a result, some pupils have not made the progress of which they are capable. The school should continue to progress its rapid reforms of the sixth-form curriculum and provision.

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 non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good 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 convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 11 April 2016.

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	137160
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10111599
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	1,587
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	181
Appropriate authority	Board of Trustees
Chair of governing body	Elizabeth Palfrey
Headteacher	James Povoas
Website	http://www.ridgewayschool.com/
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average comprehensive school.
- The school is a member of The White Horse Federation.
- The local authority supports a specially resourced provision for 20 pupils with autism spectrum disorder in Years 7 to 11 and has the ability to take one or two students in the sixth form.
- The school currently uses three alternative providers for a small number of pupils: Oakfield, Riverside and Fernbrook.

Information about this inspection

- We met with the headteacher, members of the trust, governors, members of the senior leadership team, middle leaders, staff and pupils during the course of the inspection.
- We considered the following subjects in depth, visiting classrooms, talking with team leaders and meeting subject staff and pupils with their exercise books: English, mathematics, science, history and modern foreign languages.
- In order to inspect safeguarding, we checked the school's single central record of recruitment and vetting checks, considered its safeguarding policy, interviewed the member of staff designated as the safeguarding leader and spoke with pupils and staff.
- Surveys of the views of parents, pupils and staff were also considered as part of the inspection process.

Inspection team

Malcolm Willis, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
David Simons	Ofsted Inspector
Duncan Millard	Ofsted Inspector

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