

# Ridgeway Middle School

Evesham Road, Astwood Bank, Redditch, B96 6BD

**Inspection dates** 15–16 May 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Students learn quickly during their time in the school, and students in Key Stage 3 make particularly rapid progress in English and mathematics.
- Students' attainment in English and mathematics is above the levels expected for their age in Year 8.
- Students who are supported by additional funding learn well as a result of additional opportunities and resources provided by the school.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs benefit from small group work and make good progress in their learning.
- Most of the teaching is good, with some examples of outstanding teaching.
- Behaviour is good throughout the school.
- Students are keen to learn, and in the best lessons benefit from teachers who question their understanding so they can acquire new knowledge quickly.
- Marking is a strength of the school, clearly showing where students have done well, and where they need to improve.
- Students feel safe in school, and enjoy the range of additional activities provided beyond the school day.
- Leaders are continually improving teaching, and have effective ways of monitoring the quality of teaching involving middle leaders to review the performance of subject areas.
- The subjects, visits and extra activities such as trips, clubs, and the school goats offer a wide range of experiences to enthuse all students in their learning.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students in Key Stage 2, although making good progress, do not learn as rapidly as students in Key Stage 3.
- There is not enough outstanding teaching. The needs of individual students are not always fully met in lessons.
- Students do not have enough opportunities to learn actively in lessons to develop their inquisitive and investigative skills.
- The features of the existing outstanding practice in teaching are not shared with other staff frequently enough.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons, eight of which were seen together with the headteacher or senior leaders, and made several other short visits to lessons.
- Inspectors held discussions with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, and senior and subject leaders. School documentation relating to attendance, safeguarding and students' progress and attainment was examined.
- Discussions were held with students, both formally and informally, and a range of students' work was reviewed.
- Inspectors took account of 31 questionnaires completed by staff and the 69 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also considered other communications with parents, and the responses to the school's own questionnaire for parents.

## Inspection team

Clare Saunders, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Raye Allison-Smith

Additional Inspector

David Bowles

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This middle school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are of White British heritage, and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students who are supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, in local authority care, or from a family with a parent in the armed forces) is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is below average. The proportion supported by school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- Ridgeway Middle School became an academy in December 2012. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- During the inspection all year groups were involved in end-of-year assessments.
- No students are currently educated away from the school site.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching and progress for all students are outstanding by:
  - giving students more opportunities in lessons to take a more active role in learning, for example by developing their skills of enquiry and investigation
  - fully meeting the needs of all students in lessons by adapting learning activities to individual needs
  - routinely sharing outstanding practice so that all teachers are aware of the features of an outstanding lesson.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students enter the school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are average for their age group. They learn well throughout the school, and are on track to leave Year 8 with attainment in English and mathematics that is above average.
- Students make excellent progress in all subjects in Key Stage 3, building on the good progress they make in Key Stage 2.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates as a result of additional support through small group tuition and extra resources.
- The school uses the pupil premium well to benefit eligible students. For example, extra tuition in English and mathematics means these students progress as well as their classmates, and school data show that they are on track to attain in line with other groups by the end of Key Stage 2 and by the time they leave the school. The school's pupil engagement officer ensures that eligible students are involved in as many of the school's activities as they wish to do.
- The school uses its additional 'catch-up' funding well on additional tuition to support Year 7 students' progress in literacy and numeracy. This is resulting in these students making good progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Students enjoy reading a variety of books. Time is allocated each day for reading, and for some students to have individual help with their reading. This strategy has been successful in improving attainment in reading in Key Stage 2 this year.
- Students learn well in most lessons, and work in students' books reflects high expectations of how much most students can attain in most subjects.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Much of the teaching is good, with some that is outstanding. This is leading to good students' achievement over time.
- Where teaching is good or better, teachers use well-developed questioning skills to track how much students understand about the topic, and how successfully they can apply their knowledge in new situations. For example, in a Year 5 English lesson students were eagerly discussing aspects of characterisation with each other, with the teacher encouraging them to apply the terms of inference and prediction to their discussions. This meant the teacher could accurately identify which students understood the key vocabulary for the lesson.
- Teachers plan learning activities that encourage students to work in groups, and use good strategies to ensure that these groups of students learn well. However, in some lessons not all students benefit from learning tasks designed to develop their individual strengths and tackle their weaker areas.
- Marking is a strength of the school. Teachers mark students' written work regularly and make helpful comments so students know exactly what they need to do in order to improve it. Some excellent practice is evident. For example, in science students readily respond to teachers'

written comments by improving their work, or ask further questions of the teacher to make sure they understand the work.

- Teaching assistants are used effectively to work with small groups, individuals or whole classes to provide additional support for disabled students and those who have special educational needs, and those eligible for the pupil premium. Their skills and knowledge are used well to ensure that these students make good progress in English and mathematics.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Students feel safe in school and have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, for example when using the internet.
- Students know about the different types of bullying. They say that bullying is rare, and that on the few occasions when it happens, teachers deal with the situation effectively.
- Behaviour in lessons is good. The feedback from parents and carers supports this positive view. Attendance is above average, reflecting students' enjoyment of school.
- Students are keen to learn, and will swiftly do as their teachers ask. However, students do not regularly have the opportunities to direct the learning in the classroom as activities are often teacher-led. This does not allow students to routinely engage in activities that allow them to be more active in their learning, for example by investigating and solving problems.
- There are many areas where the school helps the students to develop their social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness, and student show positive qualities in response. For example, an assembly led by a Year 5 class encouraged students to reflect on the implications of fighting and war. Students in Year 5 and 6 also enjoy the chance to camp on the school's field.
- Students enjoy positions of responsibility within the school community. The school council is active and provides the chance for students to have their say in how the school is developing. For example, it has helped to define the expectations of behaviour throughout the school. At lunchtime, some students are appointed as play leaders or sport leaders and their role is to lead some games on the playground or sports field, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to join in if they wish to.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher and senior leadership team has led to improvements in the quality of teaching and students' achievement during this academic year. Their strong drive and ambition are evident in the effective work of a teaching and learning focus group, and the constant development of the curriculum.
- Leaders have a clear understanding of where there are strengths in the school, and correctly prioritise areas to develop. They have a clear plan of how further improvements are to be made and the impact of their recent actions shows that the school has the capacity to improve further.
- Leaders throughout the school have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching. This is based on regular reviews of subjects areas in which subject leaders, senior leaders and governors are involved in observing lessons, looking at students' work and achievement, and

talking to students about their perceptions of the subject. However, the outstanding practice that exists in teaching is not yet routinely and regularly shared with all staff to create more outstanding teaching across the school.

- Senior leaders and governors monitor the performance of teachers well, and set targets for them that are increasingly challenging and linked to students' achievement. Senior leaders are ensuring that more is expected from teachers on the upper pay scale.
  - The way subjects are taught is constantly evolving. Recent innovations include a variety of aspects that aim to enthuse all students, such as using the school's goats for science lessons, and many additional activities. Students in Years 7 and 8 have the opportunity to sit examinations in functional skills in information and communication technology, English and mathematics. This helps to raise their aspirations, as they have the chance to leave Year 8 having achieved part of a GCSE.
  - The school uses its pupil premium funding well to make sure eligible students are fully involved in learning and achieve well. The appointment of a pupil engagement officer brings together academic, social and extra opportunities for all students.
  - Leaders show a determination to provide equal opportunities for all students, as demonstrated by the closing of attainment gaps between different groups of students. Discrimination is not tolerated within the school.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Governors are passionate about the continuing development of the school and have the highest aspirations for the students. They have a clear understanding of the strengths and the areas to improve in teaching and achievement through the detailed reports that the headteacher and senior leaders provide, and they use this information to provide a strong strategic lead for school leaders. They manage the performance of staff effectively, ensuring teachers are set targets that relate to students' achievement, and that good performance is rewarded. Governors routinely support and challenge leaders on all aspects of the students' education, both in meetings and regular visits to the school. They regularly update their skills and knowledge. They maintain financial stability, and make sure that safeguarding policies and procedures meet current national requirements.
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## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139029
<b>Local authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	412959

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy converter
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	397
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Julie Grieve
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mike Bennett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01527 892867
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