

The Ridgeway Community School

14 Frensham Road, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 8HB

Inspection dates 5–6 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Inspirational leadership and management by the headteacher, ably supported by senior leaders, staff and the governing body, have resulted in a calm and nurturing environment in which all pupils thrive.
- Pupils across the school achieve exceptionally well. All groups, including those with additional special needs, make outstanding progress in communication and language and in their personal development.
- Achievement of students in the sixth form is outstanding as shown by their high quality accreditation which prepares them very well for their futures.
- The youngest pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a very good start as they share their education with children in a local mainstream school.
- The majority of pupils exceed expectations as a result of outstanding teaching and support brought about by rigorous monitoring.
- The quality of care and support provided for pupils with profound and multiple difficulties, autism spectrum disorders or behavioural difficulties is exceptional, enabling them to take part fully in learning.
- Outstanding behaviour across the school and in the playground is a result of the very high quality behaviour management systems that are consistently applied. Pupils say they feel safe and their parents agree.
- High quality support and very efficient planning by the governing body mean money is spent very well for the benefit of all groups of pupils, including those who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium.
- Very effective personal training opportunities for staff mean there is a strong focus on managing and improving their performance.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 16 lessons, many jointly with the headteacher. In addition the inspectors made a number of other short visits to different sessions, heard several pupils read and visited the two off-site placements to observe pupils' learning and talk to staff.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and a local authority representative. The inspector also had a conversation with a group of pupils.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a variety of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documents, safeguarding information and pupils' work.
- The inspector took account of the school's survey of parents' views because there were too few responses to the online survey (Parent View). Questionnaires were received from 35 staff members.

Inspection team

Denise Morris, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kate Robertson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a school for pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. A small proportion has additional autism spectrum disorders and/or challenging behavioural difficulties.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or are in the process of receiving one.
- A few pupils are in the care of the local authority.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British and none speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for those known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and those from service families) is average.
- The school is based on three different sites. There is a purpose-built nursery, based on a local primary school campus which is jointly managed by both schools and which provides inclusive education for three-year-olds. Ridgeway children spend part of each week at this nursery.
- There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision at the main site for children in the Reception class.
- There is accommodation at the local Farnham College for those sixth form students who have the level of independence required to access it. Other sixth formers have their own accommodation at the main site.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase opportunities for the teaching of early phonics (the sounds that letters make) and provide training for all staff to make sure they are taught accurately.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- The vast majority of pupils make excellent progress in their language and communication skills because of the very high quality use of communication aids, particularly the use of signs, symbols, switch-operated access and other forms of technology. Because of this pupils are able to access literacy, numeracy and science tasks very well and make better than expected progress in these areas.
- Progress in reading for the higher-ability pupils is good. Pupils in Years 2 to 9 showed this by eagerly reading to the inspectors. A few of these pupils find it difficult to read new words because their awareness of using a phonics approach, which enables pupils to quickly identify new words, is limited.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a very good start to their education because provision is tailored well to their needs and abilities. Children in the inclusive nursery play happily alongside their mainstream peers benefiting from good role models.
- Older pupils in the sixth form attain good accreditation because of high quality provision and challenge. They have regular opportunities to engage in work-related experiences such as their City and Guilds horticulture qualifications. These prepare them very well for their futures.
- Those with additional special educational needs achieve extremely well because of the high quality use of communication aids which enable them to make a choice and respond to questions. For example, one pupil was able to successfully eye-point his answers while another pressed the correct switch to hear her favourite music.
- Some younger pupils were able to achieve very well as they used signs or symbols to indicate colours and answer questions about pictures.
- Those known to be eligible for the pupil premium achieve as well as other pupils because the extra funding is used to employ additional staffing and to fund additional activities to meet these pupils' needs.
- Parents are rightly very pleased with their children's progress.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teachers regularly plan challenging tasks that fully engage pupils in learning. High quality relationships and effective support mean that lessons are calm with a good work ethos. Routines are clear so that pupils know what is expected of them.
- Teachers extend pupils' skills and build on previous learning through focused questions, challenging them to find answers for themselves. An example of this was seen in numeracy where younger children who could name a few colours were taught new signs, extending their knowledge and skills.
- There is good focus on improving pupils' writing skills. Innovative approaches based on school research are used to encourage recognition of letters to promote writing. Tactile approaches enable pupils to take part in practical activities to learn letter shapes and names.
- Reading is mainly taught well, as is evident in the confidence with which some pupils read to inspectors. Not all teachers have received training in the use of phonics and as a result phonics are not taught regularly enough in a few classes and there are some inaccuracies in pronunciation that affect a few pupils' abilities to read unknown words.
- Outstanding teaching in Years 7 to 9 enabled pupils to use communicators to respond to questions. They took turns very well as they asked each other questions and were challenged to respond with three- or four-word sentences. They made excellent progress in understanding the rules of conversation because of the very high expectations of their success.
- Teachers challenge pupils very well ensuring that they complete enough work. High quality feedback helps pupils to know what they need to do next and to build on their skills. This was

clearly seen in a food technology session, where very high expectations and graduated steps resulted in independent learning as pupils successfully made toasted sandwiches for themselves.

- Teaching assistants are extremely well used to support learning, listen to reading, promote interaction, show pupils how to do tasks or record outcomes of their learning.
- Pupils are regularly challenged and teachers provide consistent feedback that helps them to make rapid progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils enjoy school. This is evident in their rapidly rising attendance. In discussion with an inspector pupils said they were very clear that if they had a problem they would 'ask a teacher to help'.
- Older pupils said they know how to stay safe at school and that they know how to cross roads safely. They get on very well together and work happily in small groups, often helping those who find learning more difficult.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about their responsibilities. They explained their jobs with pride talking about how they take turns to collect registers, clear up in classrooms, hand things out and collect the toys from the playground.
- The school council is particularly proud of its charity work. Pupils told inspectors that they are currently supporting a girl in Africa to have an education. To do this they regularly organise fund-raising activities such as cake sales. They recently created an African meal and sold portions to staff for their lunch.
- Behaviour across the school is at least good, and often outstanding. No evidence of learning being disrupted due to the challenging behaviour of any pupils was observed and there is no evidence in school records of this happening. Effective training in the management of behaviour has been provided for all staff and there have been no permanent exclusions in the past three years.
- No bullying was seen during the inspection. Staff and older pupils say that there is no bullying at the school. Records confirm this and parents agree.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the previous inspection and is now promoted very well through the curriculum.
- The many visits into the community, residential experiences for older pupils and the learning links with other schools ensure that pupils are enthusiastic about their school experiences.
- High quality college links and work-related opportunities for the oldest pupils are helping to prepare them well for their futures.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher, with the support of their staff and the governing body, have successfully maintained the outstanding quality of teaching and achievement, and improved the curriculum and attendance, in the past three years. They have built on previous outstanding outcomes by making very effective use of the national 'Teachers' Standards' to improve teaching, showing the school's strong commitment to improving teachers' skills so that they can progress and seek promotion.
- Leaders have made sure that staff receive effective training to keep pupils safe. They regularly enable staff to undertake higher-level qualifications, undertake research and make use of their findings to help pupils make the best possible progress. For example, a research project to help pupils improve their writing is having a big impact on pupils' improving skills in the subject.
- Performance is rigorously monitored through regular observations and, as a result, senior leaders have a very clear view of how well the school is doing. As a result almost all pupils make

the progress expected of them and half of all pupils now make better than expected progress.

- Leadership responsibilities are effectively distributed to the different sites and departments, each of which is fully involved in evaluating its own outcomes. This ensures that leaders are active in transforming their own departments and in their own and their staff's performance management.
 - Leadership of the sixth form and of the Early Years Foundation Stage is of a very high quality making sure that the best possible provision is available for all pupils.
 - There is a very positive partnership between the school and the local authority. Effective support is provided to the school and to the off-site facilities by the local authority, especially in identifying where improvements are needed, in providing training and in supporting the wide range of needs of the pupils.
 - The school promotes very positive relationships with parents, local schools, support agencies and a range of work-related providers.
 - Leaders make sure that all pupils have equal opportunities, as demonstrated by the high proportion of pupils who benefit from individual support so that they are all able to make equally good progress.
 - Safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides excellent direction to the school, promoting a very positive atmosphere in which pupils thrive. Governors have improved the amount and quality of their checks on the school's strengths and weaknesses. They now undertake these through regular updates and through visits. They know about the quality of teaching and achievement. Governors have improved their understanding of their role in managing the performance of staff and they make sure that sufficient funds are available to provide the training that the school requires. They manage the school's finances very well and make sure that money allocated to support pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is used for the benefit of those pupils. Governors make sure that good teachers and staff are rewarded through the school's performance management structure and that any underperformance is improved through additional support and training.
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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

Unique reference number	125471
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	403806

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	96
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	12
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Beryl Jenkins
Headteacher	Darryl Morgan
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 September 2009
Telephone number	01252 724562
Fax number	01252 737247
Email address	info@ridgeway.surrey.sch.uk

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