

Ramillies Hall School

Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 7AJ

Inspection dates

13–15 September 2016

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Proprietors do not have the appropriate skills or expertise to monitor and challenge leaders effectively.
- Leaders and proprietors have failed to ensure that effective systems are in place to track and monitor pupils' performance. As a result, pupils' underachievement is not identified swiftly and opportunities for teachers to support pupils are missed.
- Leaders and proprietors do not effectively monitor and evaluate teachers' performance, nor do they ensure that staff are held to account for pupils' achievements.
- Leaders do not make appropriate checks on teachers' judgements of pupils' work. The information they hold about pupils' achievement is not always accurate and reliable.
- Leaders do not offer training and support that is well matched to teachers' needs. Therefore, improvements in teaching and learning are hindered.
- Teachers are not provided with opportunities to share good practice and improve their skills in teaching. As a result, there is too much variability in teachers' skills across the school.
- Teachers do not check pupils' understanding thoroughly enough. Consequently, opportunities to consolidate pupils' learning are missed.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is not effective enough in supporting their progress. It is not guided sufficiently well by school policy.
- Pupils, particularly those who are most able, are not sufficiently challenged across a wide range of subjects. Consequently, they are not achieving as well as they might.
- Pupils are not provided with appropriate careers education from Year 8 onwards. As a result, pupils are not always well prepared for their future life choices.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are proud of their school, form good relationships with staff and value their education. Their behaviour is good.
- Pupils are cared for well. They feel safe in the school and attend regularly.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and teaching assistants support pupils well in their learning.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of careers education and advice from Year 8 onwards, so that pupils are fully informed and well prepared for their future life choices.
- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress by:
 - ensuring that pupils are appropriately challenged across a wide range of subjects, particularly the most able, in order for them to fulfil their potential
 - ensuring that teachers consistently provide pupils with clear steps on how to improve their work, so they can maximise their learning and progress
 - ensuring that all teachers effectively check pupils' understanding in lessons, so timely support and intervention are successful
 - providing opportunities for teachers to share good practice.
- Improve the quality and impact of leadership and management on teaching and pupils' progress by:
 - implementing effective systems to track and monitor pupils' assessment information so that underachievement can be swiftly identified and successfully tackled
 - ensuring that the performance of all teachers is monitored and evaluated effectively, so that they receive the support they need to help them raise the quality of teaching and improve pupils' achievement
 - ensuring that all information used for checking and evaluating pupils' progress, including that resulting from regular assessments, is accurate and reliable
 - making sure that proprietors have the necessary skills, knowledge and expertise to monitor and challenge school leaders effectively
 - tailoring performance management systems more precisely to the needs of individuals, ensuring that staff are held firmly to account for pupils' progress
 - continuing to embed the most recent current actions taken to raise standards across the school.

The school must meet the following independent school standards

- The proprietor must ensure that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for pupils receiving secondary education access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that is presented in an impartial manner; enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential; is drawn up and implemented effectively (paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(2), 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii) and 2(2)(e)(iii)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the teaching at the school enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught; involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time; demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress

(paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(g)).

- The proprietor must ensure that a framework for pupil performance to be evaluated, by reference to the school's own aims as provided to parents or national norms, or to both, is in place (paragraph 4).
- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a) and 34(1)(b)).

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Although proprietors and leaders have a strong desire to support pupils in their care, they have failed in their duty to provide a good standard of education. They have not acted swiftly enough to ensure that the school has effective systems in place, and that the school complies with the independent school standards. As a result, staff and pupils are hindered in their development.
- Leaders recognise that current monitoring and evaluation are inadequate across the school. Current systems to track and monitor pupils' performance are weak. Leaders have recognised this weakness and have robust plans to improve the tracking of assessment across the school. Current systems, put in place by leaders, do not enable staff to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding so that leaders and teachers can intervene swiftly and support pupils' progress. As a result, pupils' progress is hindered.
- Leaders do not effectively monitor the quality of teaching, planning and marking on a regular basis. Leaders do not provide support and training appropriate to teachers' needs. Consequently, the quality of teaching and pupils' progress across the school is too variable and inadequate overall.
- Leaders do not have appropriate systems to identify and share good practice and improve teaching and learning across the school. There are too few opportunities for the most effective teachers to share good practice with their colleagues. Consequently, pupils' progress is supported unevenly.
- Leaders have failed to ensure that pupils are provided with appropriate careers education from Year 8 onwards. As a result, pupils are not always well prepared for their future life choices.
- The curriculum is balanced and provides a range of opportunities for pupils. It is designed to meet the needs of each individual pupil. Pupils are assessed on entry and their prior learning is established. Leaders tailor the curriculum to meet pupils' needs. The school endeavours to focus on pupils' strengths and interests to enable all pupils to achieve according to their potential. However, the curriculum does not provide sufficient careers education for pupils.
- The new headteacher has made a strong impact on staff and pupils since her arrival. She has started to improve ineffective systems and raise standards. She has invested heavily in ensuring that all staff are knowledgeable and effective in safeguarding pupils. An appropriate safeguarding policy is published on the school's website. Staff are well trained and alert to the dangers and risks that young people face. For example, they have attended 'Prevent' training to help them to identify pupils who may be at risk of being radicalised. However, training to improve teaching and learning is not as well established and consequently some staff are improving the progress of pupils more than others.
- Trips and visits play a valuable role within the timetable, developing pupils' personal and social development. Some provide a clear academic focus to the curriculum. For example, Year 7 pupils walked to the local shops to further extend their social skills, and build their confidence in personal shopping and handling money. This opportunity ensured that pupils were able to further develop their mathematical and life skills.

- Pupils are provided with extra-curricular opportunities to further enhance their social skills and build confidence in their abilities. For example, participation in after-school rugby and football is encouraged to further enhance pupils' health and fitness.

Governance

- Governance is inadequate because governors do not carry out sufficient rigorous checks on the school's work, and have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- Proprietors do not have the appropriate skills, knowledge or expertise to monitor and challenge leaders effectively.
- Proprietors have failed to take swift action to reverse the decline in leadership across the school. The recently appointed headteacher has not had sufficient time available to tackle much needed improvements.
- Proprietors do not have a good understanding of information about pupils' progress and the quality of teaching within the school. As a result, they are not able to challenge the school to do better.
- Proprietors have not ensured that effective systems are in place to firmly hold teachers and leaders to account for their performance. Current systems do not evaluate teachers' success in raising pupils' achievement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The care and protection of pupils are very high priorities for all staff within the school. Staff are all trained appropriately in child protection and know what steps to take to protect pupils if they identify any concerns. Leaders have ensured that all staff have been trained to recognise the signs of radicalisation and child sexual exploitation and understand how to take prompt action to report it. Staff are alert to any risks and act swiftly to pass on any concerns they may have. Record-keeping and actions taken when issues arise are appropriate. Pupils trust members of staff because relationships within the school are strong. The school provides high-quality safeguarding information and guidance to pupils through planned curriculum time and assemblies. Safer recruitment practices are used when appointing new members of staff. There are strong systems in place to make sure that staff and visitors are vetted to be able to work with pupils. In this respect, proprietors fulfil their statutory duties effectively.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good across and within all subjects and for different year groups. This is because leaders do not provide staff with enough opportunities to share good practice. Staff have not been provided with appropriate training to improve their teaching skills and as a result, the quality of teaching varies too much across the school.
- Some teachers do not provide enough challenge for pupils. Consequently, some pupils, particularly the most able, do not complete enough work in class and do not make fast progress.

- The small class sizes allow teachers and teaching assistants to recognise pupils' talents and target individual support for pupils. However, teachers do not consistently check pupils' understanding in lessons. As a result, opportunities to clarify pupils' understanding further are missed and pupils' learning is slowed.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is not in line with school policy. Although feedback to pupils is regular, it is inconsistent in its effectiveness across the school. Pupils are not always provided with clear steps on how to improve their work. As a result, pupils' progress is sometimes hindered.
- Teachers carry out the assessment of pupils' work regularly across the school. However, leaders do not have appropriate systems in place to check and ensure the accuracy of teachers' judgements on pupils' work.
- Inspectors saw pockets of good practice in teaching and learning across the school, for example in design technology, catering and English. However, this good practice is not shared across the school.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects and are very committed to doing the best for their pupils. Relationships between teachers and pupils are positive and respectful, and the great majority of pupils want to learn.
- Teaching assistants provide helpful support to pupils so that they are able to improve their understanding in lessons. This is because they are provided with clear guidance from the SENCo and subject teachers.
- Teachers know how to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities because the SENCo provides clear guidance on how to remove the barriers that are preventing pupils from learning. Recent training provided all teachers with support on how to plan effectively for pupils' progress. The SENCo ensures that effective programmes of support are provided for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The welfare of pupils is a high priority for leaders. They monitor pupils' behaviour and attendance and act swiftly on any concerns. Pupils describe how they are well cared for, that they feel safe and are sure about which member of staff to go to if they have a concern. They report that any concerns are well managed by the school. There are clear systems to support pupils who are struggling with individual matters that affect them.
- The school has established effective partnerships with a range of external specialists, including speech and language therapists, an educational psychologist, an occupational therapist and an experienced practitioner for pupils who have autism spectrum conditions. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided with good tailored support that matches their needs and requirements.

- The school is committed to providing pupils with reflection opportunities and promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils through a well-planned assembly programme. For example, during the inspection pupils reflected on the morality of a terrorist attack and thought about the effects of hatred and discrimination on the world.
- Leaders ensure that personal, social, health education, citizenship and religious education are woven together and delivered through a well-planned community curriculum. Leaders liaise with a variety of external providers to ensure that the curriculum delivers important and up-to-date information. For example, the young people's drugs and alcohol service, 'MOSAIC', provides expert advice to pupils about issues such as drugs and substance abuse. As a result, pupils speak confidently about their understanding of different risks.
- The school provides opportunities for pupils to develop socially and emotionally, and as responsible individuals. For example, pupils are able to experience leadership positions as prefects, school council representatives and head boy and girl. The head boy and head girl explained to inspectors their clear understanding of democracy and the rule of law through their own election experiences.
- Leaders have ensured that safeguarding and safety are clearly signposted around the school for staff and pupils. Posters are helpfully used to direct pupils to the right members of staff. For example, clear posters are displayed alerting pupils to the first aiders in school and to what to do in an emergency.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding has paramount importance in the school. Leaders work hard with pupils, staff, parents and external agencies to develop effective lines of regular communication and ensure that any concerns about pupils are fully followed up.
- Pupils say they feel very safe because they are well cared for by teachers and other adults. They have a clear understanding of the different forms of bullying. Pupils told inspectors that they do not regard bullying as an issue for the school. Pupils appreciate the 'family feel' that staff provide and recognise that they are sensitive to any of their concerns. They know that staff will spend time to resolve problems, however large or small.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is effective. There are clear systems to support staff and pupils. For example, staff receive training about safeguarding and radicalisation, which has heightened their understanding of the danger and risks posed to pupils. Leaders have ensured that all staff are highly trained to keep pupils safe.
- Careers education is not delivered to pupils in Year 8. As a result, pupils are not able to make informed choices about their next steps. Pupils in key stage 4 experience careers fairs and visits from local colleges and providers, and can access personal careers interviews. Form teachers provide support with how to complete application forms for pupils' next steps in education, employment or training.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are good across all areas of the school. They are keen to learn and show respect for others. The majority of pupils show pride in their written work and their personal presentation, for example in their uniform.
- Pupils enjoy school and benefit from the small and positive learning environment. They form good relationships with staff and cooperate well in lessons. Pupils are proud of their school and value their education.

- Pupils' attendance is good. Pupils who join the school midway through their education engage positively with the school. For example, pupils' increased interest in learning goes hand in hand with improved attendance.
- Pupils are tolerant of others and respectful of those who may look and act differently from themselves. A comment by one pupil during a meeting with an inspector epitomised the views of many present: 'Everyone is equal here. We treat everyone with mutual respect.'

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils in key stage 4 are entered for a wide variety of qualifications that are well matched to their needs and abilities. Leaders, however, do not analyse key stage 4 examination results by subject or by specific groups. Leaders were unable to provide inspectors with evidence of analysed pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders do not analyse current pupils' progress across subjects or by specific groups. Leaders do not track or monitor the progress made by the most able.
- Pupils enter the school with very low attainment compared with that of pupils of similar age nationally. Some pupils arrive with considerable barriers to learning. Leaders ensure that the curriculum is matched well to pupils' needs and that education, health and care plans are effective. However, the good practice and recorded evidence from the SENCo is not widely shared across the school.
- Leaders ensure that they work closely with pupils in key stage 4 to inform them about a range of opportunities open to them at age 16. This approach has frequently ensured that pupils secure destinations at a wide variety of institutions. All pupils enter education, employment or training after leaving Year 11.
- The school uses the newly revamped library to encourage wider reading among pupils. There have been organised authors' visits and there is a wide variety of books to drive up a thirst for learning among pupils. Reading is tracked and rewarded in the school and badges are used to entice eager readers and encourage others to read widely and often.
- Information provided by the SENCo revealed pupils' developing and improving their reading skills due to effective support programmes. An inspector listened to some pupils read confidently and observed successful reading recovery programmes within the school.
- Leaders do not have a clear picture of how disadvantaged pupils are achieving across the school.

School details

Unique reference number	106150
DfE registration number	356/6008
Inspection number	10017450
This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.	
Type of school	Independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	61
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Ramillies Hall School Limited
Headteachers	D Patterson and D Anthony
Annual fees (day pupils)	Years 10–11 £9,198 Years 7–9 £9,000 Reception – Year 6 £8,340
Telephone number	0161 485 3804
Website	www.ramillieshall.co.uk
Email address	study@ramillieshall.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Ramillies Hall School is a long-established school that currently caters for girls and boys aged between five years and 16 years. It operates on a large site in Cheadle Hulme, close to south Manchester.
- The school's membership of the Independent Association of Preparatory Schools ceased in December 2015 and, as a result, the school is now subject to inspection by Ofsted rather than the Independent Schools Inspectorate.
- The school caters specifically for pupils with autistic spectrum conditions and speech, language and communication difficulties.

- Nearly all of the pupils at the school are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Many of these pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. A new special educational needs coordinator took up post in January 2016.
- In January 2016, the senior leadership team was reorganised so that the school now has joint headteachers.
- The school works with a range of external specialists including speech and language therapists, an educational psychologist, an occupational therapist and a practitioner with experience in autistic spectrum conditions.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the work of the school across a range of subjects and year groups. Some observations of teaching and learning were undertaken jointly with the headteachers. Inspectors also observed a school trip, leaving the school site with pupils and teachers.
- Inspectors looked closely at samples of pupils' written work across a range of subjects and year groups. They also noted pupils' behaviour and conduct around the school at various times in the day.
- Meetings were held with the proprietors, the headteachers, other members of staff and a group of pupils.
- Inspectors viewed pupils arriving and leaving school and sat in on an assembly. Inspectors also visited the school library and listened to several pupils read.
- A wide range of documents were scrutinised, including the school's policies, records relating to behaviour and attendance, safeguarding records and performance information. Development planning, self-evaluation documents, minutes of meetings, and records relating to teaching and learning were also considered. During the inspection, detailed consideration was given to policies and practices relating to safeguarding and also to how the school prepares its pupils for life in modern Britain.
- Inspectors considered 11 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as 10 responses from parents on Ofsted's free-text service. Inspectors also considered emails sent by parents to Ofsted, and all staff responses to the Ofsted questionnaire.

Inspection team

Dawn Platt, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Linda Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

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