

Ringwood School Academy

Parsonage Barn Lane, Ringwood, Hampshire BH24 1SE

Inspection dates

28–30 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The new headteacher has raised expectations and leads staff effectively in having high aspirations for pupils and their achievements.
- Pupils achieve well across a broad range of subjects by the end of Year 11. Their rates of progress are accelerating over time and are particularly strong in mathematics.
- Leaders use additional funding effectively to help pupils who join the school needing to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. The extra support pupils receive helps them to catch up quickly with their peers.
- Disadvantaged pupils are supported well and make increasingly rapid progress across a range of subjects. They are catching up with other pupils nationally.
- Teachers use their strong subject knowledge effectively across a range of subjects to plan lessons that develop pupils' learning over time.
- Pupils make very good progress in mathematics and English, because teaching is of a consistently high quality. Teachers match learning to pupils' needs carefully, and use questioning and feedback skilfully to deepen and accelerate learning.
- The quality of teaching is less consistently strong in science. As a result, pupils make less rapid progress and achieve less well.
- Students in the sixth form make very good progress because of the effective teaching they receive. They have good academic and pastoral support. Consequently, they achieve well and are prepared successfully for their next steps.
- Pupils feel safe and are extremely well cared for. Staff understand pupils' individual needs and support them effectively. Pupils' physical and mental health needs are met sensitively.
- Most pupils attend school regularly, and children looked after attend particularly well. However, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not attend as regularly as others.
- Leaders have recently lifted expectations for behaviour across the school. Pupils have responded positively. They conduct themselves well around the school and in lessons.
- Governors use their skills capably to support leaders in improving the school. They know the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. They challenge leaders to continue to make the school even better.
- While leaders take effective action to improve the school, they do not measure the impact of their work carefully enough. Tracking systems do not help leaders to identify easily which groups of pupils most need to improve.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Review and evaluate new systems and structures carefully, so that leaders can identify more meticulously the difference they are making and therefore increase the pace of further improvements.
- Develop a more strategic oversight of how well different groups of pupils are achieving, so that leaders can identify improvements to the quality of teaching and extra help for pupils that will lead to accelerated progress.
- Improve teaching in science to become consistently good, so that pupils make more rapid progress and achieve better outcomes than has been the case in the past.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher leads her school effectively. Staff are united in their dedication to the pupils in their school. Together, they strive to make the school the best that it can be, so that pupils stay safe, achieve academically and are equipped well for their future lives.
- Staff are proud to work at the school. Many recognise the new headteacher's commitment to ensuring that all staff continue to support and challenge pupils to meet their high expectations. Parents reflect with equal positivity. One remarked, 'The teachers are dedicated to the pupils' learning and often go way above and beyond what's needed.'
- Staff are supported effectively in improving their work. Leaders make good use of expertise from within the teaching school to share best practice in teaching and learning among the staff. Non-teaching and teaching staff feel equally well supported in developing their skills. Leaders and governors link training increasingly carefully to the needs and priorities within the school, holding staff to account for the difference they make to pupils' achievements.
- Middle leaders are capable and developing in their roles. They understand, and contribute effectively to, the school's key priorities for improvement. They work well together to share good practice. Increased accountability is focusing them on driving ongoing improvement across the school.
- Leaders and governors have recently reviewed the curriculum to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of pupils in the school. Pupils study a broad range of subjects across both key stage 3 and key stage 4, but with flexibility that meets their different needs. A much greater proportion of pupils study a modern foreign language at GCSE than is seen nationally. This broad curriculum prepares pupils well for a wide range of post-16 opportunities, both within and beyond the school.
- The formal curriculum is supported very well by a diverse and plentiful range of other learning opportunities. The prominent daily tutor programme helps pupils to develop vital life skills. Pupils value and enjoy the vast range of extra-curricular clubs and activities, particularly linked to the performing arts, which widen their life experiences and help their confidence to grow.
- Pupils learn about key aspects that prepare them effectively for future life in modern Britain. They develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well through many activities linked to the 'Life Choices' personal, social and health education programme. Opportunities to participate in foreign exchange visits and cultural exchange work with a partner school in Southampton enrich pupils' learning further.
- Leaders' work to support pupils who join the school needing to catch up in English and mathematics is integral to the curriculum, and has been since before additional funding existed. Pupils are supported effectively in improving their literacy and numeracy skills quickly. They make rapid progress during Year 7, which promotes their future learning in other subjects.

- The special educational needs coordinator is passionate and committed in her efforts to provide high-quality support for pupils in the school who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. She works collaboratively with colleagues from linked primary schools to ensure that pupils make a smooth transition into the school. This enables extra support to be put in place quickly. Consequently, many pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make very good progress.
- Leaders use the pupil premium well to support disadvantaged pupils. Governors monitor carefully the difference this funding is making. Disadvantaged pupils throughout the school are catching up with others nationally across their range of subjects because of the effective help they receive. However, they are not currently achieving as highly as other pupils in the school.
- Leaders have taken recent and decisive action to address aspects of the school that were not as strong as others. Currently, they do not clearly and precisely know what difference some of these actions are making to outcomes for all pupils. This prevents leaders from directing their future efforts more strategically.
- As the school's response to the national curriculum and assessment is evolving, it does not currently enable leaders to focus closely on the relative progress and achievements of different groups of pupils. As a result, leaders do not always target extra help as specifically or promptly as they could.

Governance of the school

- Governors are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses. They bring a range of helpful expertise to their roles. This enables them to provide useful strategic support and challenge to school leaders.
- Governors have recently evaluated how well the governing body carries out its work. Governors have subsequently adapted structures and practice to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities even more robustly. Governors have clearly defined roles and undertake appropriate training to ensure that they can carry out their duties confidently and effectively.
- Governors work closely and openly with the headteacher and her leadership team to focus on areas of the school that most need to improve. They visit the school to gain a better understanding of what leaders tell them. This enables them to be confident about leaders' assertions and the difference their work is making.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The welfare of pupils is central to the staff's work. Pupils feel safe and supported; they are confident to talk to staff if they have concerns about their own safety or that of others. Parents say that pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are extremely well cared for.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and of high quality. Staff are trained regularly, and understand their responsibilities in relation to keeping pupils safe. Leaders make careful checks on all adults working in the school and keep detailed records. Consequently, risks to pupils are minimised.

- Staff remain vigilant at all times, and report any concerns they may have about individual pupils. This enables leaders to respond quickly as required. They work effectively with experts from beyond the school to provide additional support to pupils who may need it to keep them safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers know their subjects and the curriculum well. They use their expertise to assess pupils' achievement accurately and plan future learning that builds over time. Thus, pupils generally make good progress and achieve well across their range of subjects.
- Where teaching is most effective, such as in mathematics and English, teachers structure activities carefully to challenge pupils and move their learning on quickly. These tasks match pupils' different learning needs and starting points closely. Teachers use questioning skilfully to check and extend pupils' thinking.
- Across the school, classrooms are calm and generally purposeful. Pupils respond well to clearly established routines that help them to focus on their learning. Teachers provide timely and helpful feedback that individual pupils use routinely to improve their work. For example, in an art lesson Year 10 pupils worked independently to review and apply feedback in their sketch books, which helped them to develop the quality of their portfolio of work.
- Leaders ensure that literacy is promoted successfully. A range of staff work together effectively to provide rich opportunities for pupils to improve their literacy skills and develop a love of reading. Pupils are supported well in developing their fluency, comprehension and inference skills, which they apply usefully in other subject areas. The library has a vibrant and productive atmosphere, and is used by pupils and sixth-form students alike as an enjoyable and supportive place to work.
- Pupils who need to improve their skills in mathematics are supported very effectively. The Year 7 catch-up programme provides a highly personalised level of support which enables pupils to make accelerated progress and catch up with their peers.
- Teachers use homework effectively across a range of subjects to support learning in lessons. Many parents reflect appreciatively on the extra support that teachers give pupils outside of lessons, which helps them to secure their knowledge and understanding.
- Work in pupils' books reflects a higher standard and greater progress than is sometimes evident from information shared with pupils and parents. Subsequently, it is not always clear to parents how well pupils are achieving. Leaders recognise that the new systems introduced because of national changes to qualifications and assessment need refining further to make them more informative and helpful. They are consulting with staff and parents to develop further the effectiveness of the school's tracking system.
- In a small proportion of lessons, pupils are less engaged and make slower progress. This is because learning does not meet their needs closely or challenge them sufficiently. Some pupils lose interest in the task they are completing and their behaviour deteriorates.

- The quality of teaching is not as consistently good in science as it is in other subject areas. Consequently, pupils across key stages 3 and 4 do not make as rapid progress or achieve as well as they do in other subjects. The new science leader's recent actions are starting to make a difference, but this work is in the early stages and improvements are not yet sufficiently rapid.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils are exceptionally well cared for. Teachers and leaders know them very well as individuals. As one parent reflected, 'Staff at Ringwood School have the well-being of the children at the top of their agenda at all times.'
- The large number of children looked after speak positively about how well they are supported. The school is recognised as a beacon of highly effective practice within the local area in this respect. A designated leader monitors the academic progress of these pupils as well as their attendance and emotional well-being. Pupils attend school very regularly, despite sometimes travelling long distances each day, and achieve well.
- Leaders make positive and effective arrangements to support pupils who attend alternative provision. Leaders understand the specific needs of each individual pupil exceptionally well, and match provision closely and sensitively to these needs. They make frequent checks to ensure that pupils are safe and that their particular needs are being met carefully.
- Pupils' wider learning and preparation for future life are extremely effective. The comprehensive 'Life Choices' and tutor programmes coordinate seamlessly with assemblies, and are complemented by an exceptionally wide range of thought-provoking and inspiring extra-curricular activities. Former pupils visit the school to share their experiences and help current pupils to understand the wider world.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in an age-appropriate way. They value how their tutors work sensitively and highly effectively with experts from beyond school to address important topics such as sexual health. They have a well-developed understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. Leaders' recent actions to address concerns arising from inappropriate use of social media have been very successful.
- Pupils' physical and emotional needs are supported extremely well. Health professionals work closely alongside other school staff to support individuals with specific and complex health needs, and are available to any other pupils who may need their help. Pupils are very well informed about who they can contact beyond school to receive support for their mental health needs.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and when moving around the site, responding appropriately to leaders' and teachers' heightened expectations. Almost all pupils show respect for each other, their teachers and the school environment.

- Pupils attend school regularly. Attendance figures are consistently in line with national averages. Leaders monitor attendance carefully, and praise and reward those pupils who come to school regularly. Where needed, leaders take prompt and decisive action to support and challenge pupils who do not come to school as often as they should.
- A small number of pupils who attend an alternative provider do so regularly and respond appropriately to expectations for their behaviour. Where necessary, leaders work closely and effectively with families and experts from beyond the school to review and adapt arrangements, so that they meet individual needs more closely.
- Since expectations for behaviour have been raised this year, school records show that exclusions have increased. Leaders' uncompromising response to racist and aggressive incidents has been complemented by a successful programme of wider learning. This helps pupils learn how to understand differences, develop relationships and manage conflict. As a result, more serious incidents have been almost eradicated and exclusions have returned to previously low levels.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not attend school as regularly as other pupils. The proportion who are persistently absent from school is decreasing slowly. Leaders recognise that they need to maintain their current focus on working with these pupils and their families, so that improvements to attendance continue and accelerate.
- The clear majority of pupils say that bullying is dealt with well by teachers. One parent reported that when their child experienced bullying, 'the school were straight onto it and took immediate action'. However, a small proportion of pupils and parents say that it is not dealt with as promptly and effectively as they would expect.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils arrive in Year 7 with starting points that are typically above the national average. By the end of Year 11, pupils' overall achievement is at least in line with other pupils nationally.
- In 2015, Year 11 pupils made weak progress across the curriculum. In 2016, pupils' progress across a broad range of subjects was much stronger, and was broadly in line with the national average by the end of key stage 4.
- Leaders' performance information and pupils' work show that progress continues to accelerate. Pupils currently in Year 11 are making better progress than their predecessors. Pupils' work shows that progress is also becoming more rapid for younger pupils.
- Leaders use additional funding effectively to support pupils who arrive at the school needing to catch up in English and mathematics. A personalised curriculum during Year 7 provides pupils with intensive extra help that enables them to make rapid progress. Consequently, they catch up with their peers and are able to access their learning in other subjects more easily.
- Pupils in key stage 3 make increasingly rapid progress across a broad range of subjects. They are particularly successful in mathematics, achieving their aspirational targets routinely. Where outcomes are not yet as strong, such as in English and

science, increasing proportions of pupils are on track to meet their targets.

- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is accelerating. The differences between their achievement compared with other pupils nationally are diminishing. However, disadvantaged pupils do not currently achieve consistently as well as their peers in school.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified quickly when they join the school. The special educational needs coordinator puts appropriate extra help in place quickly. As a result, some pupils make very rapid progress, but not consistently across the curriculum.
- Pupils' achievement and progress in core and additional science by the end of key stage 4 are not as good as in other core subjects. Recent work to improve outcomes for pupils is making a difference, with noticeable improvements to the quality of controlled assessments and examination performance. However, leaders know there is further work to do to ensure that pupils achieve as well in these subjects as they currently do in other areas of the curriculum.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Most of the students in Year 11 stay on in the sixth form. A small proportion of students join from other secondary schools. Students are prepared well for their post-16 learning, with teachers using bridging work effectively to lay the foundations for learning in Year 12.
- Students learn well and make very good progress because of the consistently high-quality teaching they experience. Teachers know their subjects well, and have shared their expertise to ensure that they have prepared effectively for delivering new examination courses. Consequently, students develop the appropriate skills to build on their prior learning and communicate their understanding clearly in their work.
- Leaders ensure that students joining the sixth form are guided towards appropriately aspirational post-16 courses. Leaders monitor students' attendance carefully, with tutors providing a helpful balance of academic and pastoral support. Thus, students attend well and a very high proportion of students remain at the school at the end of Year 12.
- Students value the impartial careers advice and guidance that help them to prepare for their next steps after the sixth form. Specialist careers staff ensure that students are well informed about a range of options, including apprenticeships, and support students in their applications. This means that the proportion moving on to education, employment or training at the end of Year 13 has significantly increased over the past three years.
- The small number of students who need to improve their GCSE grades in English and mathematics make much better progress than is seen nationally. In 2016, all students improved their grade in English, and almost all in mathematics. A significant proportion achieved a GCSE C grade in one or both subjects. Students currently in the sixth form are making similarly good progress.
- Students following academic courses make excellent progress and achieve highly across a range of subjects. A-level outcomes have typically been very strong in the

past, and students currently in Year 13 are on track to achieve similarly well.

- Students value the wider opportunities they have to enrich their learning in lessons. Their structured tutor programme helps them to be well informed about a range of pertinent topics, such as child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and fundamental British values. They engage in opportunities to be leaders within the school, for example through organising charity events.
- Leadership of the sixth form is effective. Leaders identify accurately the strengths and areas for further improvement within the 16 to 19 study programme. They recognise that students on vocational courses do not currently make as rapid progress as those on academic courses. They are taking action to strengthen and widen the existing vocational provision to meet the needs of a larger range of learners.
- Leaders recognise that current standards are not consistently strong across all subjects. They are monitoring key areas closely, such as art, to ensure that students' progress accelerates and they achieve appropriately strong outcomes by the end of all their courses.
- Students following vocational courses participate in work experience as part of their programme of study. Other students are required to organise their own work placement. Consequently, only a small proportion of students in the sixth form currently complete a period of work experience. Leaders plan to introduce compulsory work experience for Year 12 students from September 2017, to address this need.

School details

Unique reference number	136657
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10024653

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,648
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	325
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Kate Palka
Headteacher	Mrs Leanne Symonds
Telephone number	01425 475000
Website	www.ringwood.hants.sch.uk
Email address	office@ringwood.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 July 2013

Information about this school

- Ringwood School Academy is a larger than the average-sized mixed comprehensive secondary school. It is designated as a national teaching school. It has a sixth form which offers 380 places to students following academic and vocational courses.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is approximately half the national average. Similarly, there are lower than typical percentages of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or whose first language is not believed to be English.
- The headteacher was not in post at the time of the previous inspection. She joined the

school in September 2016. The chair of the governing body was also not in post at the time of the last inspection.

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school meets the government's floor standards for what pupils should achieve by the end of Year 11.
- A small number of pupils receive alternative provision at one of the following settings: Greenwood School, Eaglewood School, The Bridge Project, Christchurch Learning Centre and Hampshire EIS Place2Learn.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection began as a short inspection of a good school led by an Ofsted inspector. The inspection converted to become a full inspection led by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. Six additional Ofsted Inspectors joined the team on the final day.
- Inspectors visited 42 lessons to look at learning and talk to pupils about their work. They also carried out learning walks with school leaders across a range of subject areas. Inspectors visited six tutor sessions and two assemblies.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, and groups of staff, governors and pupils. The lead inspector spoke to a representative from the local authority on the telephone.
- Inspectors carried out a work scrutiny alongside school leaders, to evaluate learning and progress. They also looked at pupils' work during visits to lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of school documents including policies, information on the school website, governors' minutes and leaders' records relating to the quality of teaching, pupils' progress and how other aspects of the school's performance are monitored. Inspectors considered the effectiveness of the school's procedures and records in relation to safeguarding, including looking at the central record of recruitment checks.
- Inspectors took into account 158 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, including 143 free-text responses. They also considered information received from parents via one letter and two emails. Survey responses from 194 pupils and 88 staff were also reviewed.

Inspection team

Kathryn Moles, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Anne Cullum	Ofsted Inspector
Krista Dawkins	Ofsted Inspector
Colin Lankester	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Turner	Ofsted Inspector
David New	Ofsted Inspector
Lizzie Jeanes	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Swan	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Kearsey, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Cullum	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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