

Ramillies Hall School

Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 7AJ

Inspection date

8 June 2017

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 2(1), 2(2)(e)

- This standard is now met.
- The inspection in September 2016 judged the standard relating to careers education to be unmet. Pupils were not provided with appropriate careers information and were not well prepared for their future life choices.
- Leaders have appointed a careers coordinator and established a comprehensive careers education programme. The programme includes the development of work-related skills, advice on options, work experience, aspiration-raising events and careers information evenings.
- Pupils from Year 8 onwards now receive individual impartial careers advice from an external careers adviser. Pupils say that they have found the advice valuable, and teachers are supporting their career aspirations well.

Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(g)

- These standards are now met.
- The inspection in September 2016 judged the teaching standards to be unmet. Teaching required improvement because leaders were not providing staff with enough opportunities to share good practice or with effective training to improve their skills. Leaders did not have appropriate systems to check the accuracy of teachers' assessments or consistent policies on providing feedback to pupils. Some pupils, particularly the most able pupils, were not making fast enough progress.
- Leaders have acted quickly to put new procedures in place to improve teaching, learning and assessment. The new approach to assessment evaluates pupils' academic progress, their progress with individualised special educational needs targets, their attendance and behaviour for learning. Teachers are using the new assessment systems to plan teaching that meets individual learning needs more effectively.
- There is now a comprehensive framework to observe teaching, scrutinise pupils' work and track their progress. There is a clear focus on the level of challenge and pace of learning for pupils of all abilities. The most able pupils are a focus in all monitoring

activities and more challenging targets have been set for them. Feedback from these monitoring activities is supporting teachers to improve their practice.

- Leaders have introduced several mechanisms to facilitate the sharing of best practice. They have drawn on external expertise effectively, for example in visiting other schools and seeking local authority advice. Effective practice that is identified through monitoring is shared in staff and curriculum meetings. Training has taken place to support whole-school priorities, for example in assessment, marking and feedback, and effective questioning. Further training and visits to other schools are planned to meet teachers' individual needs and aspirations, although a budget has not yet been set to accommodate this.
- The new systems and opportunities to share best practice are having a positive impact on the quality of teaching. Teachers are becoming more adept at asking probing questions that develop pupils' understanding. They are using assessment more effectively to check pupils' understanding in lessons and monitor their progress over time.
- Good practice in marking and feedback has been shared across the school and there is an effective policy in place. Pupils say that they find teachers' comments helpful and feel better informed about how to improve their work. However, there are still some inconsistencies in the implementation of the school's policy between subjects.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are committed to improving teaching and learning and ensuring that pupils make the best possible progress. They have responded positively to the increased accountability and monitoring by leaders. The strengths in teaching identified at the last inspection have been sustained, including adults' positive relationships with pupils, their good subject knowledge and their special educational needs expertise.

Paragraph 4

- This standard is now met.
- The inspection in September 2016 judged this standard to be unmet because the proprietor had not ensured that there were effective systems in place to track and monitor pupils' progress and attainment.
- Leaders took rapid action to put an interim progress-tracking system in place while they researched into the most effective system to adopt in the long term. They have introduced standardised assessments to establish pupils' knowledge and skills on entry to the school. Such a baseline measure is necessary as pupils enter the school at various ages from 5 to 16 years, with varying school experience and often without any prior attainment information. From this baseline, leaders have established challenging targets for pupils' achievement and are checking their progress carefully.
- Leaders have planned appropriate intervention and support based on this careful tracking. For example, they have identified gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills in Years 8, 9 and 10 and are providing additional support to fill gaps. They are also ensuring that language and literacy skills are promoted successfully in all subjects.
- Leaders have researched tracking software in detail and have now invested in a system to be used from next September. Staff are being trained in its use during the summer term. The system builds on the principles that have already been introduced: setting an

accurate baseline, tracking progress against challenging targets and providing appropriate support and challenge to reach those targets.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)

- The school's safeguarding policy was checked during this inspection. The policy meets all requirements, and safeguarding arrangements have due regard to the most recent guidance issued by the Secretary of State. There are rigorous checks to ensure the safe recruitment of staff.
- Leaders update the safeguarding policy regularly and ensure that staff receive regular training updates to keep pupils safe. Staff are alert to risks and know the routes to follow if they have any safeguarding concerns.
- These standards continue to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- The school publishes its safeguarding policy on its website.
- This standard continues to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b)

- These standards are now met.
- The standards for leadership and management were not met at the September 2016 inspection because leaders did not have the knowledge and skills appropriate to their roles. They were not able to ensure that all the independent school standards were met.
- Since the last inspection, capacity in leadership has been enhanced by the reorganisation of leadership responsibilities and the constitution of a governing body. The proprietor now provides strategic leadership from within the governing body. There is now one headteacher with responsibility for the operational leadership of the school, supported by the director of studies. The governing body has an experienced and knowledgeable chair and is providing suitable challenge and support to school leaders.
- The proprietor, leaders and governors have acted quickly to tackle each of the unmet standards that were identified at the last inspection. They have a better understanding of the school's performance based on their more rigorous monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress. They have devised a thorough action plan with appropriate actions, timescales and success criteria. The plan is progressing successfully and beginning to have a positive impact.
- Leaders have established a more rigorous and systematic approach to the management of teachers' performance. It is linked to the Department for Education's Teachers' Standards and based on evidence from termly monitoring. Teachers' performance

targets are based appropriately on whole-school priorities, their responsibilities and specific aspects of their work identified through monitoring. Training needs are identified and support is provided where appropriate. The performance management cycle has yet to be completed, and impact is consequently limited. However, the new system provides a firm foundation to secure further improvements in teaching.

- Leaders and governors have drawn on external support and expertise effectively. They have established links with other schools and the local authority in order to share best practice. They now have a comprehensive careers education programme, a good overview of the quality of teaching, accuracy of assessment and the progress pupils make. They are demonstrating the skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and have taken effective action to tackle unmet standards.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

The school now meets the following independent school standards

- Part 1, paragraphs 2(1), 2(2)(e); 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(g); 4
- Part 8, paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b)

School details

Unique reference number	106150
DfE registration number	356/6008
Inspection number	10034806

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 status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	58
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Ramillies Hall School Limited
Chair	Mr Bill Griffiths
Headteacher	Mrs Denise 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	http://ramillieshall.co.uk
Email address	study@ramillieshall.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	13–15 September 2016

Information about this school

- Ramillies Hall is a long-established school that caters for girls and boys aged five to 16 years. It operates on a large site in Cheadle Hulme close to south Manchester.
- The vast majority of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. A well-above-average proportion have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. The school caters specifically for pupils with autistic spectrum conditions and speech, language and communication difficulties.
- The school leadership and management structure were reorganised following the last standard inspection in September 2016. The proprietor is not a joint headteacher any

longer, and is now part of the governing body. The governing body was established in January 2017.

- The school works with a range of external specialists, including speech and language therapists, an educational psychologist, an occupational therapist and a specialist with experience in autistic spectrum conditions.
- The school does not use any off-site provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- This was the school's first monitoring inspection and was conducted at no notice to the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, director of studies, proprietor, chair of governors and teaching staff. She met with a group of senior school pupils and spoke with other pupils during lessons.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning and sampled pupils' work in all year groups and a range of subjects.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentary evidence, including the school's action plans, pupil progress tracking, assessment information, performance management procedures, monitoring of teaching and governing body minutes. She also looked at a range of safeguarding documents including behaviour logs, the single central record and the safeguarding policy published on the school's website.

Inspection team

Jean Olsson-Law, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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