

Ridgeway Academy

Evesham Road, Astwood Bank, Redditch, Worcestershire B96 6BD

Inspection dates

2–3 May 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress because teaching is not consistently good enough.
- Some teachers do not set work at the right level for different pupils. Others do not insist that pupils produce well-presented work.
- Teachers of subjects other than English have not been trained well enough to teach reading and writing skills.
- A minority of pupils do not behave well. Some teachers do not deal with this effectively.
- The attendance of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, but who do not have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan, is too low. Too many pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are excluded from school.
- Leaders' plans to improve the school are not sharp enough.
- Leaders do not check on the quality of teaching and learning to good effect. Some middle leaders have not been trained well enough to do this.
- The impact of additional funding to support primary physical education (PE) and sport is not monitored well by leaders.
- Leaders do not routinely communicate effectively with parents and carers.
- Although the school fully meets statutory requirements for safeguarding, leaders do not check the accuracy of this information regularly enough.
- The governing body does not hold leaders to account for their actions and plans as robustly as it should.

The school has the following strengths

- Although there is inconsistency, pupils in some classes are taught well and make good progress, including in English and mathematics. Teaching is good in PE, music and geography.
- The curriculum effectively develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- Bullying is rare. As a result, pupils feel safe at school.
- Provision for pupils' social and emotional well-being is good.
- Staff are appropriately vigilant and well trained in safeguarding matters.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make consistently good progress by ensuring that all teachers:
 - are trained to teach reading and writing skills and then do so effectively
 - accurately match work to the skills and abilities of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, the most able pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - have effective strategies for dealing with low-level disruption in lessons
 - insist on pupils producing well-presented, accurate work.
- Improve the attendance of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, but who do not have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan, by evaluating existing strategies which are used to improve attendance and identifying which are successful and which need to be amended or discarded.
- Reduce exclusions for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities by analysing the reasons why pupils are excluded from school and identifying strategies to improve matters.
- Improve the impact of leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, by:
 - making sure that the checks on teaching and learning take full account of all the available information so that precisely targeted improvements can be made
 - ensuring that all subject leaders and heads of faculty have the skills to monitor, evaluate and improve teaching and learning
 - sharpening up plans to improve teaching and learning by including measurable targets and milestones throughout the year, including at subject level, so that leaders can then evaluate the progress being made
 - making sure that senior leaders and governors regularly check the accuracy of information relating to staff vetting procedures (the single central record)
 - ensuring that the governing body receives the information needed to hold leaders to account for the school's effectiveness
 - monitoring the impact of the primary PE and sport premium well to ensure that this additional funding is making a positive difference
 - making sure that behaviour in the outside areas at social times is good
 - developing an effective communication strategy with parents and carers.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership at all levels requires improvement, including governance. Leaders have not made sure that all groups of pupils enjoy consistently good teaching across the curriculum.
- Leaders have a 'monitoring, evaluation and review' cycle which evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in each department annually. Although these checks are having some success, because there is some good teaching in several subject areas, the impact of this work is not as effective as it could be for the reason that it is not securing consistently good teaching and learning. This is because the information about teaching, behaviour and pupils' progress is not consistently evaluated well, including the progress of different groups of pupils. As a result, some actions which follow these checks do not precisely identify how teaching may need to be adapted or improved to meet the learning needs of different groups of pupils.
- Leaders shared information about recent reviews which took place in science and English. Although leaders identified appropriate areas for further improvement, they did not identify the differences in achievement between different groups of pupils, particularly pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, the most able pupils and those who are disadvantaged. Inspection evidence indicates that teaching in these subjects for these groups of pupils is an area for improvement.
- The quality of leadership of subjects is variable. Some middle leaders have not been trained well enough to check and improve teaching and learning. This is a further reason why the impact of the 'monitoring, evaluation and review' process is not as effective as it could be.
- A reason why teaching and learning are not consistently good is because the school improvement plan includes few measurable targets or milestones. This means that leaders, including governors, cannot objectively evaluate the school's overall effectiveness and precisely identify further priorities for improvement at various points throughout the year. The plans for improvement which are produced by subject areas also have this weakness.
- The impact of additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is resulting in better progress for some of these pupils. However, like other pupils, disadvantaged pupils do not make consistently strong progress, including the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders use the additional funding for primary PE and sport to enable pupils to benefit from a wider range of sporting activities, as the school employs an additional part-time PE teacher. However, leaders do not evaluate the impact of this funding in any detail. As a result, they cannot say for certain if they are achieving good value for money.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding (which is given to schools to support those pupils who did not reach the expected standard in English or mathematics at the end of Year 6) is used to create some small-group English and mathematics teaching for relevant pupils. Pupils are catching up well in reading, grammar, punctuation and spelling this year. However, the rate of improvement in mathematics is not as strong.
- The leadership of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities requires

improvement. This is because pupils do not consistently achieve their potential, and progress is too variable. In addition, attendance is low for these pupils, and many receive fixed-term exclusions.

- Although the majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire expressed broad satisfaction with many areas of provision, a little over one quarter of parents who responded said that they did not consider that the school was well led and managed. Many of the comments which parents made expressed dissatisfaction with the level of communication that they receive from the school.
- The broad and balanced curriculum is well planned to meet the needs of pupils. In key stage 2, the curriculum is underpinned by literacy and numeracy and taught through themes and topics which span all subjects. In Year 7 and 8, pupils follow courses which are helping to develop relevant skills and knowledge, preparing them for their later school years. Year 9 pupils have begun GCSE courses, and pupils follow pathways that include different combinations of subjects which are well matched to pupils' skills and interests. Regular assembly themes and activities in personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education allow pupils to effectively develop their understanding of British values as well as develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- Pupils enjoy the range of extra-curricular activities available to them. These include a wide range of sporting activities and musical productions.
- The school farm is a particularly unique feature. Pupils in Year 9 who study the animal care course are able to gain first-hand experience of working with the animals. Other pupils enjoy feeding the animals, as well as taking care of the reptiles.
- In all the lessons that leaders joined inspectors to observe, leaders accurately identified strengths and areas for development.

Governance of the school

- The governing body does not robustly hold school leaders to account for the impact of their actions and plans. It is not as well informed about the school's effectiveness as it should be. This is because it does not receive, and has not requested, school performance information in sufficient detail. For example, governors do not monitor the attendance of different groups of pupils frequently enough and nor do they hold leaders to account for exclusions of different groups of pupils.
- Although the governing body checks the impact of pupil premium funding, it does not check if the school is achieving good value for money for the additional primary PE and sport funding.
- Governors do not satisfy themselves that the single central record is accurate and compliant with requirements.
- The chair of governors, who met the lead inspector, did have an accurate understanding of other strengths and weaknesses. Governors know where teaching is good or improving and where it is not good enough.
- Governors visit the school regularly to see the school's work for themselves and they share this information with the full governing body. Governors are linked to departments and have a strategic role in the department review process.

- Governors review the school improvement plan at appropriate points during the year. This is good, though not enough attention is given to the impact that the plan has on improving teaching and pupils' progress.
- The governing body has appropriate procedures in place for setting and reviewing performance of the headteacher, other leaders and teachers.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The single central record, which documents statutory safeguarding information relating to staff vetting procedures, was non-compliant with requirements at the start of the inspection. However, by the end of the inspection leaders had ensured full compliance. Notwithstanding this, the key reason why the record was non-compliant was because senior leaders and governors do not regularly check the accuracy of the information.
- Relevant staff, including some governors, have been trained in safer recruitment procedures. All staff are well trained in safeguarding matters. They work hard to ensure that pupils are safe and there is a culture of vigilance in the school. Staff are aware of the signs to look for if a child may be at risk and they know the procedures to be followed if they have a concern.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors all said that they feel safe at school. They gave examples, including appropriately regular fire alarm tests, good levels of staff supervision at social times and feeling secure on the school site.
- Pupils are taught about safety matters in assemblies and in PSHE lessons. For example, pupils learn about internet safety and how to keep safe when using social media.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement because pupils do not consistently enjoy good teaching across the curriculum. As a result, pupils make variable progress in the different subjects and year groups.
- The teaching of reading and writing skills is not as well developed as it could be. Teachers who are not English specialists have not been well trained to teach reading and writing. As a result, pupils do not benefit from a consistent, whole-school approach to helping them develop these essential skills. This is an important reason why some pupils do not make good progress.
- Teachers do not routinely use assessment information effectively to plan learning activities which are well matched to the different abilities of pupils. This means that work is sometimes too easy or too hard throughout lessons or in parts of lessons. In particular, the most able pupils are not consistently given work which challenges them sufficiently. For example, in a science lesson, pupils were asked to do research from the textbook, but no additional challenge was provided for the most able pupils, who found the work uninspiring.
- The quality of teaching for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is not regularly effective in meeting the specific learning needs of some pupils. Although all teachers

have good-quality information and advice about how to meet the learning needs of individual pupils, this information is not routinely taken account of in teachers' planning. This results in slower progress for some of these pupils. However, there are also many occasions when teachers use the information very well to plan bespoke activities which precisely meet the needs of pupils.

- The learning needs of disadvantaged pupils are sometimes taken into account by teachers. However, this is also inconsistent, which is why this group of pupils make variable progress.
- Some teachers have good subject knowledge, which skilfully helps pupils to develop a range of writing techniques. Pupils in some classes are also developing a good understanding of how writing styles are different, depending on the audience.
- There is some good teaching in many subjects, including English and mathematics. Teaching is consistently good in PE, geography and music. Good teaching in the school is typically characterised by teachers having strong subject knowledge which they use effectively to guide pupils towards higher standards. This ensures that pupils develop good skills, knowledge and understanding over time. Also, good teaching in these areas is often planned well, taking full account of the learning needs of different groups of pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- A significant minority of pupils do not work hard enough. Some pupils do not complete enough work in lessons or concentrate as well as they should. This is partly because work is not consistently well matched to pupils' skills and abilities and also because some pupils lack confidence in their own ability.
- Teachers do not consistently insist that pupils produce well-presented, accurate work. As a result, some pupils have poorly presented books. In these circumstances, pupils are not being encouraged to take pride in their work as much as they could be.
- The combination of work that is not consistently well matched to pupils' learning needs and some pupils lacking in self-belief results in some not valuing learning as much as they could. As a result, these pupils do not routinely demonstrate good attitudes to learning.
- Pupils enjoy high-quality pastoral support. Pupils' social and emotional needs are met very well by the school. Nurture provision, for example, is an effective strategy for helping pupils to manage their feelings and explore personal matters. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, as well as others, told inspectors that the pastoral staff provide good support when pupils have personal or emotional issues. Pupils are confident that staff will help them.
- Bullying is rare at the school. As a result, pupils feel safe. Pupils told inspectors that they are confident that when bullying incidents do occur, staff are quick to resolve

matters.

- Pupils understand a wide range of safety matters and they have appropriate skills to assess risks, including when working online.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of opportunities to take responsibility, including becoming a prefect, taking part in the school council and sports leadership.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Although most pupils behave well, some lessons are disrupted by low-level disruption which results in the pace of learning not being rapid enough. This is because pupils lose interest, become passive and chat about matters not related to the learning. Others work too slowly and show low levels of motivation to succeed. Some teachers do not have effective strategies to deal with low-level disruption.
- A recent pupil questionnaire that the school issued indicated that only 40% of pupils said that behaviour was good in the outside areas of the school site at social times. Just under a quarter of parents who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire said that behaviour is not good.
- Pupils told inspectors that behaviour outside at social times is not good. They said that there are sometimes disagreements and arguments which lead to inappropriate behaviour.
- The attendance of pupils has been above average in recent years. However, this year attendance is a little below average. This is because pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, but who do not have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan, have high rates of absence and the attendance of this group of pupils is too low. Leaders have not evaluated their strategies for improving attendance in sufficient detail.
- Fixed-term exclusions have been above average for the past few years. This year, exclusion rates are higher than they have been for the past three years. Exclusions for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are disproportionately high, compared to other groups of pupils. This year, half of all the exclusions in the school have been given to this group of pupils. Leaders have not fully analysed why this is, so that they can be proactive in minimising exclusions for this group of pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress across year groups. The progress that pupils make is variable within subjects and between subjects.
- An important reason why pupils' progress is not consistently good is because pupils are not taught well enough how to apply reading and writing skills in all subjects, when appropriate. This means that some pupils are not routinely able to accurately communicate their understanding of key concepts clearly in writing.
- Current Year 6 pupils are making good progress in reading and mathematics. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are also achieving well in Year 6. However, pupils'

progress is weaker in Year 5.

- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not regularly reach their full potential because work is not consistently challenging enough. In the 2017 key stage 2 tests, too few of the most able pupils attained the high standard in reading, writing and grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Although improving, the progress that disadvantaged pupils make varies between subjects and year groups. For example, the school's own assessment information indicates that only half of disadvantaged pupils in Year 7 are meeting their targets in mathematics and a similar proportion are reaching their targets in reading in Year 8. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is slower than others in mathematics in Year 7, in reading and science in Year 8 and in English language and literature in Year 9. However, disadvantaged pupils are achieving well in reading and science in Year 7 and in mathematics in Years 8 and 9.
- From their individual starting points, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities also make variable progress across the curriculum. In key stage 3, the progress of this group of pupils in English is slower than other pupils in each year group and it is slower in Year 8 science and mathematics. However, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are achieving well in Year 9, though progress in science is not as strong as it is in other subjects.
- Published data which shows the progress that pupils make at the end of key stage 2 does not accurately reflect pupils' progress from when they join this school in Year 5. This is because progress is calculated from the end of key stage 1. The school uses a commercial package to assess pupils when they join the school in Year 5. Information from these assessments indicates that many pupils typically join Year 5 with attainment which is below age-related expectations. As a result, the progress that pupils have made in the past from the start of Year 5 to the end of Year 6 is more positive than the published data indicates. However, in 2017, disadvantaged pupils' attainment was below average in writing, reading and grammar, punctuation and spelling. Overall Year 6 attainment in writing at the high standard was below average and it was below average in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Last year, attainment in mathematics and reading in Year 6 was similar to the national average.
- Pupils' achievement is directly linked to the quality of teaching. Consequently, most groups of pupils achieve well in PE, geography, music and in some classes in English, mathematics and science.

School details

Unique reference number	139029
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10048295

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	9 to 14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	470
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Julie Grieve
Headteacher	Michael Bennett
Telephone number	01527 892867
Website	www.ridgeway.academy
Email address	slt@ridgeway.academy
Date of previous inspection	15–16 May 2013

Information about this school

- The school converted to academy status in December 2012.
- The last inspection took place in 2013 when the school was a middle school. The school is currently going through the transition to become an 11–16 secondary school. During this period of transition, the school currently has pupils from Year 5 to Year 9.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment at the end of key stage 2.
- A very small number of pupils are educated full time by the local authority's medical education team. This is provision for children who are unable to attend school due to medical needs. The number of pupils who are supported by this provision is too small to be reported on.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in a wide range of subjects in all year groups. Senior leaders joined inspectors for several of these observations. Inspectors also made several further short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils and a group of staff, including subject leaders and heads of faculty. The lead inspector met with the chair of governors.
- Inspectors listened to Year 5 and Year 6 pupils read.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at policies, the school's own assessment of its strengths and weaknesses and its development planning, records of lesson monitoring, information about pupils' progress, safeguarding documents and samples of pupils' work.
- The views of the 113 parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) were considered, as were the 22 responses to the staff survey. The views of eight pupils who responded to Ofsted's pupil survey were considered. Inspectors also took account of the school's own parent and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Richard Sutton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jacqueline Newsome	Ofsted Inspector
Ant Edkins	Ofsted Inspector

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