

Inspection of a good school: Severn Vale School

School Lane, Quedgeley, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL2 4PR

Inspection dates: 25–26 February 2020

Outcome

Severn Vale School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school provides a calm, orderly environment in which pupils can learn. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Positive relationships between staff and pupils support pupils' learning. Teachers make learning interesting, and pupils are keen to take part. Behaviour is good.

Pupils move sensibly around the school site. They say that they feel safe at school and behaviour is good. Pupils told us that staff deal with incidents of poor behaviour or bullying effectively. Pupils are happy at the school.

Leaders recently made changes to the start of the school day. These changes have raised the profile of reading. There are also opportunities for pupils to prepare revision resources and complete homework. Pupils told inspectors that they like the changes. Pupils said that they are now better prepared for the start of the first lesson.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils' personal development. There is a clear determination that the school should produce well-rounded young people. Lessons entitled futures deliver the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum. Leaders ensure that this has a high priority in the timetable. Supporting pupils' well-being is an important aspect of the futures curriculum.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders, including governors, are outward-looking. They seek out good practice in other schools and, where appropriate, adapt it to fit the school. They know their school well. Leaders have accurately identified the school's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders are ambitious for pupils and expect them to achieve well.

Subject leaders have reviewed what they want pupils to learn, and when they want them to learn it. In most subjects, teachers implement leaders' plans well. This means that pupils develop their skills and remember more over time. However, where there has been

inconsistent leadership, for example in geography, this is not always the case. In key stage 4 geography, some pupils have significant gaps in their knowledge.

Teachers consistently use a whole-school strategy for developing pupils' writing skills across the curriculum. This gives pupils increased confidence in writing. Teachers use assessment effectively to check what pupils have learnt. Teachers use quizzes in lessons to help pupils recall learning from previous lessons. Pupils' books show how they are learning the planned subject content. Pupils behave well in lessons. They listen carefully to teachers. They know that adults will help them if they have any concerns.

On rare occasions, when behaviour disrupts learning, teachers apply the school's behaviour policy consistently. Pupils said that recent changes to this policy have been effective at further reducing instances of disruption.

Pupils' personal development is fundamental to the work of the school. At its heart, there is a well thought out futures curriculum. The basis of the curriculum is the desire to help pupils become balanced, effective adults with secure self-identities. Well-designed resources provided by the futures leader ensure that non-specialist teachers can deliver learning with confidence. For key stage 3 pupils, the start of the day includes a quiz. The questions help build pupils' general knowledge and cover key aspects of personal development.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have access to the full curriculum. Leaders provide teachers with the information they need to ensure that pupils with SEND are well supported in class.

The number of pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is low. This is due to the low uptake of modern foreign languages in key stage 4. Leaders have taken action to address this issue. This includes changes to the structure and ambition of the key stage 3 curriculum. These changes are designed to improve pupils' confidence in choosing it as an option for key stage 4.

Staff appreciate the work leaders have done to reduce workload. Leaders are supportive and listen to staff. This helps to ensure that staff receive the support and development they need. Staff are happy to work at the school and say they are proud of their school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff receive effective safeguarding training. Staff briefings further enhance their understanding of safeguarding issues. The leaders responsible for safeguarding maintain close links with external agencies. This ensures that there is up-to-date understanding of local and national issues.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They are confident that if they have concerns, staff will take them seriously. In futures lessons, pupils learn about potential risks in the community and online.

There are clear systems in place to ensure that anyone employed at the school is safe to work with pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In geography, there has been inconsistent leadership which has led to some pupils in key stage 4 not being taught the full curriculum. This has led to gaps in their learning which is impacting on their preparation for examinations. Leaders should ensure that there is consistent leadership in geography to ensure full coverage of the curriculum across all year groups.
- Too few pupils access modern foreign languages in key stage 4. This limits the number of pupils able to gain the EBacc qualification. Leaders should continue their drive to develop the curriculum in modern foreign languages so that more pupils feel confident to choose it as an option in key stage 4.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 20 January 2011.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 137298 |
| Local authority | Gloucestershire |
| Inspection number | 10088398 |
| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1,250 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Jane Ireland |
| Headteacher | Richard Johnson |
| Website | www.severnvaeschool.com |
| Date of previous inspection | 28 January 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The school currently uses alternative provision for one pupil. The provider is the Gloucester and Forest Alternative Provision School.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.
- We did deep dives in English, modern foreign languages, geography, history and science. This involved joint lesson visits with subject leaders, meeting with teachers and pupils, and discussions with leaders about curriculum planning and the use of assessment. We also looked at pupils' work.
- Meetings also took place with senior leaders, subject leaders, teaching and support staff and members of the governing body.
- A range of documents relating to safeguarding were scrutinised, including the school's single central record and checks on newly appointed staff.

- We reviewed documents relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour. We also reviewed documents and plans relating to pupils' personal development through the futures curriculum.
- We considered the 89 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 170 responses to the pupil questionnaire. We also considered the views expressed by parents and carers in the 142 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including comments received via the free-text facility.

Inspection team

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|------------------------------|------------------|
| Mark Burgess, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Christine Raeside | Ofsted Inspector |
| Gill Hickling | Ofsted Inspector |

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