

Inspection of Ridgeway High School

Noctorum Avenue, Noctorum, Prenton, Merseyside CH43 9EB

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 September 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils said that Ridgeway High School is a caring and supportive school community. They feel valued by teachers and other adults. Pupils appreciate the strong relationships that they forge with staff. Pupils are happy. Pupils enjoy coming to school to learn and they said that they feel safe.

Pupils respect each other's differences. Pupils told inspectors that incidents of bullying are rare. They said that if bullying does happen, teachers respond quickly to resolve any issues.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Most pupils behave well in lessons. Their conduct around the school is calm and orderly. They are polite and well mannered.

Pupils follow a wide range of subjects. Teachers expect pupils to achieve well. However, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not achieve as well as they should during their time in school. This is because, in some subjects, leaders have not ensured that the curriculum is sufficiently well planned.

Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities to widen their horizons and deepen their understanding of the world. Pupils enjoy taking part in a variety of clubs and sports, such as handball, parkour, Kin-Ball and boccia.

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

Over time, pupils have not been sufficiently well prepared for the next stage of their education or training. To address this, leaders have increased the ambitiousness of the key stage 4 curriculum. For example, more pupils now study a modern foreign language. Added to this, the proportion of pupils following the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects is rising.

Leaders have begun to review their curriculum plans to ensure that they meet all pupils' needs, including those who are disadvantaged and those with SEND. In some subjects, leaders' curriculum plans now include the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn, and by when. In several subjects, teachers have thought carefully about the order in which pupils need to learn new knowledge. This careful planning enables pupils to build on what they already know and can do. However, in other subjects, leaders' curriculum plans are at an earlier stage of development. The lack of clarity about precisely what should be taught hinders how well some pupils achieve in these subjects.

In some subjects, teachers do not use assessment effectively enough to identify how well pupils remember their learning. Some teachers do not know when pupils

have missing knowledge or where they have forgotten key learning. As a result, some pupils do not progress through the curriculum as well as they should.

Many subject leaders are new to their roles. Some inexperienced subject leaders do not know how to check whether teachers are delivering the curriculum as they intend. Added to this, some subject leaders do not routinely check whether teachers select the most appropriate activities to help pupils to learn new concepts.

Leaders have increasingly high expectations of pupils. Disadvantaged pupils, and those with SEND, receive the same curriculum as other pupils. However, some teachers do not identify the needs of pupils with SEND well enough. On occasions, they do not make learning accessible for these pupils. Some pupils with SEND do not progress through the curriculum as well as they should.

Leaders have prioritised the development of pupils' reading and vocabulary across the curriculum. Leaders' strategies to support pupils who have fallen behind with their reading are beginning to make a difference.

Leaders have ensured that staff implement the behaviour policy consistently well. Pupils value this. In most lessons, pupils can learn without disruption. Pupils' attendance is high.

Leaders have introduced 'The Ridgeway Charter'. This is a set of expectations that leaders successfully use to underpin pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about how to live healthy lifestyles and how to develop healthy relationships. Pupils contribute well to their local community by raising funds for local charities.

Pupils benefit from a well-designed careers programme. A high proportion of pupils continue into further education and training.

Governors are improving the quality of education for all pupils. They are holding leaders more fully to account for the quality of education. Parents and carers are appreciative of the support that leaders give to pupils. Teachers said that leaders consider their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. They ensure that teachers receive appropriate training, including around peer-on-peer abuse. Leaders and teachers are vigilant. They are alert to pupils' concerns. Staff know how to spot signs of abuse.

Leaders and staff work well with other agencies to support pupils who need help. They have developed strong systems to support pupils' mental health and well-being.

Pupils are clear about who they can go to should they need help. They are confident about how to alert staff to any safeguarding concerns. Pupils know how to keep safe, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders have not thought carefully enough about the precise knowledge that they want pupils to learn, or the order in which they should learn it. As a result, in these subject areas, teachers are not clear about the essential knowledge that pupils need to deepen their learning over time. Leaders should ensure that all curriculum plans identify the essential knowledge that pupils need to know and remember, and by when.
- In some subjects, teachers do not use assessment well enough to check whether pupils have learned the essential knowledge that they need to remember. As a result, some pupils have missing or forgotten knowledge. Leaders should ensure that teachers use assessment effectively to identify the knowledge that pupils have missed or forgotten.
- Some subject leaders do not know how to check whether teachers are delivering the curriculum effectively. As a result, some teachers are not using the best pedagogical approaches to ensure that pupils can build on prior knowledge and remember new learning. Senior leaders should ensure that subject leaders receive further training to check how well teachers are delivering the curriculum.
- Some teachers do not consider the needs of pupils with SEND well enough when delivering the curriculum. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not progress through the curriculum as well as they should. Leaders must ensure that all teachers are trained so that they are better equipped to make successful curriculum adaptations for pupils with SEND.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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

Unique reference number	105097
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10200778
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	883
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Weise
Headteacher	Gavin Sterry
Website	www.ridgeway.wirral.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	21 and 22 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been significant changes in leadership since the previous inspection. The deputy headteacher was acting headteacher from March 2019 to July 2021. The current headteacher was appointed in June 2021.
- A new chair of the governing body was appointed in September 2020.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 11 receive information about the full range of education and training options open to them. This includes opportunities for a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative education at six different providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic

with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, staff and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors held telephone conversations with representatives of three alternative providers, a consultant employed by the school and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. They also looked at minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour.
- An inspector looked at safeguarding policies and reviewed leaders' record of checks on the suitability of staff and governors.
- Inspectors considered the 41 staff responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. Inspectors also considered the 28 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. This included the 28 free-text responses.
- No responses were received to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science and physical education. They visited a sample of lessons in these subjects, met with subject leaders, reviewed pupils' work and had discussions with teachers and pupils. In addition, an inspector reviewed curriculum planning in a range of other subjects, including geography and Spanish.

Inspection team

David Hampson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Rochelle Conefrey	Ofsted Inspector
Phill Walmsley	Ofsted Inspector
Ahmed Marikar	Her Majesty's Inspector

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