

Inspection of Ridgeway Secondary School

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

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 October 2021

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where expectations have remained low for too long. Leaders have not managed the school's transition from a middle school to a secondary school well. In many subjects, pupils experience a poorly planned curriculum. This does not help pupils to make the progress of which they are capable.

Pupils do not behave well. In many lessons, low-level disruption does not allow pupils to focus on their learning. Teachers do not tackle poor behaviour consistently. Some pupils say that bullying happens at the school and that they do not have confidence in staff to deal with it. At social times and at the end of the school day, staff do not always supervise pupils properly. Pupils do not attend school as often as they should. This also has a negative impact on their learning.

There are extra-curricular opportunities that take place every day after school. This includes jewellery making, Latin and various sports clubs during 'Enrichment Thursdays'. Pupils do not have a secure understanding of fundamental British values and the different careers available to them when they leave school.

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

The leadership of the school has gone through a period of turbulence. Since September, the interim leadership team has quickly identified the significant weaknesses at the school. It has started to take steps to tackle these. However, its plans to improve the school are still at a very early stage and the impact is yet to be seen.

The curriculum from Year 5 to Year 11 is not well planned and sequenced. In many subjects, leaders have not thought carefully about how pupils are able to build on what they already know or make connections between the topics they study. In mathematics, for example, leaders have plans for what they want pupils to know and remember in each year group. However, they have not carefully considered how this learning builds between years or key stages. In English, new leaders have put in place a well-thought-through curriculum that sets out the texts they want pupils to study under thematic headings. However, this new curriculum has not yet been fully implemented and gaps in pupils' learning remain. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, do not have a secure grasp of basic literacy skills and struggle to spell common words.

Leaders have not identified the key knowledge and ideas they want pupils to know in each subject. Many teachers are not clear about what it is that pupils should remember from each topic to help them move on in their learning. Pupils therefore struggle to link ideas from topics together to develop a depth of understanding in the subject they are studying.

Leaders, in the past, have not planned training coherently to address the needs of staff or emerging issues. As a result, teachers have not had sufficient training to

help develop their subject knowledge or improve their teaching. Recently, leaders have used a national provider to help support their training. They have also introduced a structure to help teachers plan lessons. However, teachers do not always use this successfully to ensure pupils are secure in their learning.

In several lessons, low-level disruption is common. Some teachers do not tackle poor behaviour well or ensure that classrooms are a calm and orderly environment. Pupils linger in corridors and do not move quickly to lessons. This is also the case at the end of break and lunchtimes. Leaders have not ensured there is a culture of high expectations for behaviour and that pupils value learning and are respectful to staff.

Attendance remains a cause for concern. Leaders, in the past, have not had effective systems in place to address the attendance of pupils who are absent or persistently absent from school. Since September, leaders have worked closely with the local authority to start to tackle this. A new monitoring system is helping to identify those pupils who need support with their attendance. However, it is too early to see the impact of this work.

Leaders have not ensured that the school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum helps to support pupils' wider development. Pupils do not have a secure understanding of the relationships and sex education curriculum they have been taught. Pupils in Year 11 have received talks from external providers about their potential next steps in education or training. However, pupils in other year groups are not aware of the potential future careers available to them. In addition, pupils do not know about the importance of why someone must not be discriminated against. Some pupils do not understand why using certain terms, such as derogatory or homophobic language, are inappropriate or offensive.

Historically, trustees have not held the headteacher to account for the performance of the school. Trustees have not provided sufficient challenge around academic performance or other aspects of the school's work. This has allowed low standards to persist. A new chair of the trust and other trustees recognise this and have already started to make changes. They have asked leaders to provide more information about the school's work so that they can provide greater scrutiny and support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders have not ensured that all staff have had sufficient safeguarding training to know how to keep pupils safe. This includes supply staff who are working at the school on a long-term basis. Staff know where to record safeguarding incidents if they have a concern about a child. However, staff do not have a secure knowledge of training that they have received around peer-on-peer abuse or sexual harassment. Staff do not supervise pupils appropriately at social times or when they are leaving the school site. This potentially leaves pupils at risk of harm.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that all staff have had appropriate safeguarding training or have a secure understanding of the training they have received. Additionally, pupils are not supervised properly during social times or when they are leaving the school site. Leaders should take urgent action to ensure all staff receive appropriate safeguarding training and that this is well understood. They should also ensure that pupils are supervised appropriately throughout the school day.
- In the past, trustees have not held leaders to account for the performance of the school. This has meant that issues such as a poor curriculum, poor behaviour and low attendance have not been challenged effectively. Trustees should ensure that leaders are held to account fully for all aspects of the school's work.
- The curriculum is not well planned and sequenced from Year 5 to Year 11. This means that in a number of subjects, pupils are not able to build on prior learning or make connections in the topics they study. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is planned and sequenced coherently to ensure all pupils are able to know and remember more in the long term.
- Leaders have not identified the key knowledge and ideas that they want pupils to remember in each subject. Pupils therefore do not have a secure depth of knowledge and are not able to apply this to other topics. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum identifies what key knowledge and concepts they want pupils to remember to enable them to be successful in their learning.
- Staff have not had sufficient training to develop their subject knowledge or teaching pedagogy. This means that many teachers are not well prepared to teach their subject at different key stages. Leaders should ensure that all staff receive appropriate training in order to enhance their subject knowledge and improve their teaching.
- Too many pupils are absent or persistently absent from school. This has a detrimental impact on their learning and poses a potential safeguarding risk. Leaders should take action to ensure that absence and persistent absence reduces.
- Pupils do not behave well. Some teachers do not tackle low-level disruption effectively and pupils are not able to focus on their learning. Leaders should make sure that all staff have high expectations for behaviour and take action to address inappropriate behaviour to ensure there is a calm and orderly environment.
- Pupils do not understand the fundamental British values of respect and tolerance. Additionally, careers information and guidance are not well delivered to all year groups. Leaders should ensure that pupils are clear about all fundamental British values and that the school's careers programme is implemented effectively.

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	139029
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10202848
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	9 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	365
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Claire Torrington
Acting Headteacher	Matthew Ball
Website	www.ridgewaysecondary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 and 3 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- At the time of this inspection, the headteacher was absent. The deputy headteacher has been the acting headteacher since July 2021.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors focused on the following subjects: English, mathematics, modern foreign languages and geography. Inspectors examined leaders' plans, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about the way these subjects are taught.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about behaviour, attendance, the school curriculum and improvement planning. The school website was also checked.
- Inspectors talked to staff and leaders about safeguarding arrangements. They examined how leaders make employment checks on staff and scrutinised further safeguarding records. They also asked how incidents reported by pupils are recorded and analysed.
- Inspectors observed informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors held meetings with trustees, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaires and staff survey.

Inspection team

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