

Inspection of Roding Valley High School

Alderton Hill, Loughton, Essex IG10 3JA

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 September 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend Roding Valley High School. From the time they arrive in Year 7, to when they leave the sixth form, they respond to leaders' high expectations. Parents are positive about the education the school provides. Typical comments praise 'the aspirations for every child' and the 'caring support' from staff.

Behaviour is calm. Pupils respond well to the clearly understood routines. They move about the school, such as the narrow corridors, in an orderly way. In lessons, they concentrate well and take pride in their learning.

Pupils are polite and friendly. They praise the culture of respect in the school. Pupils say staff and leaders resolve any occasional issues of bullying. They say leaders do not tolerate any harassment or discrimination. As a result, pupils learn to have positive attitudes, and feel safe.

Pupils enjoy many opportunities to develop their individual characters. They participate with pride in leadership positions, such as subject ambassadors, house captains, or in the school council. Pupils value how their voice is heard. For example, in response to pupils' request, leaders installed water dispensers and implemented the Halo Code. In the sixth form, students show an exceptional commitment to the school community.

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

Leaders have designed the curriculum well. They have ambitious aims for what pupils should know to be ready for their next stage. Leaders consider what will help pupils most, such as the application of mathematics to pupils' daily life. Subject leaders break down learning in a lot of detail. They plan for teaching to build on what pupils already know, from key stage 3 through to key stage 5. This means pupils build up their knowledge well. The clear thinking about the curriculum particularly supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is because teachers identify closely the most important knowledge for these pupils to know and remember.

Teachers in most cases deliver the curriculum effectively. They have strong subject knowledge, especially in the sixth form. Teachers present subject matter clearly. In most cases, this supports pupils to achieve well. Pupils learn to understand complex aspects of the curriculum, such as asking questions about the past in history. Teachers skilfully adapt the way they teach, where needed, to help pupils with SEND successfully access the curriculum. However, on occasion, teachers do not check as thoroughly as they might that pupils understand what they learn. Teachers sometimes move on to new content when pupils are not secure about what has come before. When this happens, pupils do not do as well as they could.

Leaders prioritise reading. They ensure pupils who struggle with reading get all the help they need. Leaders successfully promote a love of reading in the school. They

make sure pupils build up their vocabulary to support their literacy. This helps pupils build their knowledge as they learn the content of the curriculum.

Leaders have put in place a clear behaviour policy. Staff apply this consistently. Teachers deal effectively with any disruption to learning in lessons. Staff quickly address any misbehaviour or unkindness around the school. This helps pupils behave well and follow all the rules.

Pupils have a range of opportunities for personal development. However, leaders do not check closely enough who participates in these. Consequently, some pupils do not get the help they need to benefit from these as regularly as others.

From early in key stage 3, pupils get strong advice and guidance about their next steps. Leaders make sure pupils experience input from a lot of employer and apprenticeship providers. Pupils with SEND get all the help they need to know their options and make the best decisions. As a result, almost all pupils move on to positive destinations.

The quality of education in the sixth form is especially strong. Teachers use their subject knowledge expertly to check on learning. They address misconceptions thoroughly. Teachers help pupils develop sophisticated levels of literacy. Because of this, students produce work of a very high standard. Students with SEND achieve exceptionally well in key stage 5. Students in the sixth form benefit from a rich personal development curriculum. As a result, they develop excellent levels of commitment to their education and to the community.

The trust and governors are ambitious for the school to improve. They give effective challenge and support to leaders' work to address weaknesses in provision. For example, governors ask probing questions about any weaker areas of the curriculum. They check on the effectiveness of leaders' actions to address these. Trustees take appropriate responsibility to ensure they fulfil their statutory duties, such as those regarding equalities and safeguarding.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a robust culture of safeguarding. Staff are well trained in keeping pupils safe. A typical comment from one was that 'safeguarding is an ever-present part of training'. As a result, staff are vigilant in spotting and logging concerns.

Leaders know the local risks and address these well. Safeguarding records show that leaders take appropriate actions to support vulnerable pupils. Leaders liaise promptly with agencies where needed.

Leaders teach pupils to say safe. Pupils learn a lot about online safety. Well-planned pastoral support helps them feel safe. Pupils know who to talk to if they have concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers, on occasion, do not check well enough that pupils understand what they are learning. This means that at times some pupils move on to new content without being secure about what they have learned before. They therefore sometimes lack the prior learning they need, and struggle to understand the new content. Leaders need to train teachers so that they know how to check learning effectively, so that pupils achieve even better than at present.
- Leaders do not check closely enough how strong the take-up is by all pupils of the wider opportunities on offer. This means that some pupils do not benefit from extra-curricular activities as well as they might. Leaders need to monitor more effectively the participation in opportunities by all pupils, and as a result provide better support for their personal development.

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.

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	145597
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10254561
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,429
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	212
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Roger Blundell
Headteacher	Sharon Jenner
Website	www.rodingleyvalley.net
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened as an academy on 1 June 2018. It joined the Chelmsford Learning Partnership at the same time.
- The headteacher was appointed in June 2019.
- Leaders use three registered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the chief executive officer of the trust, senior leaders, other leaders, staff, pupils, and those responsible for governance, including the chair of the trust, the chair of governors and other governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, history and drama. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also evaluated the delivery of the curriculum in some other subjects, notably computing and music.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors checked the school's single central record, considered its safeguarding policy and procedures, and spoke to leaders, staff, parents and pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed the 146 responses that were submitted from this academic year by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and 95 free-text responses submitted during the inspection. Inspectors considered the 34 responses to the staff survey, and the 137 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Charlie Fordham, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Brenda Watson	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Sutton	Ofsted Inspector
Jason Carey	Ofsted Inspector
Cathy Barr	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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