

# Inspection of Test Valley School

Roman Road, Stockbridge, Hampshire SO20 6HA

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Inspection dates: 18 and 20 October 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Inadequate**

Personal development

**Inadequate**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Previous inspection grade

Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Many pupils do not feel happy or safe in this school. Poor behaviour, bullying and harassment are commonplace. Leaders do not appreciate the extent to which these happen. While leaders work well with partners to protect pupils most at risk, they have not established an inclusive or welcoming culture throughout the school. This contributes to some pupils feeling unsafe and others feeling discriminated against. Pupils are not confident that staff will deal with these issues and so do not always report them. One pupil described it as an 'unhappy environment'.

Leaders have attempted to raise expectations throughout the school but have not been successful. Pupils want to learn and have more potential than they are often given credit for, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Often pupils cannot make the most of lessons because teaching is interrupted by poor behaviour and some staff do not implement the curriculum as leaders intend. Pupils with SEND do not receive appropriate support to meet their needs.

The careers programme provides effective advice and guidance regarding future education and employment. However, the wider personal development programme is not designed or implemented well enough to help pupils flourish.

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

Leaders have not established a positive school culture, so behaviour and attitudes are frequently poor. Some teachers have positive relationships with pupils. However, there is no consistency in how pupils' behaviour is managed, and staff too often tolerate disruption and disrespect. This is because leaders' expectations and the processes they have set out to manage behaviour are not clear. Many pupils are frustrated because poor behaviour in lessons means that they cannot learn and too many pupils do not understand the value of good behaviour. Poor conduct and derogatory language make many pupils feel uncomfortable or intimidated.

The school's curriculum is not ambitious enough. Expectations for pupils' achievement by the time they leave school are not high enough. In particular, leaders do not precisely identify the needs or potential of pupils with SEND. They do not ensure that teachers have the information they need to be able to adapt learning for these pupils. Consequently, pupils, including pupils with SEND, are not challenged and supported to achieve highly enough.

The curriculum is not well organised. Leaders have not fully considered the most important knowledge that pupils need, or when they need to learn it. In addition, there is no clear approach to checking that pupils remember what they learn. Consequently, pupils often have gaps in their learning which grow over time. They are not prepared for more complex work.

Leaders do not provide enough help for the weakest readers. They do not know what it is that pupils need to improve. For example, they have not checked if weaker readers have a secure understanding of phonics or if they need help with comprehension. Consequently, leaders have not provided the right targeted support to help pupils catch up with reading.

The personal development programme does not prepare pupils well enough for life in modern Britain or contribute to a culture free of discrimination. Personal, social, health and economic education is structured well, but its implementation is not effective. Pupils have gaps in their knowledge, particularly linked to understanding and respecting those with protected characteristics. There are clubs and trips on offer, but the range is limited. Careers education is stronger, however, and helps pupils to select their next steps.

Over time, leaders and those responsible for governance have not acted swiftly enough to improve the quality of provision. This is because they have not understood the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have not demonstrated the secure knowledge and understanding necessary to ensure that effective actions are in place to improve behaviour and ensure a culture of safeguarding. Many staff are loyal to the school and care about the pupils, but significant turbulence in leadership over recent years has contributed to the school's decline. Although new leaders have identified appropriate priorities, their actions have not yet had sufficient time to embed and so have not yet had the required impact.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders and governors have not acted well enough to keep pupils safe in school. Leaders have not created a strong and shared culture of safeguarding through the school. They have not made sure that their policies and procedures reflect latest statutory guidance. Additionally, these are not adapted for the specific issues facing the school and its pupils.

Training for staff is not as effective as it could be, particularly in terms of preventing and responding to child-on-child incidents. Too many pupils experience harassment, intimidation or physical assault. Staff know how to recognise indicators of potential harm and they report concerns. However, actions to help pupils who feel unsafe in school are not always effective because they are not seen as a shared responsibility.

Pupils who are at risk of significant harm are identified and referred to appropriate agencies in a timely way. Records are sound and show that leaders are acting to support these pupils. Here, leaders draw on a range of partners to help provide support where necessary.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Expectations of behaviour and relationships are too low. Unacceptable behaviour, language and attitudes have been normalised. Pupils' learning is disrupted, and they do not feel safe in school. Leaders must ensure that there are clear behaviour management processes and systems in place and that staff implement them consistently and effectively.
- Leaders and governors have not established a shared culture of safeguarding in school. Pupils do not feel safe due to frequent incidents of harassment, bullying and discrimination. Pupils do not report concerns because they are not confident that the school will deal with them effectively. Leaders must take decisive action to build a culture where issues of sexism, racism and homophobia are dealt with effectively.
- The curriculum is not well thought through. Pupils do not build up their knowledge and skills over time. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum is consistently well designed and implemented so that, at each point, pupils embed learning and skills into long-term memory.
- The needs of pupils with SEND are not met. Pupils with SEND do not receive the support they need to achieve well or to regulate their behaviour. Leaders must ensure that effective processes are in place to identify accurately those pupils who have additional needs, and that staff are well trained to meet these needs.
- The needs of weaker readers are not met. Those in the early stages of reading are not supported to catch up in a timely way. Consequently, they cannot access the curriculum effectively. Leaders must ensure that staff are trained and supported to identify precisely what will help pupils catch up quickly and to put in place appropriate targeted support.
- Leaders and governors do not have an accurate picture of the school's quality of provision. Over time, they have not acted effectively to rectify weaknesses. Leaders and those responsible for governance must ensure that leadership capacity and expertise are quickly developed to make the necessary and sustainable improvements.
- Leaders and those responsible for governance may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	116426
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10211422
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	406
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Roma Chappell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Caroline Lowing
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.testvalley.hants.sch.uk">www.testvalley.hants.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- After a period of frequent changes in leadership, a head of school was appointed in September 2022.
- The school currently uses two registered and one unregistered alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 11 with information about approved technical educational qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, His 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 inspection began on 18 October as an ungraded inspection. Having found significant concerns, we deemed the inspection to be a graded (section 5) inspection. As a graded inspection requires more inspector time to complete than an ungraded inspection, we returned on 20 October to complete the full inspection.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, geography, drama, design and technology, and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding leader, examined school records and discussed safeguarding cases.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including governor minutes, policies and records for behaviour management, attendance and bullying. Inspectors also reviewed documents related to the alternative provision used by the school.
- Inspectors observed pupils at different times during the school day, including at tutor time, assemblies, breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of pupils from different year groups and considered their responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator to discuss the provision for pupils with SEND. They visited lessons to look at the support these pupils were receiving.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the confidential staff survey. They took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View.

## Inspection team

Mary Davies, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Willman	Ofsted Inspector
Jo Brinkley	His Majesty's Inspector
Francois Walker	Ofsted Inspector
Cathy Reid	Ofsted Inspector
Julia Mortimore	Ofsted Inspector

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