

Inspection of a good school: Robert May's School

West Street, Odiham, Hook, Hampshire RG29 1NA

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 November 2022

Outcome

Robert May's School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupil welfare is at the centre of every decision made by leaders. Pupils are very proud of their school and feel safe and well cared for. They trust the adults to help them if they report bullying or any worries. Breaktimes and lunchtimes are orderly because pupils know that leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Being an 'upstander' against unkindness rather than a 'bystander' is very important to pupils. They learn that this helps to create a warm inclusive culture where everyone is welcome and accepted for who they are.

A wide range of leadership opportunities enables pupils to understand how they can make a meaningful contribution to society. House charity committees help raise money for their chosen charities through fundraising events such as cake sales and tombolas. Pupil librarians help maintain a well-equipped library where pupils huddle together to read or complete homework. Student council members work with leaders to ensure that all pupils have an active voice in the school. Pupils learn to be responsible and develop real pride through their achievements. House points and rewards recognise and celebrate an excellence that all pupils strive to achieve.

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

Leaders carefully identify the important subject knowledge that pupils need to be learned successfully over time. They order learning in a way which helps pupils recap important ideas. Consequently, most pupils can link prior knowledge to new topics and information. Leaders seek many wide and varied learning experiences and opportunities. For example, in physical education, they enjoy rock climbing and abseiling as part of the curriculum. All pupils follow the same ambitious curriculum, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Lessons are calm and purposeful and led by knowledgeable, passionate teachers. Pupils show dedication to learning and pay close attention to their teacher's instruction. Leaders have provided training for all staff to help them structure learning that is challenging.

Pupils recognise that teachers have high expectations of what they will learn in each lesson. The majority of pupils are rising to this increased challenge and are progressing well through the curriculum. However, not all teachers expertly adapt learning in order that all pupils achieve as well as they could.

Leaders want all pupils to be independent learners with the skills to thrive in later life. Those who find reading more difficult receive additional, effective help. Leaders have recently reviewed the support that pupils with SEND receive. These pupils are now more fully involved in the life of the school and are working with increased independence, learning alongside their peers. Leaders regularly review and share detailed support plans and teachers are now starting to use these more effectively to adapt learning. However, there is still some work to embed this and ensure that parents of pupils with SEND fully understand what the educational provision for their child looks like in school.

The strength of the personal development curriculum has been pivotal in establishing a culture of learning in school. Pupils learn about sex and relationships and how to stay safe online. The 'Robert May's Programme' teaches pupils important lessons about self-motivation and respect. Opportunities to develop new interests and passions are plentiful. Clubs and trips are well attended by many pupils. The new house system encourages friendly competition, though pupils recognise that pride through participation is the biggest reward they can win.

Trustees and leaders are resolute in their ambition for pupils. Their clear vision and aims are shared by all staff. They told inspectors that the mantra of the school is 'one team, one dream'. Trustees hold leaders accountable for the clearly planned actions developed to drive the school forward. Staff speak highly of the support and training they receive from leaders. This helps to make the school a happy place to work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an effective culture of safeguarding in this school because leaders ensure all staff understand their role in keeping pupils safe. Staff receive effective training to spot the signs that pupils may be at risk. They know to quickly and accurately report their concerns to leaders, who take swift action to seek additional external help when it is needed.

Leaders maintain precise records of each step they take to resolve concerns and are tenacious in making sure the pupils receive the right help. Trustees make regular checks to ensure that the school robustly complies with the safeguarding policy.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff do not consistently check what pupils know and understand in order to then adapt learning to close gaps in pupils' knowledge. This means that some pupils are at

risk of falling behind their peers. Leaders must continue to provide training and support to ensure that all teachers have the expertise to reshape learning to help all pupils achieve well.

- Leaders' recent improvements to support pupils with SEND are not yet consistently well implemented by all staff. This means that not all pupils with SEND are achieving as well as they could. Leaders must continue to embed their plans to support pupils with SEND and ensure that parents and pupils are involved in this process.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2012.

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	138135
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10227231
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	1317
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Anna Rigby
Headteacher	Rea Mitchell
Website	www.rmays.org
Date of previous inspection	17 May 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has undergone a number of significant changes of leadership over the past two years.
- The school uses three alternative provisions for a small number of pupils.
- The school has a specialist resourced base for pupils with autism spectrum disorders. The provision currently supports 14 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

- 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 these subjects: English, science, modern foreign languages and physical education. 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 leaders, staff, pupils and those with responsibility for governance, including the chair of the trustees. The lead inspector also spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors looked at the school's website and policies, met with leaders and spoke with pupils and staff. They scrutinised school records of the safeguarding checks carried out on adults working at the school and spoke with trustee responsible for safeguarding. They scrutinised a selection of electronic child protection records.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator to discuss the provision for pupils with SEND. They visited the specialist resourced base and other lessons to look at the support these pupils were receiving.
- Inspectors held discussions with the three alternative provision providers to discuss the educational provision and check the safeguarding arrangements for pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised meeting minutes from trustee meetings and records of visits to the school made by members of the trust. Inspectors also scrutinised a range of school policies and school development plans and school evaluation forms.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the confidential staff survey. They took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View and comments made by those who responded.

Inspection team

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