

Inspection of The Ridgeway School & Sixth Form College

Inverary Road, Wroughton, Swindon, Wiltshire SN4 9DJ

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 April 2023

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| The quality of education | Outstanding |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
| Personal development | Good |
| Leadership and management | Outstanding |
| Sixth-form provision | Good |
| Previous inspection grade | Good |

What is it like to attend this school?

The Ridgeway School & Sixth Form College is an inclusive and aspirational school. Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. There are clear routines in place, which all pupils understand. Pupils report that bullying is rare. When it does occur, it is dealt with swiftly. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe.

The curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. Pupils are challenged to achieve their best. As a result, pupils at Ridgeway achieve very well. Pupils learn about issues that are happening in the world around them. Students in the sixth form are well supported both academically and pastorally. They enjoy engaging in challenging lessons.

There are a range of extra-curricular activities on offer, including many sports and performing arts opportunities. The school's drama productions are a highlight for many pupils and staff. Guest speakers visit the school frequently, giving pupils access to varied opportunities beyond the academic curriculum. Pupils learn about other cultures through the curriculum and through celebration days. Students in the sixth form take part in a range of enrichment activities alongside their academic qualifications.

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

Pupils experience a broad curriculum. The majority of pupils in key stage 3 will follow English Baccalaureate subjects in key stage 4. Leaders have designed subject curriculums with considerable thought and care. This means that pupils build securely on prior learning and revisit important knowledge and concepts. Teachers are subject experts. Pupils learn effectively because teachers present information clearly and routinely check for understanding. This means that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged, achieve well. Pupils' work is of a high standard. They are well prepared for their next steps.

Students in the sixth form enjoy their learning. Their teachers give them work that is demanding. Students receive effective feedback which helps them to develop their subject expertise. Sixth-form students learn how to work independently, and do this maturely. The enrichment programme in the sixth form gives students the opportunity to develop their talents and interests. Some students choose to take additional qualifications to broaden their suite of subjects.

There is an embedded reading culture throughout the school. Younger pupils read often and enjoy the opportunities they are given. Visits from authors complement these opportunities. Pupils who are at the early stages of reading and those who need to catch up are supported to do so. Sixth-form students benefit from one-to-one academic mentoring to ensure they do not fall behind.

Staff and pupils have a shared understanding of expectations of behaviour. Pupils benefit from a calm and orderly environment throughout the school. Low-level

disruption is extremely rare. However, a small number of pupils do not always make the right choices when unsupervised. Pupils who do not meet leaders' high expectations are supported well so they do not miss out on learning. Sixth-form students take responsibility for their education. Leaders insist on high attendance and punctuality.

Leaders ensure pupils learn about the protected characteristics. Cultural differences are celebrated throughout the year. Pupils learn about life in modern Britain. However, this work is not always reflected in the attitudes of some pupils.

There is an extensive range of extra-curricular activities on offer at the school, including a large number of pupils participating in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Some older pupils take on leadership roles associated with the environment and the community. This means they have a say in how to improve the school. Peer mentoring also supports younger pupils well. Students in the sixth form work with teachers to ensure pupils have their voices heard. Pupils learn about how to stay safe and healthy. Leaders find creative ways to complement these important messages, for example through 'Immersion Days' and theatre workshops. Sixth-form students receive age-appropriate information as part of their mentoring programme.

The careers programme ensures that pupils, including students in the sixth form, receive information about their next steps and support with university applications. Most pupils in Years 10 and 12 do work experience, and value this opportunity to be in the workplace. Leaders understand how to develop this programme further, including improving the quality of work experience for sixth-form students.

Leaders have a clear vision for the school. Their vision is shared by all staff, governors and trustees. This means the school community works effectively together. Governors hold the principal and his leadership team to account. Senior leaders engage positively with staff, and they feel happy and well supported. As a result, there is a continuous drive towards improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Pupils learn about harmful behaviour and how to stay safe. Leaders work in the best interests of pupils and young people. They are tenacious when working with external agencies. As a result, the most vulnerable pupils attend well, and there are many examples of where the support and vigilance of staff have ensured positive outcomes for pupils.

All staff receive regular training and updates. The reporting process is clear and effective. Safer recruitment practices are in place and closely monitored.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders monitor pupils' behaviour closely at all times. However, this does not ensure that all pupils are highly motivated and have high levels of self-control when unsupervised. Leaders should develop a culture which encourages all pupils to develop greater self-control and consistently positive attitudes to their education.

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

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| Unique reference number | 137160 |
| Local authority | Swindon |
| Inspection number | 10256633 |
| 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 | 1,604 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 211 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Ninna Gibson |
| Principal | Adrian Cush |
| Website | www.ridgewayschool.com |
| Dates of previous inspection | 3 and 4 March 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school is part of The White Horse Federation.
- The size of this secondary school is larger than average.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with autistic spectrum conditions. There are currently 23 pupils in this provision.
- The school uses three registered alternative provisions for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- On the first day, inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history, drama and design and technology. As part of this, they held discussions with senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers. They also talked to pupils about their learning and looked at work they had completed.
- The lead inspector also met with the subject leader for modern foreign languages.
- Inspectors visited a selection of sixth-form lessons and spoke to students in the sixth form about their experiences.
- Inspectors analysed responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and to the online pupil and staff surveys.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator and reviewed plans that support pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead, reviewed documentation related to safeguarding and referrals to the local authority. They also spoke to staff about how they keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors met with leaders who oversee behaviour, personal development and the curriculum.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the local governing body, a representative from the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of The White Horse Federation.

Inspection team

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Victoria Griffin, lead inspector | His Majesty’s Inspector |
| Sarah Forster | Ofsted Inspector |
| Steve Smith | Ofsted Inspector |
| Helen Kerr | Ofsted Inspector |
| Tim Redding | Ofsted Inspector |

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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