

# Inspection of Ringwood Waldorf School

Folly Farm Lane, Ashley, Ringwood, Hampshire BH24 2NN

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Inspection dates:

26 to 28 April 2023

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## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Good**

Sixth-form provision

**Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**Yes**

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

Kindergarten is welcoming. Every day is an 'outdoors day'. Children learn the importance of routines and rules. Careful adult support helps children to sustain learning, take turns and make friends. Children gain a strong sense of belonging. This sets them up well for their future schooling.

Pupils gain a varied set of experiences, including through the school's specialist curriculum. Most pupils enjoy 'making and doing' through activities such as weaving, whittling, felt making and for the oldest pupils, copper work. Visitors and school visits consolidate learning and broaden pupils' horizons well, for example to museums, zoos and Hengistbury Head. There is a chess club.

Staff provide effective pastoral support. Pupils develop their personal identity well. However, some pupils in the main school do not receive a good quality of education because teaching is not sufficiently well matched to their needs. Some pupils do not learn at the right time the important information they need to know. Some staff's expectations of pupils' behaviour are not high enough. A minority of pupils misbehave at social times or do not maintain concentration in class.

Students who continue to post-16 education learn a lot of subject content and gain strong inner confidence and resilience. This helps them to be successful in going on to future education, employment or training.

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

The school's effectiveness has dipped since the previous inspection. Trustees and leaders have a firm grasp of what needs to be done to drive forward the necessary improvements. A new improvement plan sets out the most pressing areas for improvement. Leaders are taking the right actions. However, there is variation in how swiftly some staff implement the agreed actions. Weaknesses in the quality of education and behaviour and attitudes remain.

Many school policies have been upgraded and implemented this year. Trustees have appointed a compliance officer and commissioned external consultants to provide advice. The school is using this expertise effectively. For example, considerable work has been carried out to ensure the school site is secure, well maintained and the independent school standards are met.

The whole-school curriculum sets out what will be taught and when in every subject. Sequences of work are broken down into the small chunks of knowledge that pupils should learn. However, there are weaknesses in the implementation of the curriculum. Leaders have not ensured that all staff have strong subject knowledge in the subjects they teach. Teaching does not always build on what pupils already know. For example, some pupils' compositional skills in writing are hindered because the planned curriculum is not adhered to well enough. A minority of pupils do not take care over their 'main lesson' work.

Leaders with the responsibility for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) identify their needs accurately. However, some staff do not use this knowledge to tailor what and how pupils learn across sequences of work. This means that these pupils find it hard to retain important knowledge and vocabulary.

Staff with the responsibility for leading the reading curriculum are committed to implementing the phonics programme in full. This is starting to pay off. However, leaders have not yet ensured that pupils who need to catch up do enough practice to secure their phonics and read accurately. At times, some staff model phonics inaccurately, which results in pupils having misconceptions. However, most older pupils eventually become fluent readers and spell accurately.

Leaders are stringent when challenging poor attendance. Pupils now attend well. There is a new behaviour policy in place. Staff have been retrained. They record incidents of poor behaviour or bullying and act in line with school policy. However, for a minority of pupils, incidents of careless behaviour are frequent. Leaders' actions are not yet resulting in school-wide improvement.

There is a suitable personal, social, health and education (PSHE) curriculum in place. Pupils receive impartial careers advice. They learn about respecting one another and maintaining healthy relationships. They study a range of religions and festivals and celebrate difference.

In kindergarten, staff meet children's needs well. Children enjoy the rhythm of the day. Staff build on their knowledge of what children know and can do. There is a sharp focus on staff modelling speaking in sentences. Staff provide explicit support for children who need to develop their core strength or spatial awareness. This approach helps narrow gaps in children's learning and development over time.

Students receiving post-16 education produce high-quality work across their diploma subjects. They gain a deep body of knowledge and use it well to analyse critically and develop complex arguments verbally and in writing. Pupils' artwork is often impressive. Pupils achieve well. Many go to university or sustain places in further education, employment or training when they leave.

Leaders are supportive of staff workload.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Trustees fulfil their duties to ensure that staff complete statutory training. Leaders provide staff with regular safeguarding updates. This means that staff are well informed in what action to take should they suspect a pupil is at risk of harm. Staff refer on concerns, and leaders work with external agencies when necessary. The safeguarding policy is up to date and on the school's website. Pupils feel safe in school.

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

### **(Information for the school and proprietor)**

- There are weaknesses in the implementation of the curriculum. Teaching does not always build on what pupils already know and understand. Some teaching sequences miss important steps, including for pupils with SEND. A minority of pupils are unable to understand the technical vocabulary teachers use in the 'main lesson'. This slows pupils' learning down unnecessarily. Leaders must ensure that teaching builds on what pupils know and can do so that pupils retain all the knowledge they should across the curriculum.
- Expectations of pupils' behaviour are not consistently high. A minority of pupils do not behave well at social times. A minority of pupils interrupt learning. Leaders need to ensure that all staff consistently maintain high expectations for pupils' behaviour and conduct.
- In some subjects, including reading, teaching is not built on strong subject knowledge. Pupils' gaps in knowledge are not always detected and addressed swiftly. Leaders must ensure that all staff have strong subject knowledge in the subjects they teach. Leaders must assure themselves that the intended curriculum is implemented well across all subjects.
- Some leaders are too accepting when a minority of staff are slow to follow newly agreed school-wide expectations. This slows school improvement down. Trustees must ensure that they hold school leaders to account stringently for ensuring that all staff are proactive in raising the quality of education and improving pupils' behaviour and attitudes so that a strong culture of positive behaviour and academic rigour prevail as the norm across the school.

## **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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113943
<b>DfE registration number</b>	838/6022
<b>Local authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	10267601
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent school
<b>School category</b>	Independent School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	258
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	18
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Ringwood Waldorf School Trust
<b>Chair</b>	Sinead Wilson-Devane
<b>Headteacher</b>	Louise Tiley
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£5,470 to £10,642
<b>Telephone number</b>	01425472664
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ringwoodwaldorfschool.org.uk">www.ringwoodwaldorfschool.org.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:liz@ringwoodwaldorfschool.org.uk">liz@ringwoodwaldorfschool.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2 to 4 April 2019

## Information about this school

- The proprietor aims to provide a curriculum that is in keeping with Steiner education principles. The school is affiliated with the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship. This group provides advice for Steiner Waldorf schools.
- The school is led by a school management team. The chair of the school management team is the principal leader, who oversees the day-to-day running of the school.
- The school operates a kindergarten for children aged three to six years old. Pupils join Class 1 at the start of national curriculum Year 2. The school has one class per year group for each year up to Class 12, which is the equivalent of national curriculum Year 13.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- Many pupils leave and join the school at times other than typical transition times. The school has visiting students from overseas. Students attend from four weeks to a school year.
- In the upper school, pupils take English and mathematics GCSE.
- A small number of pupils remain at the school to undertake post-16 education. These pupils study for the Ringwood Waldorf School Diploma.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

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 met with the members of the school management team, two trustees, school leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and other staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, art and craft and history. Inspectors also reviewed other curriculum areas, such as craft and technologies, science and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation and discussed safeguarding with leaders and other staff.

- In making their judgements, inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. They also looked at the responses to the pupil and staff surveys.
- An inspector held a telephone call with a member of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship and a member of Dorset local authority safeguarding team.

### **Inspection team**

Julie Carrington, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Richard Vaughan

Ofsted Inspector

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