

Inspection of a good school: Ravenswood School

Pound Lane, Nailsea, Bristol BS48 2NN

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 June 2023

Outcome

Ravenswood School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders work with integrity, putting pupils at the heart of their decisions. Their vision of 'dream, achieve, believe' is realised in the determined way that the school has set about continuing to improve the quality of education over the past few years.

The school is crystal clear about what it wants pupils to learn. Staff want to ensure that while at Ravenswood, pupils learn the life skills they need to live safely and to be as independent as they can.

Staff go above and beyond to ensure that pupils encounter a wide, rich set of experiences. Outside learning, such as in the wildlife area, the go-karting track and a variety of sports, trips and residential help pupils to learn how to live interesting, active and healthy lives. Pupils know that staff will listen to and support any concerns about bullying incidents that occur.

Leaders seek every opportunity to enhance learning. Older pupils help to run an on-site kitchen and a pop-up shop. A real-life bus stop helps pupils learn how to travel safely. Pupils experience real world environments through assisted technology in the 'discovery room.' These all help to empower pupils to feel more confident to face life beyond Ravenswood.

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

This is an inclusive school that has high aspirations for all pupils. Leaders have set about creating an ambitious curriculum. It precisely pinpoints the building blocks of learning, the order to be taught and when learning should be revisited. Quite rightly, leaders have focussed on getting the core areas of the curriculum where they want them to be. Detailed, yet manageable assessment systems reveal how successfully pupils learn the intended curriculum.

In the core subjects such as reading and mathematics, staff implement the curriculum well. In these subjects, teachers and teaching assistants know exactly what to teach and in what order. They use resources well to support learning.

Leaders have an accurate and honest evaluation of strengths and areas to improve next. They carefully navigate school improvement to make sure that change is managed well. Through their thorough evaluation, senior leaders are aware that the school now needs to embed a high-quality curriculum in all subjects.

Leaders prioritise phonics teaching from the early years class through to post-16. Pupils learn to decode and those who struggle have the help they need to catch up. Creative solutions such as 'sports phonics' sessions help older pupils who have become disengaged with learning to read.

Carefully chosen texts support the curriculum. Reading books match pupils' phonic understanding. This supports them to gain confidence and fluency in reading. Leaders ensure that professional development supports staff well in the core subjects so that they have the knowledge they need to adapt learning to meet the needs of each pupil.

The school benefits from strong governance. Governors set high expectations and have a strong vision for the future of Ravenswood. They know the school very well through their visits, discussions and challenge.

Staff are happy working here and are proud of their school. They appreciate how well leaders manage workload and how they value staff. Leaders support new teachers well.

Pupils enjoy school and are proud to be part of it. School ambassadors play their part in keeping everyone safe and happy. They help to interview prospective staff and they show visitors round. Pupils move around the school calmly and try hard in lessons. Leaders ensure that precise approaches to help each pupil to learn to manage their behaviour are understood and used by staff. Routines and expectations are firmly embedded. Staff vary their forms of communication to ensure that everyone is heard, understood and valued. The strong relationships between staff and pupils contribute to Ravenswood being a safe and secure place to learn. Consequently, pupils thrive.

Pupils in the post-16 classes benefit from structured career advice alongside a transition curriculum involving local colleges. This helps pupils and their families to plan for the future. Consequently, when leaving Ravenswood, pupils successfully move on to further education, training or employment.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff are well-informed about latest safeguarding guidance. They also ensure that everyone in the community stays alert and holds fast to the view that 'it could happen here.'

Governors complete safeguarding training and understand their roles in checking safeguarding processes at the school. Recruitment procedures are secure.

The school's curriculum ensures that pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe. Pupils say that they feel safe in all areas of the school. They report that they have 'numerous lessons on how to stay safe online.'

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In foundation subjects, some staff do not have the specific knowledge they need to adapt learning successfully for some pupils. As a result, some pupils do not gain new knowledge as well as they could. Leaders need to ensure that staff have the guidance they need to implement the curriculum well in all subjects.

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 January 2014.

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	109407
Local authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	10256800
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	137
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	31
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Toby Willis
Headteacher	Mark Senior
Website	www.ravenswoodschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Ravenswood School caters for pupils with complex learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties and for pupils with autism. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school uses two unregistered alternative providers.

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 met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and curriculum leaders. They also met with members of staff. Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils, with an adult present.
- The lead inspector met with the deputy chair of the governing body and had a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority.
- The responses to Ofsted’s online survey and staff survey were considered.
- To inspect safeguarding, an inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader and talked to staff and pupils about safeguarding. The arrangements for recruiting staff were scrutinised along with a range of safeguarding school documents.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, computing and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with curriculum leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work.

Inspection team

Tonwen Empson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Gill Hickling

Ofsted Inspector

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