

Inspection of a good school: Ridgewood Community High School

Eastern Avenue, Burnley, Lancashire BB10 2AT

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 November 2023

Outcome

Ridgewood Community High School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, enjoy school. They look after each other at playtimes and help each other to learn during lessons. Pupils benefit from the strong and positive relationships that they have with staff in school. They know that they can trust the adults around them to keep them safe. Staff support pupils to reach their future goals.

Staff have high expectations for pupils' achievement. A key ambition is to support all pupils to become independent. For example, students in the sixth form have ample opportunities to practise ordering a drink in the local café. They also pay for items in shops and use the local library regularly. All pupils learn how to follow a recipe and prepare food in the kitchen. Pupils enjoy challenges through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. They also take part in work experience in school and through external work placements. Pupils are supported to achieve well in this school.

Pupils behave well in school. Sometimes, there are friendship issues and pupils fall out. When this happens, staff help pupils to understand how to be a good friend and to repair their friendships.

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

The school's curriculum is ambitious for all pupils, including those in the sixth form. The long-term aim is to ensure pupils are ready for the next stage in education, training, work and adulthood. Pupils experience a broad curriculum that includes the full range of national curriculum subjects. In most subjects, the school has considered the knowledge and skills that it wants pupils to learn in each year group. However, a small number of subjects are in the early stages of development. In these subjects, it is not clear to teachers what pupils need to learn and when this subject content should be taught. This means that some pupils do not learn as well as they could in these subjects.

Communication is the foundation of the curriculum. Non-verbal pupils use a range of resources and adaptive technology. This ensures that they have a voice and equal access to all curriculum activities. Resources are chosen to help some pupils learn through their senses. Teachers choose activities that will gain the attention of pupils and help them to practise and apply their knowledge. Teachers give pupils time to work together to discuss the task and exchange ideas. By meeting pupils' needs in these ways, staff ensure that all pupils can engage positively in their learning.

Teachers use assessment information well to shape future teaching. This approach has been well thought through and considers the wide range of pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff use the education, health and care (EHC) plan alongside the curriculum to check pupils' understanding and ensure that they move forward in their learning.

A sharp focus on reading has injected a love of reading in school. The school has invested in a range of books that are accessible for all pupils. A new phonics programme and reading scheme helps pupils at the early stages of reading to learn the letters and sounds they need to read unfamiliar words. Focused training has given staff the knowledge that they need to support pupils to read with confidence. Consequently, pupils become fluent readers.

Attendance is a high priority for the school. The school works in partnership with parents and carers to overcome any barriers to attendance. For example, staff are adept at meeting pupils' health and care needs. This helps all pupils to feel comfortable, welcome and settled in school. Over time, this supportive partnership has helped to secure improvements in pupils' attendance.

The positive behaviour policy, alongside extensive staff training, has resulted in a sharp improvement in pupils' conduct and behaviour. Staff know pupils extremely well and they are quick to notice if a pupil is becoming unsettled or anxious. Staff also know how to support each pupil to allow them to settle back into learning.

There is an extensive and enhanced offer in place to support the personal development of pupils and students in the sixth form. For example, pupils can access summer school, holiday clubs and a range of clubs in school. Water sports, residential trips, visits to the theatre, music lessons and a school choir are just a few of the many opportunities that pupils enjoy.

Pupils show respect to others. They accept each other's unique differences. They understand and know how to keep themselves safe in the community and online. The school celebrates cultural and religious ceremonies. Pupils learn about food, music and traditions from other cultures. They enjoy cooking and eating together.

The work to strengthen the curriculum has had a positive impact on the workload of teachers. They have the information and resources that they need in most subjects to design effective learning opportunities.

Governors support the school well. They are passionate and determined to give the pupils in school the best possible education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the curriculum has not been carefully thought through. This means that teachers do not have the information that they need to help pupils learn all that they should. Consequently, this hinders pupils' achievement in these subjects. The school should ensure that all subjects are well designed, so that pupils can acquire the knowledge that they need.

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/outstanding. 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 February 2013.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and](#)

[protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	135013
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10268715
Type of school	Secondary special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	186
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	39
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Preston
Headteacher	Ian Carden
Website	www.ridgewood.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- A sixth-form base has recently opened in the campus of a local university.
- All pupils have an EHC plan. The school caters for pupils with specific learning difficulty, visual impairment, hearing impairment, speech, language and communication, autistic spectrum disorder, multisensory impairment, physical disability, moderate learning difficulty, severe learning difficulty and profound and multiple learning difficulty.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders. An inspector also spoke with the school improvement partner and a representative from the local authority.
- An inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: communication, English and early reading, physical education and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents expressed through Ofsted Parent View including the free-text responses. They also considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to the pupil survey to consider.

Inspection team

Julie Bather, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Stuart Perkins

His Majesty's Inspector

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