

# Inspection of Ridgeway High School

Noctorum Avenue, Noctorum, Prenton, Merseyside CH43 9EB

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Inspection dates: 30 and 31 January 2024

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Requires improvement

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

The school has a strong sense of community which helps pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to feel happy and safe. Pupils respect the differences between people, and they are proud to be part of a diverse school community.

The school has high aspirations for all pupils. It expects pupils to flourish both academically and socially. Typically, pupils strive to meet these high expectations. They behave well and they try hard in lessons.

Pupils benefit from a suitably ambitious curriculum. In the main, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education or training. The school is aspirational for pupils' futures. Pupils are encouraged to think carefully about their next steps. For example, pupils are keen to take part in careers fairs and to visit local employers.

The school provides a range of opportunities to enhance pupils' learning of the curriculum. For instance, pupils told inspectors that they enjoy a variety of outings, such as visits to theatres and museums.

The Ridgeway Charter programme encourages pupils to engage in all areas of school life. As part of the programme, pupils are encouraged to attend a range of extra-curricular activities, such as cooking and gaming clubs.

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

The school has ensured that the curriculum is designed well. To this end, the curriculums in most subjects are carefully structured. In these subjects, the school has thought about the precise knowledge and skills that they want pupils to acquire. This is helping current pupils to learn increasingly well. However, the knowledge and skills that these pupils are acquiring are not fully reflected in the most recent external examination results. This is because weaknesses in the design of the previous curriculum affected pupils' achievement across a range of subjects.

In a few subjects, however, the school is still identifying exactly what pupils need to learn and in which order this needs to happen. From time to time, this hampers teachers from designing appropriate learning that builds on what pupils know already.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. For the most part, they routinely check how well pupils have understood earlier content, and they regularly support pupils to revisit prior learning. In those subjects where the curriculums are further developed, teachers use carefully designed assessment opportunities to evaluate accurately what pupils know and can remember. Nevertheless, in those subjects where the curriculums are less well developed, teachers are not equipped to identify

and address pupils' misconceptions quickly enough. This hinders how well some pupils learn.

Pupils with SEND learn the same curriculum as their peers. The additional needs of these pupils are identified swiftly and accurately. The school ensures that staff have the information that they need to be able to understand the individual needs of pupils well. Pupils with SEND benefit fully from all that the school has to offer.

The school prioritises reading. It has accurately identified the reading ability of all pupils. The school has developed a cohesive, structured programme which ensures that pupils who are struggling to read receive timely and appropriate support. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about this programme, which gives them the opportunity to try books of different genres and supports them to develop a love of reading.

Most pupils behave well in classrooms and around the school. They display positive attitudes to their education, and it is rare for learning to be disrupted. Teachers apply the school's behaviour policy consistently well. The school takes swift and appropriate action when more serious behaviour incidents occur. For example, the school uses a range of methods to support those pupils who need additional help to manage their behaviour, including mentoring, counselling and support from external agencies.

The school has prioritised pupils' wider development. Pupils' learning in personal, social, health and economic education ensures that they understand the importance of healthy relationships and healthy lifestyles. Pupils learn about different cultures and religions. This helps to prepare them successfully for life in modern Britain.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They are extremely supportive of school leaders. Staff told inspectors that their workload and well-being are well considered by leaders when making any changes to policy and practice. The school provides regular and relevant training for staff to enable them to carry out their roles effectively.

Governors have a strong dedication to the school. They, together with school leaders, have a shared vision for continuing to develop the high quality of education that pupils receive. Governors, and leaders at all levels, have an accurate understanding of the school's priorities.

## **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 very small number of subjects, the school is still refining its curriculum design. Occasionally, this hinders teachers from designing learning that supports

pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding. The school should ensure that these subject curriculums set out the most important things that pupils need to know and remember. This is so that pupils can build successfully on what they know already.

- In a few subjects, where refinements to the curriculum have been more recent, some teachers do not use assessment information as effectively they could to address pupils' misconceptions quickly. On occasion, some pupils move onto new learning before their knowledge is as secure as it should be. The school should ensure that, in these subjects, teachers are suitably equipped to remedy any gaps in pupils' learning before introducing new concepts

## 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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 105097   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Wirral   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10290837   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Secondary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Foundation   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 11 to 16   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 903  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | John Weise   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Gavin Sterry   |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.ridgeway.wirral.sch.uk">www.ridgeway.wirral.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 4 May 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005                      |

## Information about this school

- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school uses four registered and two unregistered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors discussed the ongoing impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, staff, pupils and representatives of the governing body. An inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.

- An inspector held a telephone discussion with a member of staff at six alternative providers.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history, modern foreign languages, and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 spoke to staff, including early career teachers, about pupils' behaviour and their workload in school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey. They took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils shared through Ofsted's survey for pupils and through discussions held with pupils throughout the school.

### **Inspection team**

|                                  |                         |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Rebecca Sharples, lead inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Scott Maclean                    | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Mark Cocker                      | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Katy Robinson                    | Ofsted Inspector        |

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