

Inspection of The Ridge Academy

Clyde Crescent, Whaddon, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL52 5QH

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 May 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

The principal of this school is Liz Oakey. This school is part of Academies Enterprise Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Rebecca Boomer-Clark, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Hall.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are polite, keen to learn and proud of their school. They listen carefully to each other and respond appropriately to adults and each other. When pupils join this school, they learn respect for themselves and others.

Pupils who attend this school have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Most pupils have missed significant parts of their education before they enter The Ridge. The personal development of pupils is fundamental to the school's work.

Classroom charters help pupils understand the school's routines and behaviour expectations. Staff know the pupils well. They use this knowledge to raise pupils' self-esteem and ensure they are ready to learn. The school's curriculum and carefully chosen reading books inspire pupils to learn. Pupils enjoy sharing their academic success with their parents and carers at special events.

Pupils say that everyone is treated fairly at the school. Real-life examples help pupils to secure their knowledge of how to be responsible and active citizens. For example, pupils raise money for charities, represent the school's football team and care for the school's animals. All pupils have a trusted adult they can talk to in school. Pupils are confident that staff will help them. They feel safe.

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

School and trust leaders have an accurate knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. All at the school have high ambition and expectations for pupils' academic success and personal development. Systems and processes, such as the interim standards board are in place to continue improving the school.

The provision for pupils with SEND is seen as everyone's responsibility. Parent and pupil voice is carefully considered when designing pupils' learning and next steps. Teachers are supported to devise precise targets for pupils to work towards. Effective training has rapidly increased staff knowledge of pupils' needs. The school's approach to supporting pupils with SEND and its accurate use of assessment information ensures staff know how to meet pupils' needs successfully.

The school's curriculum design identifies the important knowledge, skills and vocabulary pupils need to know and remember. Teachers use the curriculum to ensure essential knowledge is presented and taught effectively. Learning activities and resources are adapted appropriately to ensure pupils learn age-appropriate curriculum content. Gaps in knowledge are quickly identified by staff. Pupils can talk confidently about their prior learning.

The school prioritise pupils learning to read well. Staff ensure pupils secure their phonic knowledge. Regular practice helps pupils remember the letter sounds well.

This builds their confidence and interest in reading. There is a well-stocked library and class books are shared frequently to nurture pupils' love of reading.

The essential knowledge identified in the curriculum design is taught well in most subjects. Pupils make connections between important concepts. For example, in mathematics, pupils apply their knowledge of different calculations to solve problems. Wider curriculum books show pupils' writing is supported well with scaffolding and appropriately adapted learning activities. Pupils' books show they are developing their subject knowledge and vocabulary. However, in some subjects the curriculum's essential knowledge is not as well implemented. Pupils do not make connections between important concepts. Their recall and use of wider curriculum subject knowledge is not as secure.

Some pupils currently attend alternative provision. The responsibility for pupils' education remains firmly in the hands of the school. This ensures the quality of provision and accurate identification of pupils' next steps. Pupils remain part of the school community. There is an expectation for pupils to return to school full-time as soon as possible. This demonstrates the school's ambition for pupils and its knowledge of how to meet pupils' needs.

Most pupils attend school regularly. Effective communication and positive working relationships with parents help remove barriers that prevent pupils from attending school. Leaders are quick to secure additional support for pupils when needed.

Behaviour development training for staff has created a shared language and expectation to support pupils' positive behaviour. As a result, the number of behaviour incidents has reduced significantly. Pupils are effectively helped to recognise and manage their behaviour.

In addition to the school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum, there is a curriculum to promote pupils' mental health. Pupils learn how to become resilient and independent learners. They know about fundamental British values and choosing right from wrong. Pupils know how to avoid and resolve conflicts. Pupils learn how to build positive relationships and value the diversity and differences of others. As they develop their discussion and debating skills, pupils understand that people may hold opinions different from their own. Pupils move to their new class or secondary school with confidence.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some wider curriculum subjects, pupils do not have a secure knowledge of important curriculum concepts. Consequently, pupils cannot make connections

between the curriculum's important concepts to build on prior learning. The trust needs to ensure pupils secure their curriculum content knowledge to recall and connect important 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

Unique reference number	138430
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10322259
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	62
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Hall
CEO of trust	Rebecca Boomer-Clark
Principal	Liz Oakey
Website	www.theridgeacademy.org
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 June 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The Ridge Academy is part of the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET).
- Gloucestershire County is the commissioning local authority for the school.
- Pupils who attend the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) such as Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision and two unregistered provisions.

Information about this inspection

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

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

- The inspectors met with the principal, senior leaders, staff, pupils, the regional director of education (primary) and trustees, including the chair of the interim standards board and the director of education.
- The lead inspector spoke with representatives from two of the alternative provisions used by the school.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a known adult.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors also discussed the school's curriculum and provision and sampled pupils' science, geography, history, art and design and English writing books with leaders.
- The inspectors observed pupils during social times and spoke with pupils and leaders about opportunities for pupils' personal development.
- 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.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. She also took into consideration the responses to the survey for staff.

Inspection team

Marie Thomas, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jo Stoling

Ofsted Inspector

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