

# Inspection of a good school: Ruskin Community High School

Ruskin Road, Crewe, Cheshire CW2 7JT

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Inspection dates:

18 and 19 June 2024

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are polite and courteous. They behave well. Most enjoy attending school and value the warm and respectful relationships that they develop with staff and their peers. Pupils learn about the religious, social and cultural differences found within the local community. They recognise the importance of everyone playing their part in making the school a welcoming environment for all.

The school has increasingly high expectations for pupils' learning. Many pupils work hard to live up to this high standard and achieve well. They enjoy their learning and want to succeed. Nevertheless, poor attendance impedes the progress and attainment of some pupils. This is particularly the case for some disadvantaged pupils.

Pupils benefit from the school's determination to expand their horizons, such as through an array of trips and visits. This includes visits to an assortment of colleges and universities, which allow them to explore different options for their futures. A wide range of clubs and activities gives pupils the opportunity to develop their talents, including in sports and the performing arts. The school ensures that every pupil, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), has the opportunity to benefit from these rich experiences.

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

The school has recently redeveloped the curriculum to ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND, benefit from a suitably broad and ambitious programme of learning. It has determined what pupils should learn for each subject and broken this down into small steps of knowledge. This enables teachers to design learning that builds on what pupils

already know. However, older pupils have not had the full benefit of this curriculum over time. Despite recent improvements, some pupils retain gaps in their knowledge. This hinders their achievement.

Typically, teachers have strong subject knowledge. They value the training that the school provides, particularly the coaching approach, which allows them to share expertise with their colleagues. Most teachers deliver the curriculum well, using suitable approaches that develop pupils' understanding. They make sensitive adaptations to learning activities that allow pupils with SEND to learn successfully.

The school has recently adapted its approach to checking on pupils' learning. Staff value the positive impact that this has had in reducing their workload. However, the checks that some teachers make on pupils' learning during lessons are not effective enough. This means that sometimes they do not identify or address misconceptions which hinder pupils' understanding of curriculum content.

The school has established effective processes to identify pupils with SEND. Staff assess the needs of these pupils well. Staff provide the help that these pupils need to follow the same curriculum as their peers.

The school has recently strengthened its approach to identifying and supporting pupils who have gaps in their reading knowledge. Staff provide suitable help to improve pupils' reading proficiency. The school has also begun work on raising the profile of reading in the school, which is starting to increase the proportion of pupils who choose to read widely and frequently.

The school has increased its focus on pupils' attendance. In many cases, attendance has improved. However, for some pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, this is not the case. Their levels of absence remain high. They miss out on valuable learning and the wider opportunities that the school offers. As a result, some pupils do not make the progress that they should through the curriculum.

In the main, pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. The 'chance, choice, consequence' system enables staff to deal quickly with any behaviour that does not meet the high standard that the school expects.

The school has carefully considered the provision for pupils' wider development. Pupils learn about the fundamental British values, such as democracy and the rule of law, which underpin society. The school ensures that pupils receive suitable careers information. Pupils develop their understanding of academic and vocational options, including apprenticeships. This enables them to make informed decisions about their next steps.

The school and the governors share a commitment to raising the aspirations of pupils at the school. Governors know the school well and provide suitable support. Nonetheless, on occasion, their oversight of some aspects of the school's provision is not sufficiently rigorous. From time to time, this hampers the school from identifying and addressing areas of weaker practice as rapidly as it should.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

#### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not check with sufficient precision that pupils have learned all that they should. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their learning that persist over time. The school should provide suitable training for teachers so that they use formative assessment strategies effectively, to identify and address gaps in pupils' learning.
- Some pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged and those with SEND, have persistently high levels of absence. These pupils miss out on learning and the wider opportunities that the school provides. The school should ensure that it acts swiftly to identify and overcome any issues that prevent these pupils from attending regularly.
- At times, the school's evaluation of some aspects of its work is not as effective as it should be. Consequently, the school does not identify and address weaknesses in some of its processes as swiftly as it should. The school, and members of the governing body, should strengthen their evaluation systems so that any weaknesses are identified and addressed quickly.

## 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 June 2015.

### 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 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	111417
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire East
<b>Inspection number</b>	10348075
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	732
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	John Rhodes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dean Postlethwaite
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ruskinhighschool.co.uk">www.ruskinhighschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, there have been changes to the school's leadership team, including the appointment of a new headteacher.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 11 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## 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 of the school.
- Inspectors met with leaders, including the headteacher, and a range of staff. The lead inspector spoke with representatives of the local governing body, including the chair of governors.

- The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including leaders' self-evaluation documents, improvement plans and minutes of meetings of the local governing body. They also reviewed records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- 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 spoke with pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at social times.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in art and design, English and science. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work and spoke with teachers and with pupils.
- Inspectors visited lessons and reviewed pupils' work in a small number of other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Charlotte Oles, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Phil Lloyd

Ofsted Inspector

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