



The Ridgeway Community School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125471
Local Authority Surrey
Inspection number 293271
Inspection date 4 December 2006
Reporting inspector Mike Smith

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special	School address	14 Frensham Road
School category	Community special		Farnham
Age range of pupils	2-19		GU9 8HB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01252 724562
Number on roll (school)	104	Fax number	01252 737247
Number on roll (6th form)	20	Chair	Mr Les Collyer
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Headteacher	Mr Darryl Morgan
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The Ridgeway School is located in Farnham and takes pupils from a wide area that includes a number of residential care homes catering for inner London boroughs. On entry all pupils are working well below the national expected levels. All pupils have statements of special educational needs or are awaiting assessment for their severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties and/or complex learning difficulties, including those pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage and other pupils represent a range of ethnic backgrounds. One pupil is at an early stage of English acquisition and there are twice as many boys as girls. The school operates from three sites that include a purpose built nursery based on a primary school campus and accommodation at Farnham College for the more able post-16 students. The school is involved in a range of community partnerships including work with parents and in the planning of work related learning. The school has awards for Investors in People, Art Mark, Healthy Schools and Parent Partnership.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding qualities. The headteacher has a clear vision for improving the school and sets high standards for himself and others. Pupil achievement is at the heart of all decision making. With the motivated senior leadership team, hard-working staff and well-informed governors, the headteacher strives to improve the provision and learning opportunities for all pupils. A parent, reflecting the views of many, wrote, 'The school is fantastic. It encourages friendships, opportunities and expects children to achieve, so they do'. The good self-evaluation strategies that are in place enable the school to know itself well, and have a clear understanding of what needs to be improved and how to achieve it.

Pupils' standards are well below the national average. Given their starting points, and the barriers to their learning, the achievement and progress of children from the Foundation Stage right through to students in the post-16 provision are good. Pupils make particularly good progress in their language and communication skills. The school enables this good progress, and pupils' outstanding progress in their personal development, through the excellent relationships, good teaching, therapy support and the excellent care, support and guidance they receive for their individual needs. By emphasising the importance of making their own choices the school helps pupils to become confident in their learning. Pupils are given challenging personal targets which most successfully achieve. Lesson monitoring has identified the need to improve the consistency of recording practices, to enable more accurate tracking and analysis of progress as pupils move through the school. In addition, the school is aware of the need to further analyse pupil data to identify any underachievement and then to implement appropriate improvement strategies.

The curriculum offers a wide, interesting and relevant range of learning activities that meet the needs of all groups of pupils. There is a good emphasis on the development of personal, social, health and citizenship education. Visits into the community and visiting specialists effectively support pupils' learning. There is a strong emphasis on inclusion between the different groups of pupils within the school and opportunities to work alongside mainstream peers are sought whenever it is seen to meet the needs of individual learners. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils are encouraged to have positive attitudes towards others and their behaviour is excellent. Pupils demonstrate great enjoyment for their learning experiences which contributes towards the very positive learning environment created in the school. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. One wrote, 'The school has turned my son around. His confidence has grown and he is pushed to try new things which he succeeds at, and which even I did not think he was capable of'. There have been good improvements since the last inspection. Governors take an active role in school monitoring, self-evaluation, and strategic management. Through clear processes of self-evaluation, leadership and management are having a positive impact on the learning provision which is leading to improved chances for pupils to achieve and make continued good progress. The capacity to improve even further is good.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Post-16 students achieve well and enjoy their learning as a result of good teaching and a relevant curriculum. The strategies for recording student progress are improving. The more able students work from a base in the local college of further education and all students are well prepared, as best as they can be, for life after school and they demonstrate increasing maturity. They make outstanding progress in their personal development, gaining confidence and self-esteem through their successes. They enjoy opportunities for work experience as well as succeeding in a variety of relevant accredited courses.

What the school should do to improve further

- Enable teachers to achieve consistency in how they record pupils' attainments, in order to facilitate the tracking of their progress.
- Ensure that pupil data is effectively analysed to identify any underachievement and for improvement strategies to be put into place.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Standards are well below average because of pupils' severe or profound learning difficulties. Despite these difficulties, their progress and achievement are good in relation to their challenging individual targets. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in their communication and personal development skills, and older students learn to be more independent and self aware. The great majority of pupils achieve well. The school works hard to ensure that no group of pupils fares less well than any other. The professional development of all staff is increasingly supporting and ensuring the needs of all pupils are equally met. In classes, pupils' progress is being thoroughly monitored and recorded, though not yet in a consistent way. The current emphasis on developing more effective systems for identifying pupils who may not be making the expected progress and then developing strategies to support their improvement is appropriate.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are excellent. Relationships between staff and pupils are outstanding. Pupils are encouraged to be aware of themselves, others, and the environment and they are well supported to become as independent as possible. There is a very positive atmosphere within the school and pupils gain immense enjoyment from their lessons and other activities. Pupils' behaviour is

exemplary. They are polite and sensible as they move around the school. Attendance is good. Pupil's achievements are celebrated and the school's brass band, for example, has played with bandmen from one of the regiments of the Queen's Guards. Older students make an excellent contribution to the community. They support elderly people living in sheltered housing by collecting shopping lists and then collecting goods from a local food store. Charities are supported and funds are raised to help less fortunate people all over the world. Pupils feel safe and understand healthy lifestyles. They acquire useful skills to help them cope with everyday living and in preparation for the next stage of their education. There are junior and senior school councils and pupils know their views are listened to. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. This provision is firmly embedded in the everyday life of the school and in the many additional opportunities that are arranged outside school. For example, a pupil on visiting a cathedral adopted an attitude of prayer and reverence, despite being from a different cultural background himself.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

From the Foundation Stage to the post-16 provision teaching and learning are good and as a result pupils make good progress. The quality of teaching and learning is systematically monitored and accurate judgements are made with support given for improvements. High expectations are made of teachers. It is recognised that across the school the monitoring, assessing and recording of pupils' learning is inconsistent and an agreed policy and improvement strategies have been put in place. Pupils are individually motivated with challenging activities and targets that are relevant to their needs. Their learning is enhanced by the excellent accommodation and resources that are well utilised by staff. There is a positive ethos of reward and celebration of individual achievement. Team work between teachers, support staff and therapists are a strength and all staff help ensure that pupils' personal development needs are fully met so they can get the best out of their learning opportunities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is good and offers a broad range of experiences that support pupils' excellent personal and good academic development. Independent learning and communication and language skills are emphasised from the Foundation Stage right through to the post-16 provision. Personal, social and health education, and citizenship make a significant contribution to pupils' growing self-confidence and maturity. Opportunities for pupils to be included in working alongside their mainstream peers are considered at every opportunity. The curriculum is further enriched with a range

of additional opportunities, including sporting activities, African dance, and involvement with local festivals. Community links are good, supporting students involved in work experience, or work shadowing opportunities. Planned visits outside school and lunchtime clubs help improve pupils' social and life skills. Older students have a variety of opportunities to work in teams and develop enterprise and financial skills. Good use is made of social and cultural events. Visits including art projects, trips to France and residential stays enhance and support learning experiences. Post-16 opportunities are good and students' needs are met by a relevant range of accredited courses and work related opportunities which help to prepare them for when they leave school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The care and support for pupils is excellent and the combination of efficient school procedures and practice keeps pupils safe and secure while helping them to acquire the skills of independence. Safeguarding pupils is at the heart of clear procedures which are understood by all staff. The excellent team work between all staff ensures that there are consistent approaches and support for all pupils. The monitoring and recording of pupils' progress is good and is improving as consistent procedures are being implemented. The personal guidance that pupils receive ensures that they make excellent progress with their personal development. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and personal dignity is respected at all times. There is effective partnership work with support agencies which ensure that the specific needs of pupils are well met. The partnership with parents is outstanding and the communication between school and home is excellent. A parent wrote, 'The school is very good. They offer a lot of help, support and advice and we can contact them at any time'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher gives excellent guidance and encouragement and senior staff have clear roles and are fully committed to fulfilling their responsibilities. Management responsibilities have been shared more widely across the school and have led to a clearer focus on school improvement. The impact of everyone's work is reflected in the excellent care and personal development of pupils and the good progress they make. Through effective monitoring and self-evaluation, areas for improvement and strategies for action are clearly identified. Learning and teaching are regularly monitored and opportunities for further professional development are good and are linked to school improvement. Teachers, therapists, and support staff work effectively as a team, their work is valued and, consequently, their morale is positive. The school works very effectively with external support agencies and consequently, the appropriate support is co-ordinated to meet

pupils' individual needs. The governors are clearly aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are fully involved in the strategic management.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming us into your school and a special thank you to the school council who met with me and told me what they liked about the school. We noticed that you really enjoy coming to school and working in your lessons and you all get on with each other so well. We agree with you and your parents: your school is a good school that supports your needs and ensures that you make good progress in your learning. The school knows what it has to do to make things even better for you and you can help by practicing your good listening and good looking. We particularly liked the fact that:

- all staff care, support and guide you exceptionally well
- your relationships with each other and all adults are excellent
- your personal development and behaviour are excellent; you think of others less fortunate than yourselves and you are friendly and polite to everyone
- you make very good progress, particularly with your communication, language and self-help skills
- there is excellent communication between the school and your home
- the school ensures that you all learn as well as you can and works extremely well with other people to ensure you receive the support you need
- your headteacher is determined to improve the school further and with all the adults in the school, is working hard to help you make even better progress in the future

There are a few things the school knows it can improve upon:

- they can ensure all teachers monitor and record your progress in a consistent way so they know how well you are doing as you get older
- also they must enable you all to receive the support you need so you can make the best progress you are capable of.

Once again, thank you for being so friendly and we wish you a very Merry Christmas.

Yours sincerely

Mike Smith Lead Inspector