

# Ridgewood School

Barnsley Road, Scawsby, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN5 7UB

**Inspection dates** 21–22 October 2015

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The school is improving quickly because the new headteacher has raised teachers' expectations of what students can and should achieve.
- Students in all year groups are learning much more quickly than they were a year ago because teaching, learning and assessment are now much better.
- The school has a very effective tracking system, which enables managers to see exactly how much progress students are making and who needs extra support.
- When students are not reaching the challenging targets that the school sets for them, teachers and their assistants provide effective extra support which enables most to catch up.
- Good arrangements for ensuring students' health, safety and welfare mean that they benefit from plenty of help when they need it.
- Students' behaviour has improved markedly. Conduct in lessons and around the school is generally good.
- The 16 to 19 study programmes are outstanding rather than good because students achieve so highly. Arrangements for their welfare and personal development are exceptional. Leadership and management of the 16 to 19 provision are outstanding.
- The headteacher, governors and managers at all levels work effectively to ensure that improving teaching enables students to make better progress than previously.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is still scope for teachers to accelerate the pace of learning in some lessons, especially in Years 7 to 9.
- The use of homework to enable students to work independently, master topics and consolidate learning is insufficiently developed.
- A small number of students do not meet the school's recent much higher expectation of good conduct.
- A relatively small minority of parents have concerns about how well the school communicates with them.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and achievement to consistently outstanding by:
  - matching the high quality of teaching frequently found in the 16 to 19 provision and in Years 10 and 11 in Years 7 to 9
  - strengthening the setting of homework to enable students to develop skills of working independently and to provide opportunities for them to master topics fully they find difficult and consolidate their learning.
  
- Eliminate the small residue of poorer behaviour by supporting actively those students who find it hard to meet the school's raised expectations of good conduct.
  
- Improve communications with parents by:
  - developing a more consistent approach to responding to parental concerns
  - ensuring that the school website is clear about who to approach for help and advice
  - creating more regular opportunities for parents to provide feedback on their views of the school.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The new headteacher and recently reconstituted senior team are passionate about securing high quality education for the students. At the outset, just over a year ago, they knew that the 2014 GCSE results had been too low and set about ensuring that far more was to be expected of students. They put in place clear plans swiftly to ensure that the quality of teaching and GCSE results improved at pace. These measures were successful because results improved in 2015 and they laid the foundations for a further rise in 2016.
- The school has effective methods for checking on how it is doing and setting ever more challenging targets for continuous improvement. Middle managers are an enthusiastic and able group who help the senior team by ensuring that intended improvements and faster student progress occur in their areas.
- Assessment of the progress of individual students and groups enables managers at all levels to track any underachievement, discover the reasons for it and intervene when necessary with extra support packages.
- The management of teaching is effective. Lesson observations by managers lead to suggestions for improving classroom practice and ensure that students are learning quickly. Performance management arrangements are robust and effective, and pay is firmly linked to responsibilities and the progress that students make. The school's less experienced teachers really value the assistance and suggestions provided by their more experienced colleagues and the help that they receive from Hungerhill School.
- Strong promotion of equal opportunities means that the school ensures that all groups of students now make good progress. The school uses its pupil premium funding well to ensure that disadvantaged students are rapidly closing the gap on other students at GCSE.
- Good provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is increasingly skilfully threaded into the wide-ranging and relevant curriculum that meets their needs well. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 builds quickly on students' skills and understanding in preparation for the run up to GCSE in Years 10 and 11. Well-structured careers education enables students to benefit from one-to-one interviews as they choose their GCSE options. This also happens when they move to the next stage of education or the world of work.
- Students have plenty of opportunity to benefit from around thirty extra-curricular activities, including music, drama and sport which help them to widen horizons and build confidence.
- Through the provision of the 'character curriculum' at the end of the school day, teachers ensure that students fully understand their future responsibilities as citizens of Britain. Teachers provide plenty of opportunity for students to discuss how and why radicalisation occurs in our society and enable them to fully understand why it is unacceptable in modern Britain.
- Questionnaires filled in at parents' evenings show that most parents are very happy about the way that the school has improved under new leadership and how it keeps their children safe. However, the on-line questionnaire indicates that there is a small but significant group of parents who are not happy about the way the school sometimes deals with their concerns.
- **The governance of the school**
  - has improved quickly as the school has improved. Governors are an effective group. They fulfil all statutory duties and several are closely involved in providing valuable support and challenge to the school's senior team. They fully understand how the school has improved and know what still needs to be done.
  - ensures that performance management arrangements are effective and that any salary progressions are fully merited. Governors understand how the school uses its pupil premium funding and know that the arrangements for spending it are having a marked effect on improving progress rates of disadvantaged students.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective because there are good systems in place, which members of staff implement correctly. If managers have any concerns about students' safety or welfare they always contact parents to discuss them so that extra support can be provided if necessary.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- There have been considerable improvements in the quality of teaching, especially in the last year, as higher expectations of what students can achieve have become part of the daily life of the school. For example, a comparison of this year's written work in Years 7 to 9 with what was produced last year

emphasises the rise in standards and improvement in layout.

- Teaching in the 16 to 19 study programmes and Years 10 and 11 is of consistently good or better quality and enables students to do well in a wide range of GCSE subjects and Level 3 courses in Years 12 and 13. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 has improved in the past year because a considerable number of high quality teaching appointments have helped to improve rates of progress to levels that are much higher than a year ago.
- A key factor in the improved quality of teaching has been effective lesson monitoring and good quality professional development for teachers so they continuously improve their classroom practice. Another has been the setting of much higher targets for students designed to raise achievement to outstanding levels.
- Teachers take time to plan carefully and have worked out how quickly students of all ability must learn if they are to reach the challenging targets that the school sets for them.
- Typically, teachers manage their classes well, make lesson objectives clear, monitor the progress and understanding of their students effectively and check their learning with good quality questioning. They explain work clearly and maintain a productive learning atmosphere where students can concentrate and contribute orally without distraction.
- Marking of students' work follows the school policy and is relatively consistent in quality. It enables students to see clearly what they have done well and explains what they have to do to make improvements. In many instances, this leads to extra tasks for students to complete in order to master fully the topics they are studying.
- Effective assessment in Key Stage 4 and the 16 to 19 study programmes enables teachers and managers to see instantly whether students are meeting their targets or slipping back. Teachers always provide additional help and guidance for any students identified at risk of falling behind.
- Teaching and assessment in Years 7 to 9 are not as strong as in other year groups. Assessment is less rigorous and sometimes less accurate. In these year groups there are more instances of incomplete work and in class there are a few occasions where students become slightly restless because they don't have enough to do.
- There is little consistency in the setting of homework to enable students to develop independent learning and research skills and to consolidate and fully master topics they have been learning about in lessons.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**is good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote students' personal development and welfare is good.
- Students become more confident and assured as they mature through the school. They feel that the teachers and their assistants know them well as individuals, and give them all the support they need to become successful learners.
- The good and developing range of extra-curricular activities enables them to develop additional skills and interests in activities such as team games, theatre, and the exceptionally well-attended Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.
- The increasingly strong focus on skills and values vital for life in modern Britain mean that students fully understand topics such as tolerance of diversity and the dangers posed by radicalisation. Students confirm that they are taught about all forms of bullying, how to report it and who to approach in times of need. They know how to stay safe from the potential perils posed by drugs, alcohol, roads, water, knife and gun crime and the internet if used unwisely.
- Effective levels of supervision when groups of students are on the move between lessons and at breaks means that they are kept safe from overcrowding in narrow areas. Most pupils say that they feel completely safe at school but there is occasionally some bullying that members of staff deal with effectively.
- A strong and effective emphasis on spiritual, moral, cultural and social development ensures that students have every opportunity to develop into mature, productive adult citizens who understand the diverse cultures that make up Britain.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- Staff and students say that behaviour has improved considerably since the new headteacher arrived and that it is now having a positive effect on the amount of progress they are making in class. The new, clear and consistently applied behaviour for learning policy is helping to produce a studious atmosphere for learning in the classroom. Students are motivated by the reward systems so increasing numbers are doing their best to cooperate fully over prolonged periods of time.
- Behaviour around the large site is generally good and students move to lunch, breaks or their next lesson in an orderly fashion. Students are proud of their appearance and show respect to visitors and to the adults who work with them. Lunchtime supervisors are quick to praise the students for their politeness when they are in the dining hall. Students who attend work experience behave in a mature fashion as they gain the skills they will need in their chosen careers. The school checks carefully to ensure that they are always safe and well supported.
- Exclusions have risen to be in line with national averages, but they have ensured that behaviour continues to improve as the school becomes ever more effective in eliminating unacceptable conduct.
- Students' attendance is broadly average and persistent absence has fallen to below average, especially for disadvantaged students and those who are disabled or have special educational needs. This reduction in absence for these groups has been a key factor underpinning the greater progress they are making.
- A small minority of students are not fully responding to the current sanctions and support systems, and there are occasions where behaviour in lessons taken by supply teachers is unacceptable.

## Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Attainment has risen substantially in the last year, particularly in Years 10 and 11. GCSE results in 2015 rose considerably compared with the previous year, and all groups of students achieved well. Unvalidated GCSE results for 2015 were above the 2014 average in English, mathematics and overall, reflecting the very good progress that students had made. Where some GCSE subject results had been below average in 2014, there were often very large rises in 2015 as more was expected from students right across the curriculum. Results in 2015 in vocational and academic courses in 16 to 19 study programmes represented at least good and frequently outstanding progress.
- Attainment is rising further now because teaching has improved again and even more is expected of students in terms of the progress they are making. The school's accurate assessment system shows that the current Year 11 cohort are on track for even better results than the school achieved in 2015. Current students in 16 to 19 study programmes continue to progress exceptionally well towards well above average outcomes.
- The 2014 GCSE results showed that disadvantaged students were around half a grade lower than other students in the school in mathematics and around a grade lower in English. In both subjects, they were around half a grade lower than other students nationally. The 2015 results showed that the gap partially closed in English but not in mathematics. However, in both subjects, this group of students made better than expected progress because their starting points in Year 7 were lower than those of other students. The school is currently using its pupil premium funding well to ensure that this group of pupils continues to close the gap on other students in terms of attainment and progress.
- All groups of students currently in school, especially lower ability, higher ability and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, are progressing well in terms of those making expected progress in most of the subjects that they study. Large numbers are doing better than that. This means that in Years 10 and 11, progress has accelerated across the entire curriculum and any previous slippage has been eliminated.
- Typically, students join Year 7 with attainment in English and mathematics that is above average. They have been progressing year-on-year towards above-average GCSE results. However, the results have not been as high as they should have been because several groups of students have not been making enough progress between Years 7 and 11. The picture is now very different as the school tracks all groups with precision to ensure that they progress well. Current standards in Years 10 and 11 are well above average and represent good achievement.
- In Key Stage 3, progress is much better than it was a year ago because teaching is more geared towards reaching higher standards than previously. A scrutiny of students' work in the current Years 7 to 9 compared with books from the year before shows far more progress and much better presentation. Nevertheless, there is still scope for greater expectations in these year groups if progress is to match that found across Years 10 and 11.

- The school ensures that the small group of students who attend work placement also progress well. Currently, they are on track for achieving creditable and in some cases good GCSE results while, at the same time, they develop the skills they need for their chosen careers.
- By the time students are ready to transfer to 16 to 19 study programmes or courses elsewhere, the school ensures that they have the qualifications and skills necessary to make a success of the next stage of their education.

## **16 to 19 study programmes**

## **are outstanding**

- The very successful 16 to 19 provision has never looked back since opening three years ago. It has fully captured the imagination of students in Years 10 and 11 who wish to study both academic and vocational courses. The relatively new 16 to 19 study programmes centre offers a superb setting for study at higher levels. Numbers of students have increased as the quality of teaching and excellent results inspire confidence in students who need to make a choice after GCSE.
- The 16 to 19 study programmes provide a wide range of subjects at AS and A-level, coupled with a good selection of vocational courses, also at Level 3. Expert tuition in mathematics and English quickly ensures that the few students without a grade C are soon successful in gaining it.
- Outstanding teaching ensures that students have every opportunity to progress well on their chosen courses. The 2014 results at AS and A-level were above average overall and reflected the very good progress that students had made. Vocational course results were way above average and represented outstanding achievement. Results in 2015 were of a similar high quality when a third of all students achieved at least one grade A or A\*.
- Tutors make every effort to ensure that all students complete their chosen courses by monitoring their progress well. The proportion of students progressing from AS in Year 12 to A-level in Year 13 is very high and far above national average figures. High quality careers advice, well organised work placements and very effective help with applications to university mean that all students are ready to move to their chosen destinations after the age of 18.
- Students all behave extremely well and cooperate fully in an exceptionally mature fashion as a very strong work ethic prevails throughout all classrooms and study areas. Outstanding leadership and management of the sixth form have ensured that the strong start three years ago has developed into a vibrant and superbly successful provision for young people aged 16 to 19.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137603
<b>Local Authority</b>	Doncaster
<b>Inspection Number</b>	10002158

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,410
<b>Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes</b>	234
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Brian Stones
<b>Headteacher</b>	Maggie Dunn
<b>Telephone number</b>	01302 783939
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ridgewoodschool.co.uk">www.ridgewoodschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@ridgewood.doncaster.sch.uk">admin@ridgewood.doncaster.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	25 September 2013

## Information about this school

- Ridgewood School is much larger than the average-sized secondary school and has a large 16 to 19 study programme.
- The current headteacher has been in post for just over a year.
- Most students are White British.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students, those supported through pupil premium, is below the national average. The pupil premium funding is additional funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- A small number of students in Years 10 and 11 attend work experience in the National Health Service, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council and Stoneacre Garages one day a week.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupil's performance at GCSE.
- The school has had regular support from Hungerhill School, Doncaster, over the last year.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 40 lessons, including seven jointly with the senior management team, and looked at a wide range of written work, especially in Years 9 and 11.
- They held meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle managers, the special needs coordinator, the leader of the 16 to 19 provision, groups of students and representatives of the governing body.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including the school's review of its performance, development planning, governors' minutes, records of students' progress, safeguarding procedures and incident logs.
- They took account of several parental surveys carried out by the school and 126 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also took account of 85 questionnaire responses from members of staff.

## Inspection team

John Paddick, Lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Fiona Dixon	Ofsted Inspector
Graham Crerar	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Lanovy-Taylor	Ofsted Inspector
Janice Gorlach	Ofsted Inspector



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