

Inspection of Rugby Free Secondary School

Anderson Avenue, Rugby, Warwickshire CV22 5PE

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 July 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Inadequate
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What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have created an encouraging and inclusive environment. Pupils benefit from a school community that includes pupils from a wide range of different backgrounds and cultures. Leaders have fostered a culture in which pupils see these differences as a positive thing. Uniqueness is valued and celebrated. Pupils feel confident 'to be themselves' at Rugby Free Secondary School.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils. In most subjects, teachers expect pupils to produce their best work. Pupils embody the school values of kindness and respect in their daily interactions with staff and each other. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong.

Pupils behave well in the vast majority of lessons and at other times of the day. Very little learning time is lost. Bullying does happen, but it is rare. When it happens, leaders deal with it quickly and effectively. Pupils feel safe. They have confidence in their teachers to look after them well.

As part of the school's 'set for life' curriculum, the school actively teaches pupils about the skills they need to succeed in modern Britain. Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and interests. Most pupils make good use of these. The opportunities include an equalities club, a debating society and a gardening group.

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

All pupils learn a broad and ambitious curriculum. Curriculum leaders ensure that pupils learn content in a logical order. This is developing pupils' confidence and knowledge in a variety of subjects over time. For example, in mathematics, pupils become secure in calculating the area of two-dimensional shapes before learning how to work out the volume of three-dimensional shapes.

Leaders have introduced clear routines for the start of lessons. As part of these routines, pupils answer questions about work they have done in the past. Curriculum leaders choose these questions carefully. They design questions that focus on the important knowledge pupils need to know. Pupils told inspectors that answering these questions helps to 'jog their memories' and they remember things they have learned before.

Teachers know that some pupils need extra help to learn the curriculum. All pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have an individual plan. This plan explains how adults can best support them. Teachers use this information well in lessons. This means that most pupils get the support they need. In addition to this, leaders have ensured that teachers create teaching resources that allow all pupils to access the learning.

In some subjects, teachers do not check pupils' understanding systematically. This means that teachers do not consistently know when pupils are stuck or have misunderstood something. As a result, not all pupils get the help they need quickly enough. This slows their learning.

Teachers promote reading well. For example, inspectors observed pupils passionately discussing and debating which books they would like added to the school library. When pupils join the school, leaders make appropriate checks on pupils' starting points in reading. Leaders use the information from these checks to identify pupils who have specific reading difficulties or who are at the early stages of reading. They ensure that these pupils get the help they need from skilled adults. This supports these pupils to become more confident and fluent readers.

The school's behaviour policy is simple and clear. It is well understood by pupils and consistently applied by staff. Pupils appreciate this. Pupils' behaviour around school is respectful and calm. They are rarely late to classes or school.

The headteacher is determined that all pupils be well prepared for life in modern Britain. Tolerance for others is consistently promoted by staff and through the school's curriculum, assemblies and wider opportunities. Consequently, pupils are highly respectful of people's differences. They are knowledgeable about the protected characteristics and talk confidently and maturely about them.

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, want 'the very best' for pupils. They regularly gather the views of pupils, parents and carers, and staff. As a result, they know what the school does well and how it can improve further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff take pupils' welfare seriously. They are alert to any signs that a pupil may need support and they report concerns quickly. Leaders take action to ensure that pupils who need help get the support they need. Safeguarding records are thorough and well organised.

As part of the school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. Leaders make sure that this curriculum teaches pupils about risks they may face in the local area. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online. They know what to do if something is worrying them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not check pupils' understanding within lessons well enough. This means that teachers do not know which pupils need extra help, so

pupils do not get timely support. Leaders should ensure that teachers know how to check learning systematically in their subjects, so that teachers are able to give pupils the help they need quickly.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	142881
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10184721
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	853
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Johnson
Headteacher	Samirah Roberts
Website	www.rugbyfreesecondary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 and 15 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school opened in September 2016. It is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average. The proportions of pupils with SEND and those who speak English as an additional language are above average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is above average.
- The school is registered for pupils in Years 7 to 13. Currently, there are five year groups in the school, Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11. The school plans to open a sixth form in September 2021.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provision provider.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and senior leaders. They talked to a wide range of staff. The lead inspector met with representatives of those responsible for governance, including the chair of the school improvement board. The lead inspector also met with the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents. These included: school policies, safeguarding records, curriculum documents, information about pupils' attendance and behaviour, the single central record and information about leaders' evaluation of the quality of education.
- Inspectors focused on the following subjects during the inspection: English, mathematics, science and history. As part of this focus, they met with curriculum leaders and class teachers, and talked to pupils. Inspectors visited lessons accompanied by leaders. They also looked at pupils' work.
- As part of inspecting safeguarding, inspectors held discussion with staff, leaders and those responsible for governance. They also observed at informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding arrangements and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors considered 273 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. This included 152 free-text comments.

Inspection team

Christopher Stevens, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Gwen Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
David Hermitt	Ofsted Inspector
Graeme Rudland	Ofsted Inspector

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