

# Inspection of The Ripley Academy

Peasehill, Ripley, Derbyshire DE5 3JQ

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Inspection dates: 4–5 February 2020

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Inadequate

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are proud to come to this school. They feel valued and cared for. The school is inclusive and welcoming. Pupils enjoy positive relationships with each other, and with staff. Pupils enjoy the wide range of experiences on offer. They attend well.

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils' behaviour and achievement. They have instilled a sense of self-belief in pupils. Pupils are confident and develop high aspirations. They know their teachers want them to do well and they appreciate the help they get to be successful. Pupils experience a broad curriculum that meets their interests and needs. This helps them to achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well in lessons and through additional activities. Some pupils attend an informal sports club at lunchtimes. During the inspection, pupils excitedly spoke about playing badminton and beating their 'rally record'.

Pupils do not think that bullying is a problem in their school. They know that any problems will be sorted out quickly and effectively. Pupils feel safe in school. The atmosphere in school is happy and harmonious.

Pupils recognise that their school has improved considerably. They are keen to contribute to its continued improvement.

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

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is ambitious for all pupils, including those students in the sixth form. Pupils study a wide range of subjects in appropriate depth. The curriculum provides opportunities to develop pupils' cultural capital, for example by exposing them to an extensive range of literature in English. The number of pupils who study modern foreign languages is increasing.

Leaders have focused on extending pupils' reading, and developing their communication skills and vocabulary. Pupils are articulate and speak with confidence. Their written work does not always match the quality of their verbal responses, but this is developing.

The curriculum is well planned and sequenced in all subject areas. This ensures that pupils build on their knowledge and deepen their understanding. The school's 'connect, activate, demonstrate and consolidate' framework provides opportunities for pupils to revisit their learning. This helps knowledge to 'stick' so that pupils know more and remember more over time.

In some subjects, some teachers do not deliver the curriculum as well as others. They do not always ensure that work is sufficiently demanding or that all pupils understand before they move on. Many teachers provide pupils with clear feedback. However, this is not the case for some.

Many subject areas provide enriching experiences that bring the subject to life for pupils. For example, at the time of the inspection, some pupils were due to visit Barcelona. Pupils in Year 8 have visited jewellery-making workshops as part of their design and technology study.

Staff have high expectations of pupils with SEND. Those who need it receive additional support. Pupils with SEND achieve well.

The quality of pupils' work across the curriculum is generally good. Pupils achieve well in most subjects, particularly in science and languages. In all subjects, pupils' achievement is improving.

Leaders have created a positive learning environment. Pupils and staff have mutual respect. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. Most pupils are motivated. They concentrate well and are keen to participate. This helps them to deepen their understanding, and to progress well through the curriculum.

The curriculum in the sixth form enables students to study an appropriate range of courses. For example, they can mix A-level and BTEC qualifications. Those who need to re-sit their English and mathematics GCSEs are supported to do so well. All students participate in work experience. Staff help students to find placements that are relevant to their interests and future plans. Students receive advice and guidance about their next steps. Those who wish to go to university are supported well in their choices and applications. However, some students would like more information about alternatives to studying at university.

The school promotes pupils' personal development well. The curriculum ensures that pupils learn about diversity, such as different faiths and beliefs, and different lifestyles. Pupils recognise that such differences are to be valued. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils are enthusiastic about extra-curricular activities. They appreciate the opportunity to play non-competitive sport and take music lessons.

Leaders consider staff's well-being and workload. Staff feel well supported and enjoy working at the school.

The trust has provided effective support to senior and subject leaders. The leadership team has brought about much-needed improvements to all aspects of the school. Leaders are determined to continue to improve the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a culture of vigilance where all staff understand their responsibilities. Staff are well trained and knowledgeable about safeguarding matters. The designated safeguarding leader is supported well by a team of pastoral

and support staff. The most vulnerable pupils receive additional support, for example from the school's family support worker.

Leaders involve external agencies when necessary. They are quick to refer concerns so pupils get the help they need quickly. Leaders maintain high-quality records. These help leaders to monitor and support vulnerable pupils effectively.

The curriculum teaches pupils to keep themselves safe in different situations.

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

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

- The curriculum is ambitious. However, sometimes, some teachers do not provide pupils with work that is suitably demanding. Leaders should ensure that work matches the aims of the curriculum and meets pupils' needs so that pupils are appropriately challenged and supported.
- Most teachers check pupils' understanding and many correct misconceptions. Not all teachers provide clear, direct feedback. Leaders should develop strategies to ensure that all staff consistently provide pupils with clear feedback to deepen their understanding and improve their achievement. Leaders should ensure that they continue to consider staff workload in the development of such strategies.
- Leaders have given high priority to developing pupils' vocabulary and oracy. This has been successful. However, pupils do not consistently extend these skills to their written work. Leaders should develop strategies to improve the quality of pupils' writing across the curriculum.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	141259
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10110025
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	679
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	80
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Andrew Hindmarsh
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lisa Walton (Executive Headteacher)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://ripleyacademy.org">http://ripleyacademy.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	23–24 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school uses two alternative providers. These are the Blend Youth Project and the Genesis Academy.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

- We met with the headteacher and other senior leaders, including those from the trust. The lead inspector met with the chair and a member of the local governing body.

- We undertook deep dives in English, science, mathematics, computing and design technology. These deep dives consisted of meeting with curriculum leaders, visiting lessons, examining pupils' work and meeting with teachers and pupils from the lessons visited. We also visited lessons and looked at curriculum plans for a range of other subjects.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. She scrutinised a range of documents related to safeguarding, the school's single central register and the school's system for monitoring safeguarding concerns.
- We met with groups of staff and with pupils, including students from the sixth form.
- The lead inspector spoke with an alternative provider by telephone.
- We considered the 49 responses to Ofsted Parent View, and the 49 free-text responses. The lead inspector considered the contents of emails from two parents, and spoke to one of these by telephone.

### **Inspection team**

Deborah Mosley, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Claire Shepherd

Ofsted Inspector

Laurence Reilly

Ofsted Inspector

Rachel Tordoff

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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