

Inspection of a good school: The Romsey School

Greatbridge Road, Romsey, Hampshire SO51 8ZB

Inspection dates: 20 to 21 June 2023

Outcome

The Romsey School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The Romsey School is firmly committed to compassionate excellence. This is highlighted through the school's shared values of aspire, care and include. These values permeate and define the school. Pupils are highly aspirational and care for one another. There is a strong ethos of inclusivity and a real focus on tolerance.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils are calm, engaged, polite and respectful. They hold doors open for adults and are keen to talk about their work as school ambassadors. There is a strong focus on praise and encouragement. Bullying is rare and dealt with appropriately. Pupils are happy and safe.

High-quality careers support ensures that aspirations are high. Significant numbers of pupils continue their education at neighbouring colleges. Careers education is well supported by visiting speakers, external visits, business links, fairs and webinars. Pupils are provided with helpful information on apprenticeships.

Pupils' cultural understanding is supported through extra curriculum opportunities, trips and visits. These activities enhance the curriculum and cover subjects, sports and the annual production. Trips and visits include Fairthorne Manor, Paris, Barcelona, Iceland, Kenya and the Jurassic Coast.

The members of the leadership team have worked with commitment and determination to rapidly improve the school. They make beneficial use of evidence-based research as a focus for school improvement. Senior leaders have made particularly effective use of self-evaluation to identify areas for ongoing improvement.

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

The curriculum is carefully planned, ordered and organised. Content builds well on the work of the feeder primary schools and prepares pupils for their studies post-16. Key

ideas, concepts and skills have been carefully selected, sequenced and embedded in schemes of learning. The curriculum is ambitious. It is adapted and evaluated regularly.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils. This is true for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Support for higher prior attainers is extensive. It includes intervention and university visits as well as Latin, further mathematics and triple science.

Relationships are exceptionally strong between teachers and pupils as well as pupils themselves. Teachers' subject knowledge is robust. They have a good understanding of how to teach their subject. Lesson planning ensures that there is a constant focus on retrieving and retaining knowledge.

Pupils recognise links across subjects, but these are not always highlighted by teachers themselves. Curriculum links are not always identified to support pupils' wider knowledge, skills and appreciation. As a result, opportunities are missed to help pupils to know more and remember more.

Reading and literacy are developing well. However, subject-specific vocabulary is not always sufficiently highlighted. Pupils with low reading ages are quickly identified and supported. The quality of work in pupils' exercise books is variable. Assessment is embedded and used effectively in order to inform next steps for both learning and planning.

Attendance, suspensions and exclusions are carefully tracked and analysed. Shortfalls are being rigorously addressed through extensive initiatives and tighter monitoring. These are beginning to have a positive impact. The recent focus on behaviour is significantly improving pupils' attitudes and engagement.

The school offers a detailed and full programme supporting pupils' welfare and well-being. This is actively promoted through the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme as well as assemblies and tutor time. However, the programme is not yet fully and coherently joined up across all the areas of provision.

Curriculum leadership is secure. Teachers' curriculum understanding is strongly aligned with leaders' views and the planned curriculum. However, curriculum implementation needs further embedding. Teachers are very well motivated and enthusiastic about their work. Staff say that senior leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being.

Leaders are determined and committed. In a relatively short amount of time, they have addressed attendance, behaviour and the quality of teaching and learning. The headteacher has a zeal which is decisive and persuasive. The senior leadership team is new, committed and determined.

Trustees and governors are knowledgeable about the school. They are supported through regular meetings, reports from the headteacher and feedback from surveys and discussions. The trust is actively engaged with the school and ensures that it is held responsible, while offering encouragement and expertise.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The child protection and safeguarding policy confirms the school's obligation to safeguarding. The school is committed to promoting the physical, mental and emotional welfare of every pupil inside and outside of the school. The single central record of recruitment checks is fully compliant.

The school has a well-established culture of safeguarding. Leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective. All staff receive training with weekly updates. Staff know how to identify and report safeguarding issues.

Pupils are supported to keep safe, including when online. Pastoral systems ensure that all pupils have an adult they can talk to if needed. Pupils receive age-appropriate and responsive lessons on issues including consent and inclusion.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders recognise that the quality of education is not yet securely and consistently perfected across all subjects. This means that, in a small number of subjects, implementation is not yet fully embedded. Leaders should continue to ensure that the curriculum is implemented consistently, sharing the very best practice which already exists.
- Linking curriculum content across different subjects is not yet sufficiently highlighted. As a result, pupils do not always make important links between different areas of learning. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum supports pupils to make connections across subjects, including PSHE, to help them to secure their learning and remember more.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2017.

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](#)' 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	137239
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10240383
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,155
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sarah Pearson
Headteacher	Annie Eagle
Website	www.theromseyschool.org
Date of previous inspection	14 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act

Information about this school

- The Romsey School is a larger-than-average sized 11 to 16 mixed secondary school. The school is part of the Gateway Multi-Academy Trust.
- Seven pupils attend off-site provision on a part-time or full-time basis at three registered education providers and two other education providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical educational qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in English, mathematics, history and art. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders and visited a sample of lessons. They spoke with subject teachers, talked to pupils and looked at samples of work.

- Inspectors held meetings with leaders, staff and pupils. They looked at record-keeping and reviewed safeguarding documents and practices. Inspectors considered school policies, curriculum documentation, behaviour logs, attendance records and destination statistics. The lead inspector met with trustees and governors. He also spoke with a representative of the local authority and leaders at two of the alternative placement schools.
- Inspectors looked at the responses to the Ofsted Parent View online questionnaire and additional written comments received from parents and carers. They considered the survey returns completed by staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Paul Metcalf, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Cullum	Ofsted Inspector
Christopher Doherty	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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