

Inspection of a good school: Sir William Romney's School

Lowfield Road, Tetbury, Gloucestershire GL8 8AE

Inspection dates:

25–26 February 2020

Outcome

Sir William Romney's School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils value the strong community ethos of this school. This contributes to calm, purposeful learning. Pupils are attentive and conduct themselves well in class. Many aspire to achieve well and take pride in their work. Across most subjects, teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes. However, sometimes expectations are not as high. When this happens, some pupils do not show the same pride in their work, particularly in mathematics.

Leaders have helped to establish a strong sense of belonging for pupils and staff. Pupils say that they feel safe. Most pupils rightly believe that this is an inclusive school. Pupils of all abilities are valued for their individuality. Pupils told inspectors that staff resolve issues, including bullying, quickly on the rare occasions they occur. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn alongside their peers. Many rightly believe that they are supported well because teachers know them as individuals. However, some parents and carers of pupils with SEND are less confident about the support for their children. Leaders have recognised that more should be done to allow parents to contribute to the design of support for pupils with SEND.

The curriculum supports pupils' social and emotional development well. There are plentiful opportunities to explore their interests and abilities in clubs and other school events. Leaders have increasingly improved access to careers advice for pupils. Assemblies and tutor times are used well. Consequently, pupils learn about the importance of diversity, democracy and citizenship.

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

Leaders have constructed a well-designed curriculum. Their work is rooted in a clear moral purpose. Leaders aspire to ensure that pupils achieve well academically and holistically. Leaders ensure that English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects are central to the curriculum. Pupils are well informed to make useful choices for their future career pathways. Curriculum plans are carefully tailored to meet the needs and interests of

pupils in the locality. Pupils experience a strong breadth and depth in their learning. Leaders put emphasis on ensuring that pupils develop a love of learning. Pupils recognise this. For example, many pupils say that they have learned to love geography and art because their teachers inspire them.

Governors share leaders' ambition to ensure that the school's curriculum promotes pupils' academic, social and emotional success. They know the school well. They have put in place useful and considered processes to check what leaders tell them. They have taken the time to ensure that they make sound decisions about the long-term future of the school.

Leaders identify accurately the strengths and weaknesses of provision. They act swiftly and appropriately to tackle areas that could be better. For example, pupils' attendance overall is improving and the use of exclusions is reducing.

Curriculum leaders are well supported to revise the teaching and learning of their subjects. The English, science, art and humanities curriculums are examples of strength. For example, the English curriculum is very well and creatively sequenced. Pupils learn to embed key knowledge through a step-by-step approach. Consequently, in these subjects, pupils develop strong knowledge and achieve well at the end of key stage 4. However, leaders know that a few subjects could be strengthened further. For example, changes in the leadership and teaching team mean that the implementation of the mathematics curriculum is less secure. There are similar challenges in languages.

Leaders are improving the quality of teaching. Staff say that leaders care for their well-being in considered ways. They receive high-quality training, enabling them to reflect on and hone their teaching. Teachers focus on securing pupils' knowledge and skills so that they can move on to more complex concepts. However, occasionally teachers do not expect enough of pupils. At these times, pupils take less pride in their work and do not learn to apply their knowledge consistently when working on their own.

The strategic leadership of SEND is not as strong as it should be. Too much of SEND provision relies on the operational working of the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). Communication and coproduction with parents are not as established as they should be. Furthermore, some policy development lacks the input of SEND leadership. Leaders, including governors, are aware of this and have plans to address the shortfall. Nevertheless, this is a key area of work for leaders to focus on as a next step.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All those who work at the school prioritise pupils' safety and well-being. Safeguarding leaders have established strong systems for recording concerns that are followed diligently by staff. Staff are well trained to spot signs that pupils may be at risk. They have good relationships with pupils, parents and other agencies. Consequently, leaders make sure that pupils get the support they need.

Safer recruitment practice meets statutory expectations. Appropriate checks are made on new staff. These are recorded on a single central register. The register is overseen by an appropriately trained member of staff and checked regularly by leaders, including governors. References are sought from the most recent employer. As a result, leaders do all they can to ensure that those who work at the school are appropriate and safe for pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the curriculum is not implemented as effectively as in others. This means that pupils' learning can vary. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum in all subjects is implemented as coherently and well sequenced as in English, art and geography. Similarly, they need to ensure that teachers have consistent expectations of pupils in all curriculum areas.
- SEND leadership is not strategic enough. Most pupils with SEND are supported well in lessons. However, a significant proportion of SEND parents do not know that this is the case or feel that they have to fight to get what they believe their children need. Furthermore, more of the work of the school needs to be driven by the needs of SEND pupils, to ensure that reasonable adjustments are consistently applied across policy and practice in the school.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 23–24 February 2016.

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	136985
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10111598
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	449
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Katy Riddington
Headteacher	Jonathan Bell
Website	www.swr.gloucs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 February 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Sir William Romney’s School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. It became an academy in 2011. Leaders have recently concluded a consultation about joining the Athelstan Multi Academy Trust. The academy will join the trust on 1 April 2020.
- The academy has below-average proportions of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who speak English as an additional language. The pupils are predominantly from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils with either a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is higher than the national average.
- There is high pupil movement at this academy. Large numbers of pupils join and leave the school other than at the normal time.
- The school uses one alternative provider, Stroud College.

Information about this inspection

- We met with senior and middle leaders, including the headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding lead, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteachers and the SENCo. We also met with five representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. We discussed leaders' evaluations, priorities for improvement and the curriculum.
- We did deep dives into three subjects: English, mathematics and geography. We met with senior and subject leaders, teachers and pupils. We also visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' work and talked to pupils.
- We also met with leaders to discuss the wider curriculum and safeguarding arrangements. Inspectors analysed 61 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online parents' survey, 87 responses to the pupil survey and 32 responses to the staff survey.
- We analysed school documentation, including leaders' evaluations and plans for improvement, reports to governors and information about pupils' behaviour and attendance. We also scrutinised policies and procedures relating to the curriculum and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David New

Ofsted Inspector

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