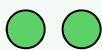


Ringwood School Academy

Address: Parsonage Barn Lane, Ringwood, Hampshire, BH24 1SE

Unique reference number (URN): 136657

Inspection report: 15 September 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils achieve highly positive outcomes in this school. In national assessments, pupils typically achieve above that of their peers both nationally and in similar schools. This includes the most vulnerable pupils. Leaders ensure that students in the sixth form follow pathways that are right for them and prepare them thoroughly for their next steps. Some students achieve impressive outcomes in qualifications that do not appear in the overall school data.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, develop deep and secure knowledge across the curriculum. They produce work of a high quality. Leaders have placed great importance on the development of pupils' reading. Pupils who join the school with gaps in their learning receive expert support. This means that they make rapid progress in order to catch up with their peers.

Pupils are very well prepared for their next steps in education, training or employment. They go on to ambitious and appropriate destinations.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders have developed a curriculum that is ambitious, inclusive and engaging. It fulfils leaders' aims to develop pupils' passions and ensure they flourish in their learning. The curriculum is well planned and enables pupils to build deeply on their learning over time.

Pupils benefit from opportunities across the curriculum to improve their communication, reading and numeracy skills. They also really value the opportunity to develop and celebrate their talents in a wide range of creative subjects.

Leaders have implemented an inclusive and flexible approach to teaching based on research. Teachers plan engaging lessons which pupils enjoy. Pupils are empowered to work hard. Teachers deliver highly effective lessons consistently. They check pupils' learning skilfully and provide thoughtful advice and support. This means that pupils understand what they need to do next.

Teachers are passionate and inspiring. They are experts in their subjects. This is, in part, because of the deliberate and greatly valued professional learning programme provided for all staff. Leaders have a deep understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching in the school. If standards ever fall short of their exacting expectations, swift and effective support is put in place.

Staff adapt their teaching carefully to meet the different needs of pupils. Pupils, including the most vulnerable, therefore thrive in their lessons.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

This is an extremely inclusive school. Leaders' thoughtful and effective actions ensure that all pupils, including the most vulnerable, feel a deep sense of belonging.

Through a precisely crafted transition programme, staff identify pupils' needs accurately and quickly. Leaders swiftly remove any barriers to wellbeing or learning. Effective support is in place for young carers and pupils known to social care. Teachers make appropriate adaptations consistently so that all pupils can achieve in their learning. A team of skilled teaching assistants provides carefully considered support. This enables pupils to progress in their learning while also building their independence.

Leaders use pupil premium funding powerfully to increase opportunities for disadvantaged pupils. For example, they have introduced a highly effective reading scheme to support vulnerable pupils in particular. Leaders use alternative provision wisely, and always in the best interest of pupils.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are skilfully championed. They sometimes spend time in 'the hive'. In this welcoming space, expertly trained staff empower pupils to develop their social skills, confidence and resilience. A range of activities also enhances pupils' skills in communication and numeracy. However, leaders and pupils do not see 'the hive' as a destination. It is a springboard for pupils to return to their normal classrooms so that they can access the ambitious and broad curriculum on offer.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

Leaders are extremely ambitious. They lead with wisdom and passion. Leaders make decisions that are always in pupils' best interests. This sometimes means making courageous choices such as the recent change to the mobile phone policy. This is already having a positive impact on pupils' safety and engagement. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school. Their actions have led to significant improvements across the whole school and they are far from complacent.

Leaders are very collaborative. There is a real sense of community and teamwork that staff and pupils greatly value. Staff's wellbeing is a genuine priority. As a result, they feel truly valued and proud to work at the school. Staff benefit from tailored professional learning. Early career teachers receive expert support.

Trustees are highly effective and fulfil their statutory duties confidently. The board has a range of expertise and educational experience, which has enabled them to challenge and support school leaders successfully. Trustees and school leaders are outward-looking. They continually seek opportunities to work with other schools and educational professionals in order to enhance their own practice.

Leaders seek parent and carer, pupil and staff views regularly, acting on any concerns or suggestions effectively. The majority of parents are positive about the school. In particular, they praise the high expectations, quality of teaching and communication from staff. One parent, representing the views of many, said, 'We are wholeheartedly positive about our

children's experience and feel very fortunate that they attend. They have instilled in our children a strong sense of working hard and being kind.'

Post-16 provision

Strong standard 

Leaders have developed an ambitious and vibrant post-16 provision. There is a broad range of subjects on offer. Leaders ensure that the curriculum responds flexibly to students' talents and aspirations. Teachers refine their expertise continually through well-crafted professional learning opportunities. As a result, students benefit from a high-quality offer.

Skilful teaching ensures that students deepen their knowledge and understanding across all subject areas. Students show notable levels of engagement in lessons. They achieve positive outcomes in national assessments. The wider enrichment offer and careers support ensure that students also develop mature life skills. For example, many students take on leadership roles and make a significant contribution to the life of the school. They can also develop additional expertise such as teaching English as a foreign language and British Sign Language. As a result, students are very well prepared for later life. They progress to appropriate education, employment or training.

The school's inclusive culture is extremely evident in the sixth form. Leaders ensure that students with barriers to learning receive the support that they need. Additionally, students who join the school in Year 12 receive a warm welcome.

Students speak passionately of the provision they receive in Years 12 and 13. It is a happy place in which to learn, and students are flourishing.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

The majority of pupils attend school well. Leaders have created a culture of belonging, meaning pupils want to be here. All staff promote the importance of regular attendance. The ambition to improve attendance further is a priority for the school. There is a clear strategy in place to achieve this. This has resulted in a reduction in persistent absence. However, too many vulnerable pupils still have high levels of absence, which is affecting their ability to engage fully with school life. Leaders are aware that there is more to do in this area.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are mature, considerate and enthusiastic. Pupils display a deep level of respect for themselves, each other, the staff and the school environment. Pupils challenge themselves to succeed. This impressive level of self-motivation is seen from Year 7 to Year 13. Leaders ensure that there are very high expectations of behaviour. Where pupils fall short of this, leaders and staff take effective action. Staff help pupils to reflect thoughtfully on their mistakes. Pupils are rightly proud of the school's respectful and inclusive community. Bullying and discrimination are rare. When they do happen, the school responds quickly. Most pupils feel that the action taken is effective.

Leaders have designed an engaging personal development programme that prepares pupils well for a diverse modern Britain. Leaders have recently revised the curriculum, ensuring it is carefully sequenced and enables pupils to build their knowledge over time. Younger pupils have a detailed understanding of the wider world. The curriculum changes mean that this is increasingly the case for pupils in key stage 4 and the sixth form.

Leaders ensure that pupils receive age-appropriate lessons on relationships and sex education. Pupils speak maturely about healthy relationships and know how to keep themselves safe. They also understand the importance of fundamental British values and display these around school. Pupils have benefited from a focus on prejudicial language and cultural diversity. They celebrate the differences in their community with pride.

Leaders understand the barriers to pupils' wellbeing and work collectively to remove these. Pastoral staff understand the needs of pupils well. Pupils value the effective pastoral support in the school. They also feel empowered to challenge language or actions that compromise their happiness.

Pupils benefit from an extensive range of enriching opportunities, which helps to develop their understanding of the world. This includes many clubs, trips and experiences of work. Leaders remove any participation barriers for the most vulnerable pupils so that all pupils benefit significantly from the carefully designed offer. Pupils are extremely enthusiastic about the opportunities on offer. In particular, they speak passionately about sporting experiences and performing arts activities. For example, auditions for this year's musical created a palpable sense of excitement and ambition around school.

Leaders ensure that careers support has a very positive impact. Staff provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to learn about different options beyond school. Pupils from Year 7 to Year 13 benefit from personalised guidance. They talk passionately about how it has increased their ambitions for the future.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils are rightly very proud to attend Ringwood School. They benefit from a great sense of belonging. Pupils are safe, happy and successful. They value the school's inclusive culture highly. Pupils celebrate differences maturely and respectfully. They are increasingly developing their knowledge of the wider world in preparation for life after school.

Pupils behave with integrity. They are enthusiastic and articulate. Pupils enjoy the welcoming and harmonious community and generally attend school regularly. Pupils' wellbeing is a priority. They are kind to each other and there are positive relationships between pupils and staff. Bullying does not occur often. Pupils and staff do not tolerate unkindness, bullying or prejudicial language of any kind. Students in the sixth form are flourishing, and are excellent role models for the younger pupils.

Pupils achieve extremely well. They are highly ambitious and work hard to reach

aspirational goals. Pupils receive effective support that ensures that any barriers to learning are removed. They benefit from an exciting and inspiring curriculum as well as high-quality teaching from expert staff. As well as achieving positive success in national assessments, pupils are given the tools to develop their confidence, maturity and talents. They also benefit from extensive careers education. As a result, pupils are very well prepared for their next steps.

Pupils are effusive about all the enrichment opportunities that the school offers. These help them to develop their passions and talents. Many excel in experiences such as competitive sport, music productions, house competitions and leadership roles. The role of 'principal student' in the sixth form is a coveted achievement that is greatly contested every year.

Pupils are thriving. They are 'inspired to learn, supported to succeed' as reflected in the school's values. One pupil, reflecting the views of many, said, 'I feel so lucky to come to this school.'

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that their strategic approach to improve the attendance of groups and individuals is carefully embedded, so that persistent absence reduces and attendance continues to improve.
 - Leaders should continue to embed the personal development curriculum so that pupils' knowledge is consistently detailed and secure.
-

About this inspection

This school is part of Ringwood School Trust and is the only school in the trust. The school is overseen by a board of trustees, who are known locally as governors, chaired by Hugh Paton.

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

This inspection took place on 15 and 16 September 2026.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

The inspection team spoke with the headteacher and senior leaders. Inspectors met with representatives of the governing board, including the chair of governors. They also spoke to staff and pupils.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently makes use of 6 alternative provisions, including 2 that are unregistered.

Headteacher: Leanne Symonds

Lead inspector:

Louise New, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Catherine Old, His Majesty's Inspector

Ginny Rhodes, Ofsted Inspector

Caroline Lowing, Ofsted Inspector

Helen Jones, Ofsted Inspector

Gary Tostevin, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from [different sources](#). More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

 The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 15 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,592

Well above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,063

School capacity

1,591

Well above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

18.82%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 30.4%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

3.52%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.53%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

13.19%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support at the school.

National average: 14.0%

Location deprivation

Above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English indices of deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	68.0%	45.4%	Above
2023/24 (final)	58.5%	45.9%	Above
2022/23 (final)	55.1%	45.3%	Above

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	56.2	46.1	Above
2023/24 (final)	53.7	45.9	Above
2022/23 (final)	52.2	46.3	Above

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.35	-0.03	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.22	-0.03	Close to average
2021/22 (final)	0.21	-0.03	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	37.5%	25.8%	Above
2023/24 (final)	30.0%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	20.0%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	40.3	34.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	42.6	34.6	Above
2022/23 (final)	35.6	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.42	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.65	-0.57	Close to average
2021/22 (final)	-0.31	-0.55	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	37.5%	53.1%	-15.6 pp
2023/24 (final)	30.0%	53.1%	-23.1 pp
2022/23 (final)	20.0%	52.4%	-32.4 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	40.3	50.4	-10.2
2023/24 (final)	42.6	50.0	-7.4
2022/23 (final)	35.6	50.3	-14.7

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.42	0.16	-0.59
2022/23 (final)	-0.65	0.17	-0.82
2021/22 (final)	-0.31	0.15	-0.47

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (revised)	96%	92%	Above
2022 leavers (revised)	96%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	97%	94%	Above

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	35.13	35.00	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	36.20	34.38	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	37.62	34.16	Above

A-level value added

A score showing students’ progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	0.0	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	0.2	0.0	Above

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	7.3%	8.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	8.9%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	8.3%	9.0%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	21.4%	23.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	25.6%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	25.6%	26.5%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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