Inspection of an outstanding school: Reigate Valley College

Ironsbottom, Sidlow Bridge, Reigate, Surrey RH2 8PP

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 May 2024

Outcome

Reigate Valley College continues to be an outstanding school.

The headteacher of this school is Amy Smith. This school is part of the Inclusive Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, David Euridge, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ron Searle. Amy Smith is also the director of education at the Inclusive Education Trust.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils know that Reigate Valley College is a school where, 'There is always someone in your corner.' Trusted mentors from the 'Safe Team' provide a pivotal point of contact for every pupil and their family. An atmosphere of safety and support helps pupils to re-engage successfully with education.

In all key stages, classrooms are joyous, industrious places. Pupils, most of whom have been permanently excluded from mainstream schools, enjoy learning. Staff take time and care getting to know every pupil's likes, dislikes and what helps them to learn well. Pupils and families feel understood, accepted and valued. Pupils settle well into their short- and longer-term placements.

Pupils view the school as a stepping stone to success. Standards are high. Pupils are expected to behave well, and they do. Inappropriate language and conduct are challenged without exception. Pupils are rewarded frequently for effort and progress in learning and in behaviour and attitudes.

Countless opportunities exist for pupils to extend personal and social skills. 'Enrichment Friday' is a weekly highlight, with trips and visits where pupils practise newfound skills in the 'real world'. Breakfast for staff and pupils, cooked by the Head of School, once each term is a welcomed social occasion.

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

In all key stages, the curriculum, and wider school provision, entices pupils to learn exceptionally well. Formal and informal checks establish precisely what pupils know, what gaps they have in learning and what grabs their interest. In turn, staff use this information to adapt and refine learning activities, so that pupils engage positively and make rapid progress. Younger pupils successfully complete units of work in English and mathematics, and older pupils achieve a range of accreditations and qualifications.

All pupils at Reigate Valley College have social, emotional and mental health needs. Staff are expert at identifying barriers to learning and implementing helpful strategies and interventions. Every pupil has an individual support plan co-produced between the pupil and those who work with them. The plan details termly targets in well-being, curriculum and learning, and belonging and values. Monthly 'inclusion panel' reviews 'give every child the opportunity to come to the forefront' of discussions. This holistic approach ensures that pupils are prepared socially, emotionally and academically for their return to mainstream school or for their next step.

Learning to read and developing a love of reading is prioritised. Staff teach reading skilfully. Pupils in key stage 1, and beyond where needed, have daily phonics lessons. Pupils read books matched to the sounds that they know, enabling them to read with increasing independence, confidence and fluency. Books and stories are shared routinely. A particular highlight is 'Campfire Club' on Fridays, where pupils and adults share books selected from the public library at the beginning of each half term.

Developing pupils' positive behaviour and attitudes is a bedrock of the school's work. Relationships between staff and pupils are caring, but staff reflect, 'We do real conversations. Pupils know when they step over the line.' High expectations are consistently maintained.

Pupils' attendance at school is dramatically higher than in their previous schools and most pupils attend well. Attendance is tracked closely and reasons for any non-attendance are understood and tackled. Mentors (and home-school link workers) support families to forge positive relationships with education. Parents are united in their appreciation for the school.

In all lessons, teachers respond skilfully to opportunities to promote pupils' wider social, moral, cultural and spiritual development. Numerous outings and visits enhance the curriculum further and deepen pupils' motivation. The wider curriculum and enrichment opportunities are key in securing high attendance – pupils do not want to miss out!

The atmosphere amongst staff is highly positive. They describe a sense of community, trust and respect for all. Without exception, staff support the aims of the school, and they report that workload is manageable. The local governing board and board of trustees hold different and complementary roles. They support and challenge the school, adding significant value.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Reigate Valley College, to be outstanding in May 2014.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the definition of children in need of help and protection; pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's pupil premium funding (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	148129
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10322055
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Academy alternative provision converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	43
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ron Searle
CEO of the trust	David Euridge
Headteacher	Amy Smith (executive headteacher) Steven Hayes (acting head of school)
Website	www.rvc.surrey.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Reigate Valley College is one of three schools in the Inclusive Education Trust. The trust has delegated some responsibilities to the school's local governing board.
- The school caters for pupils who have been permanently excluded and for those who are at risk of permanent exclusion. All pupils have identified social, emotional and mental health needs, but most do not have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- The school provides short-term learning programmes for pupils in key stages 1, 2 and 3. Pupils join the school at any point during the school year.
- Pupils who join the school at, or during, key stage 4 remain for the duration of the key stage.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- There have been some changes to the leadership structure of the school. The former executive headteacher is now the chief executive officer of the trust. There is an executive headteacher and an acting head of school with leadership responsibilities across the school's three sites. There is a deputy headteacher at each site, with day-to-day responsibility for that phase.

- The school operates from three different sites. In addition to the key stage 4 campus at Sidlow Bridge, a primary provision called the Phoenix Centre is located in Redhill, and the key stage 3 Allingham Road campus is located nearby in Reigate.
- Reigate Valley College converted to become an academy school in September 2021. When its predecessor school, Reigate Valley College, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics and topic. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also considered the curriculum and visited lessons in cookery and personal, social, health education.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, the chief executive officer, staff and pupils. The lead inspector held a telephone meeting with the chair of the board of trustees and scrutinised minutes of trustee and local governing board meetings.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff and pupils during discussions and through staff's responses to Ofsted's survey.
- Inspectors took account of parents' responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text comments.

Inspection team

Hilary Macdonald, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Allen	Ofsted Inspector

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