

Inspection of Royal Alexandra and Albert School

Gatton Park, Reigate, Surrey RH2 0TD

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 March 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and well cared for at Royal Alexandra and Albert School. They benefit from positive relationships with staff across the school. Pupils feel safe, confident that if they report any concerns or worries they will be dealt with.

Pupils are assured and articulate, even from the youngest ages. They talk with confidence to adults and visitors about their school and what makes it special. They engage with opportunities to lead and shape their school, such as in the school council, where they have a real say in what happens.

In the past there have been some challenges around bullying and inappropriate language, but pupils report that this is now dealt with effectively by leaders. As one pupil explained 'they don't tolerate that kind of thing here'. Lessons are settled and engaging spaces for pupils to be absorbed by their learning. This supports pupils in achieving well.

Pupils benefit from an exceptionally wide variety of opportunities to develop their skills and interests outside of their taught lessons. Clubs include a range of sports, creative writing, art, photography and allotment and gardening. Opportunities such as accessing the equestrian centre and engaging as members of the model United Nations are also on offer.

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

The school has developed a robust and well-developed curriculum across its subjects that reflects the high ambitions that there are for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These plans identify the knowledge and skills that pupils need to know, and they consider carefully the order that pupils need to learn them from the junior phase up through secondary and into sixth form. This supports pupils in building effective knowledge over time. As a result of this work, pupils perform well in national curriculum tests and GCSEs. In the sixth form, achievement in some subjects has not always been as strong. However, the improved curriculum and precise teaching is now supporting current pupils in doing well.

The school has taken effective action to support those who struggle to read with fluency on joining the school. There is now a well taught phonics programme in place, and staff are precise in identifying the skills that pupils need to develop to become increasingly confident. Beyond phonics, a more developed reading programme is also used well to support pupils in developing precise reading skills. However, this is very new, and leaders recognise there is more to do to monitor this as this embeds.

In lessons, staff support pupils well in moving through their planned curriculum. They give clear explanations, supported by expert subject knowledge. Staff check

learning regularly, to ensure that any misconceptions are picked up quickly. Pupils are supported well in remembering their learning over time.

The school's renewed behaviour policy is effective in supporting good behaviour, although not all staff apply this with the same consistency. A small minority of pupils need additional support to meet the high expectations that staff have of their conduct. Where pupils might struggle, they have effective pastoral support from staff who care about their welfare and well-being.

In the past, the school has not always ensured that all staff had a secure knowledge of how to meet pupils' additional needs, or made timely referrals for external support. Leaders now act much more rapidly to ensure that all pupils are supported. Training and professional development has begun to provide staff with the knowledge they need to adapt learning activities to ensure that all pupils, particularly those with SEND, can access their learning effectively. However, this is not yet fully embedded. Leaders acknowledge that there is more work to do to ensure that this is a consistent feature of lessons so that all pupils are supported in doing as well as they can.

As well as the wide range of clubs and activities, there is also a cohesive programme that supports the development of pupils' wider character. Lessons in personal, social and health and economic education are closely linked with a programme of assemblies and visiting speakers. These all work together to develop and promote the school values of ambition, courage, integrity and respect. These programmes are well planned and sequenced but they also leave room to respond to the needs of the pupils in the school. A well-developed careers programme is also in place to support pupils in considering their options when they leave school. This connects across the school and is especially bespoke to students' needs and next steps in the sixth form.

Senior leaders are precise and evaluative in their approach. They carefully identify the steps that have been needed to move the school forward, and evaluate whether these are having the effect that they intend. Governors now have the information they need to effectively hold leaders to account. This work continues as the school moves towards its next set of priorities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not yet ensured that all staff have a consistently secure knowledge of how to meet the additional needs of pupils with SEND. In some

lessons the support is not consistently strong. The school needs to continue its training for teachers to embed the practice of routine adaptations to learning so that all pupils can access their learning effectively.

- The school has instituted policies to support more consistent behaviour across the school which are having a demonstrable effect on conduct. However, these are still embedding and there is some variation in how consistently these are applied by some staff. The school needs to ensure that staff are supported in embedding this more consistently across the school.

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	125279
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10296310
Type of school	All-through
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1097
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Clamp
Headteacher	Morgan Thomas
Website	www.raa-school.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 and 17 November 2021

Information about this school

- The school currently uses one unregistered alternative provider.
- There have been many staffing changes since the last inspection, including a new headteacher and leadership team.
- 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 school also has boarding provision for some pupils. This provision did not form part of this inspection.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, teachers, other staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, history, science, media studies and design technology. For each deep dive, the 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.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- The inspectors took account of a range of other information, including the school's development plans, school policies and governor minutes.
- The inspectors spoke with pupils about their experience of the school. They took account of parent and carer and staff views through conversations and responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Marian Feeley, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Lorraine Greco	Ofsted Inspector
Philip Wayne	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Cooksey	Ofsted Inspector
Vickie Farrow	Ofsted Inspector

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