

Ringwood Waldorf School

Folly Farm Lane, Ashley, Ringwood, Hampshire BH24 2NN

Inspection dates

2–4 April 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Sixth form provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This school has improved considerably in the past year. The trustees and the headteacher are ambitious for the school. Their actions have led to modernisation and ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- Children in the kindergarten are well cared for. They are imaginative and articulate. They enjoy talking to each other and adults.
- Pupils in the lower school make good progress in reading and writing. They reach standards in line with other pupils nationally by the end of key stage 2.
- Upper school pupils' attainment in both English and mathematics at GCSE level is above the national average. Their attainment across a range of other curriculum areas is strong.
- Post-16 students are highly articulate. The great majority secure places in higher education when they leave.
- The curriculum fosters pupils' personal development well. Pupils reflect thoughtfully. This leads to a strong sense of self-awareness.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' conduct. As a result, pupils behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Senior leaders' efforts to improve the rate of pupils' attendance have not had enough effect. Attendance remains too low.
- The school's careers education programme is well established. However, some pupils do not receive specialist advice when they need it.
- Senior leaders understand the general strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, their process for gathering information about pupils' progress is not precise enough.
- Some leadership responsibilities are too widely dispersed among senior leaders.
- Many teachers are experts in their field. However, they do not share their expertise with each other systematically.
- Teaching is typically well planned. Even so, some mathematics teaching is not adapted to meet the needs of younger, less able pupils.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement, by:
 - providing teachers with guidance about teaching mathematics to pupils with lower prior attainment in this subject
 - ensuring that teachers systematically share the good practice that exists within the school so that all teaching improves to a high standard.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, by:
 - extending the range of advice for pupils about their career pathways
 - raising the rate of pupils' attendance to at least the national average.
- Improve leadership and management, by:
 - establishing a more efficient method of collating and using information about pupils' attainment and progress
 - adjusting senior leaders' roles so there is a sharper focus on further improving teaching.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and senior leaders show great commitment to the school. They have high expectations of staff. They are modernising many aspects of the school, while at the same time respecting the philosophical standpoint of staff and parents. Consequently, staff are well motivated and parents support the school strongly.
- Over the past year, senior leaders' analysis of the school's performance has improved. New appointments have increased the school's capacity to sustain compliance with the independent school standards. Senior leaders now have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Their reports to trustees are reliable and so form a solid footing on which to base improvement plans.
- Senior leaders' system for monitoring the performance of staff draws information from several sources, including external evaluations. It is fit for its purpose. However, the responsibility for using this monitoring information strategically is shared too broadly across senior leaders. As a result, improvements in teaching do not happen as rapidly as they could.
- Staff are reflective about their work. They have deeply held beliefs about education. Many teachers engage in extra reading and research relating to the Steiner model of education. Staff are respected by pupils and parents. Their morale is high.
- Senior leaders ensure that pupils' attainment and progress are regularly assessed by class teachers against the aims of the school's curriculum. Teachers' assessments are accurate and consistent within each year group. However, senior leaders do not collate this information efficiently and so its usefulness for raising attainment is not fully exploited.
- The kindergarten curriculum develops children's imagination and social skills. Senior leaders manage the transition into Class 1 thoughtfully and the extra support children require is planned well in advance. The lower-school curriculum helps pupils develop their reading, writing and numeracy skills in each year. Pupils are given a wide range of other experiences, particularly in the creative arts.
- Middle- and upper-school pupils follow a curriculum that provides a suitably broad range of subjects. This allows them to acquire the knowledge and understanding necessary to prepare them well for the next stage of their education. Pupils' self-confidence and communication skills are supported particularly well.
- Pupils are given the choice of several extra-curricular activities, from extra mathematics help to the school choir. Along with many school trips, these enhance the curriculum well.
- Senior leaders ensure that opportunities to develop pupils' personal skills are threaded through the curriculum. Pupils are regularly asked to consider other people's views. This develops their tolerance and respect for other cultures and beliefs. Pupils have a strong sense of moral purpose. Teachers model the principles of democracy well throughout the school. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Teaching often causes pupils to contemplate questions of purpose in life. Assemblies, class performances and discussions with class teachers all contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is a strength of the school.

- Leadership of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is effective. Leaders ensure that pupils' individual plans set out their needs clearly. As a result, teachers and teaching assistants understand how they can best help these pupils and provide them with valuable support.
- Staff believe that the school is well managed. They feel that leaders trust them, respect them and support them in their work. Consequently, they are proud to be part of this school community.
- An overwhelming majority of the parents who responded to the survey, Parent View, believe the school is well run and would recommend it to other parents.

Governance

- The chair of the board of trustees provides strong leadership to the board. He has introduced far-reaching change during his tenure. As a result, the school's finances have been stabilised. Recent appointments to the board have increased the level of expertise of the group. Trustees have established a strong vision for the future.
- Trustees have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have raised their expectations of the content and quality of senior leaders' reports to them. Trustees receive timely, detailed information about the performance of the school. However, they recognise that the processes for gathering this information require further refinement.
- The board of trustees has established procedures to check that all the independent school standards are met. It ensures that the school's statutory safeguarding obligations are met fully. It has recently overseen significant improvements to the security of the site and access arrangements for parents and the public.
- Trustees have a good understanding of their individual roles. They provide appropriate challenge and strong support to senior leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Senior leaders ensure that all policies are up to date and reflect the latest national guidance. Staff maintain and follow appropriate risk assessments for activities on- and off-site and so risks are minimised effectively.
- Leaders have fostered an open culture at the school. Pupils know who they can talk to if they have any concerns. Safeguarding is seen as everyone's responsibility by the whole school community. The school works closely with parents. They feel the school communicates effectively with them. This further enhances pupils' safety and security.
- Senior leaders make appropriate checks on staff before they are appointed to make sure they are suitable to work with children. Once employed, staff receive regular training in safeguarding to ensure that their skills are kept up to date. Consequently, they have established a vigilant safeguarding culture at the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching at this school is characterised by respectful, trusting relationships between pupils and their teachers. Consequently, there is a sense of community across the school which contributes well to pupils' learning.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' academic progress are suitably high. Pupils respond well to the challenges they are set. Teaching develops pupils' independence and resilience well in the lower school and reinforces these skills for older pupils.
- Teaching is generally well planned. Teachers think carefully about the order that ideas are presented to pupils. They establish a rhythm of learning that means pupils recap on previous work before moving on to new ideas. However, mathematics teaching does not provide enough support to some lower-school pupils, particularly those who are less able, when new ideas are introduced and subsequently practised.
- Teachers across the school have good subject knowledge. They have strong artistic and linguistic skills. They apply these skills throughout the curriculum. For example, classrooms typically have inviting themed displays based on teachers' and pupils' artwork. There is variation in the effectiveness of teachers' use of resources because practical ideas for their use are not always shared well between teachers.
- Teaching of reading in the lower school develops pupils' reading skills well and introduces pupils to a range of authors and styles of writing. Through the middle school, pupils further develop an appreciation of literature. Pupils in the upper school have a rich experience of reading to draw on. For example, they are able to discuss particular types of science fiction writing, spontaneously and in some detail.
- Pupils know what is expected of them because, at the start of each teaching sequence, teachers set out how their work will be assessed. Teachers in each class have a systematic method of evaluating pupils' attainment and progress against the school's curriculum goals. They use this information to help pupils overcome misconceptions. For example, at the time of the inspection pupils in Class 10 (Year 11) had recently completed a mock examination in mathematics. Subsequent teaching was focused on the concepts that individuals had not grasped. As a result, pupils were making strong progress.
- Pupils with SEND are generally supported well. Teachers are aware of pupils' individual needs and so they are able to plan extra help for them. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive extra tuition in English. These pupils, some of whom are on short-term visits, feel welcomed by both staff and pupils.
- Teachers use homework according to the school's policy. Older pupils are set appropriate tasks to work on at home. These tasks reinforce pupils' learning well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are enthusiastic learners. They demonstrate great pride in their school. During the inspection, pupils were keen to talk with inspectors about their learning and to share their

work. Teaching regularly causes pupils to stop and reflect. Over time, this has given pupils a good awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses.

- Pupils regularly take part in drama productions and other artistic performances. This develops their confidence and self-assurance well. For example, upper-school pupils took part in a production of 'The Tempest' last year.
- Pupils feel safe and well looked after. Bullying is very rare at this school. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. The school's age-appropriate online safety teaching is effective, so pupils have a good understanding of how to avoid the risks associated with the internet.
- Teachers act as 'class guardians' and so each pupil has someone they can go to if they are concerned or worried about anything. Pupils value this system. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves physically and emotionally healthy.
- The school provides impartial careers education and guidance through a programme of visiting speakers, events and one-to-one interviews with their class guardian. However, more detailed, specialist advice is not provided in a timely way for some pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons is typically attentive. Pupils are well motivated. They listen carefully to each other as well as their teachers and this encourages less-confident speakers to take part. For example, during drama productions and recitals in the hall, pupils show great respect to their peers.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school site is calm and courteous. Staff supervise pupils effectively, so the school is an orderly environment at break and lunchtime.
- Teachers record diligently the rare incidents of poor behaviour. They reflect carefully on the causes and take action to help pupils meet their high expectations of conduct. No pupils have been excluded in recent years.
- The rate of pupils' attendance is too low. Senior leaders have improved systems for tracking attendance and further improvements are planned. They have raised parents' awareness of the need for regular attendance. However, these initiatives have yet to have an impact and too many pupils are still persistently absent from school.
- A high proportion of parents agree that the school makes sure pupils are well behaved. One parent's comment was typical of many: 'I find the pupils to be very kind and considerate of others. I am struck by the emotional maturity and sense of self and security that these young people have.'

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Across the lower school, pupils write well. They present their work neatly and write with a cursive script. Their written work is imaginative and uses a range of punctuation well. Pupils read fluently. Pupils in Class 4 and 5 (Years 5 and 6) reach the expectations the school's curriculum sets for their age group in reading and writing.
- The most able pupils, and those of middle ability, make strong progress in mathematics.

These pupils are confident with calculation because they have regular opportunities to practise these skills. Some less able pupils are not as confident because their learning is not supported as effectively.

- Middle- and upper-school pupils' learning leads into the school's diploma programme. Pupils learn well in a range of disciplines including humanities, science, languages and crafts. Pupils attain particularly well in the creative arts. For example, their musical skills are well developed.
- Virtually all pupils opt to take GCSE English and mathematics at the end of Class 10 (Year 11). Last year, pupils attained standards in these two subjects that were well above those seen nationally. Current pupils are on track to achieve well in these two qualifications this year.
- Most teaching places a consistent emphasis on pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar. This makes a good contribution to the high standard of written work which pupils produce.
- Across all year groups, pupils take great care over their 'main lesson' work, which consists of a theme studied for three or four weeks. This work is well presented. Pupils' other preparatory written work and note taking vary in quality between subjects.
- Pupils are able to explain clearly what they are learning about in lessons. The great majority of them have a secure grasp of key concepts and ideas.
- The most able pupils achieve well. They are given many opportunities to study academic themes of personal interest. They respond well to this and so take their learning to great depth in these areas.
- In most subjects, pupils with SEND make good progress as a result of the effective help they receive.
- Pupils develop the skills and aptitudes they need to move on to the next stage in their education. They have the necessary knowledge and understanding to make a success of their studies in other settings when they leave the school. These include mainstream schools, colleges or universities.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders of the kindergarten have established an exciting learning environment for children. Staff actively encourage children to talk to each other and to staff. Storytelling is a regular part of children's experience. Children's speaking and listening skills are developed well.
- Staff use equipment and resources well to provide welcoming indoor spaces for children. Children's fine motor skills are developed well by a range of art and craft activities. For example, children cut and stick paper to make Easter baskets. This develops their dexterity. Children use the extensive outdoor space to explore and play. They cooperate well with each other and learn to share.
- Some children have developed a secure pencil grip and choose to write words. Some are able to write their names. Staff use games, such as throwing a bean bag and counting the throws, to help children recognise numbers and begin to count.
- Teaching is well planned. Staff design activities that fire children's imaginations. Children

respond to these activities with enthusiasm. For example, during the inspection, children were playing creatively with a range of resources. They were keen to discuss what they were making with their peers and with adults.

- Leaders ensure that children’s development is assessed regularly. Staff make accurate observations of children’s achievements. Even so, the process for systematically recording these observations is not yet rigorous enough. Inspection evidence shows that children make good progress from their starting points against the expectations of the school’s curriculum.
- The school is exempt from the requirement to assess pupils at the end of the early years foundation stage. Children leave the kindergarten when they are six and so move on part way through key stage 1. When they leave, children are well prepared to join Class 1 (Year 2) at the school.
- Staff help children develop personal, social and emotional skills effectively. Children feel secure and well-cared for. They behave well.
- Parents feel involved in the kindergarten. They expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the quality of care and nurture that children receive. One parent expressed a view which was echoed by many others, saying: ‘My children have a very positive attitude to learning and I attribute this to their school experience.’
- Leaders maintain effective safeguarding practices in the kindergarten. They have made sure that all statutory safeguarding responsibilities are fulfilled. Staff are well trained and vigilant.

Sixth form provision

Good

- Post-16 students, in Classes 11 and 12 (Years 12 and 13), study for the Ringwood Waldorf Upper School diploma. Students accumulate credits across a range of disciplines including English, mathematics, science, humanities, languages, physical education and the arts. A high proportion of students reach the school’s expected standard of learning and so attain the diploma.
- Students follow a core of academic subjects and choose option subjects that match their interests and aptitudes. The academic curriculum is supplemented by enrichment activities and each student is given an individualised programme of study that builds on their prior attainment.
- Students’ work shows they have a good depth of academic understanding. They are articulate and self-assured. They explain their thinking in depth verbally and express sophisticated arguments in writing. For example, students’ extended writing on philosophy demonstrates their ability to synthesise complex ideas.
- Teaching stimulates students’ intellectually curiosity. The positive relationships that typify teaching in the lower and middle school are present in the upper school. As a result, students are motivated to learn.
- All students who begin to study in Class 11 are retained in Class 12 and complete their programmes of study. A high proportion of students go on to secure places at university when they leave. In recent years, all students have sustained places in education, employment or training after finishing Class 12.

- Students show mature attitudes to their study and behave well. They frequently help younger pupils with their work. Students act as positive role models to younger pupils. This makes a considerable contribution to the community spirit in the school.
- Students' personal development is supported well by a range of enrichment activities. Last year, students took part in a series of democracy workshops at a school in Germany. This developed their confidence and extended their knowledge of the democratic process.
- Students carry out community service as part of their diploma accreditation. They also complete a work experience placement. Students' employability skills are developed well by activities such as public speaking in addition to specific advice such as how to write a curriculum vitae.
- Senior leaders ensure that students understand how to keep themselves safe. Leaders are aware of the risks students face and so provide suitable activities to promote their safety. For example, visiting speakers, such as the police, provide students with up-to-date information about how to stay safe.

School details

Unique reference number	113943
DfE registration number	838/6022
Inspection number	10094393

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	7
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Ringwood Waldorf School Trust
Chair	Esbjorn Wilmar
Headteacher	Geli Patrick
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,500 to £9,000
Telephone number	01425 472664
Website	www.ringwoodwaldorfschool.org.uk
Email address	mail@ringwoodwaldorfschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 June 2009

Information about this school

- The Ringwood Waldorf School Trust is the proprietor of this independent school. The trust aims to provide a curriculum that is in keeping with Steiner education principles.
- The school is affiliated to the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship. This group provides advice for Steiner/Waldorf schools.
- The most recent full inspection of the school was carried out by the School Inspection

Service (SIS) in January 2018. At that time the school did not meet all of the independent school standards. SIS carried out a progress monitoring inspection in October 2018 and found that the school had met all of the standards. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in June 2009.

- The school is led by a school management team. The chair of the school management team is the principal leader, who is in charge of the day-to-day running of the school.
- The school operates a kindergarten for children aged three to six years old. Pupils join Class 1 at the start of national curriculum Year 2. The school has one class per year group for each year up to Class 12, which is the equivalent of national curriculum Year 13. The school currently has no pupils in Class 11 (Year 12).
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is around the national average. No pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A small number of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school does not use off-site alternative education provision.

Information about this inspection

- The chair of the school management team acted in the role of headteacher as the main point of contact with the inspection team during the inspection.
- Inspectors met with the chair of the school management team, senior leaders, senior administrators, the chair of the board of trustees and one other trustee.
- Inspectors observed learning across a wide range of subjects and in all age groups. Most of these observations were conducted jointly with a trustee and/or senior leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' written work and observed several drama performances. During the inspection, pupils performed in a spring festival for parents.
- An inspector listened to several pupils read.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation including minutes of trustees' meetings, development plans, analysis of pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour logs. They also considered safeguarding documents and the school's evaluation of its compliance with the independent school standards.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from the lower school (key stage 2) and the upper school (key stage 4) as well as post-16 students.
- Inspectors took account of 133 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 21 responses to the staff questionnaire. Inspectors spoke with several parents at the school gates.

Inspection team

Paul Williams, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jonathan Dyer

Her Majesty's Inspector

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