

# Inspection of RGS Dodderhill

Dodderhill Road, Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire WR9 0BE

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Inspection dates: 5–7 October 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Good**

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The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Early years provision

**Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

RGS Dodderhill is a caring school where pupils thrive. Adults take the time to get to know each and every pupil very well. Teachers encourage and nurture pupils' individual talents and strengths. Pupils describe the school community as a 'family where everyone gets on'. They feel safe and valued and relish coming to school.

Leaders have high expectations for every child. They pay serious attention to ensuring pupils achieve their full potential and develop into confident young adults.

Pupils behave exceptionally well around the school and in class. They consistently show positive attitudes to their education. Pupils are polite, kind and respectful. They go out of their way to welcome visitors to their school. Everyone agrees that bullying is rare. If pupils fall out, they trust adults to help them resolve any issues quickly.

The school goes beyond the expected. There is an impressive range of extra-curricular activities. These are of the highest quality. They allow pupils to develop their talents and excel. They include learning to sail, hockey, choir, coding club and many, many more. Pupils appreciate these opportunities and make excellent use of them. They told inspectors 'there is something for everyone at Dodderhill'.

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

Leaders are ambitious for pupils. They ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learn a broad range of subjects. Children, for instance, start to learn French in the early years.

Leaders plan most subjects logically so that pupils build knowledge step by step. For example, in music, children develop a strong sense of pulse in the early years before learning how to play rhythmic patterns in key stage 1. However, in a few subjects the curriculum is not as carefully sequenced. This means that some content which pupils learn in key stage 2 does not always prepare them fully for learning new concepts in key stage 3.

The school's provision for pupils with SEND is strong. Adults quickly identify pupils who may have additional needs and how best to support them. They share this information with teachers. Teachers use this information to help pupils well in lessons. In addition, leaders train staff in how to meet the needs of pupils with specific learning needs. Consequently, pupils with SEND are fully included in lessons and well supported.

Teachers know how to teach their subjects effectively. They check pupils' understanding well in lessons and use questions skilfully to spot pupils who may be stuck. This means that pupils who need help get it quickly. Teachers use a range of high-quality materials to support learning skilfully. For example, in mathematics,

pupils use electronic devices to plot straight-line graphs. As a result, pupils can see the relationship between graphs and equations.

Leaders promote reading well. The school has several libraries. These are well stocked, bright and inviting. Teachers share their love of stories, poems, and other books with pupils. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the stories they have listened to and the books they are reading. Children in the nursery get off to a good start in reading. They enjoy taking part in singing rhymes and playing listening games. However, leaders have identified the need to improve the teaching of early reading further. By the time children start Year 1, nearly all pupils read confidently at an age-appropriate level. However, the approach to teaching younger children to read sometimes varies. This means that a few children do not consistently get the right support.

Pupils enjoy coming to school, are punctual and are rarely absent. They are highly motivated. Pupils show consistently positive attitudes to their education. They actively support the well-being of other pupils. For example, older pupils encourage younger children into school as they arrive in the morning. Lessons are free from disruption. Pupils told inspectors that this helps them learn because they 'can focus'. When pupils find work difficult, they persevere. They do not give up.

The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is exceptional. Staff know pupils very well. This means they provide opportunities for pupils that match their interests and talents. Leaders give careful thought about how to develop pupils' character. For example, they identified that some pupils would enjoy the chance to develop their independence. So, they arranged for these pupils to step out of their 'comfort zone', and study a qualification in sailing. Furthermore, the school offers meaningful opportunities for pupils to contribute positively to society. For instance, pupils in Year 5 and Year 6, are working on a project with a local care home. As part of the school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum, pupils learn about a wide range of careers. They study a range of different faiths and traditions. Leaders also ensure that pupils learn about age-appropriate healthy relationships in line with statutory guidance. Consequently, the PSHE curriculum prepares pupils well for their next steps and life in modern Britain.

The proprietor body has high expectations. During the pandemic, for instance, it ensured all pupils could study the school's curriculum at home. This allowed pupils to keep up with their learning. Parents greatly appreciated this. The proprietor body knows the school well. It regularly gathers the views of parents, pupils, carers, and staff. The proprietor body also receives helpful information about the school from the headteacher. It uses this information to hold school leaders to account. The proprietor body checks that the independent school standards are consistently met. The body fulfils its statutory duties well. For example, it ensures that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and that the welfare requirements of the early years foundation stage are met. In addition, the safeguarding policy, that has regard to the latest government guidance, is published on the school's website.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff know the signs that a pupil may need help or support. Staff pass on any concerns quickly. Strong relationships between pupils and staff mean that pupils feel confident to raise any worries with adults. When pupils need help, adults ensure they get it quickly.

Leaders are acutely aware of the potential risks facing pupils. They ensure that pupils get the information they need to help them keep safe. Pupils learn, for instance, how to protect themselves from potential harm when using the internet.

## What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- Some teachers do not adopt the best approach when helping younger pupils who struggle with reading. Therefore, a few pupils do not get the most effective support they need to keep pace with the school's early reading curriculum. Leaders should ensure that all teachers of early reading have expert subject knowledge.
- In a few subjects, the curriculum is not yet sufficiently sequenced from the early years to Year 11. However, it is clear from the actions that leaders have already taken that they are in the process of bringing this about.

## 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.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	147783
<b>DfE registration number</b>	885/6057
<b>Local authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10195173
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	169
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	The Royal Grammar School Worcester
<b>Chair</b>	Quentin Poole
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Atkinson
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£7,434 to £12,702
<b>Telephone number</b>	01905 778290
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://www.rgs.org.uk/dodderhill">https://www.rgs.org.uk/dodderhill</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:dodderhill@rgs.org.uk">dodderhill@rgs.org.uk</a>

## Information about this school

- The school is registered to admit pupils aged two to 16. The school currently caters for boys and girls aged two to 11. The 11 to 16 provision is for girls only.
- The school has provision for two-year-old children and offers before- and after-school care. This is managed by the governing body.
- This was the school's first standard inspection since the school was registered by the Department for Education (DfE) on 14 August 2020.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

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

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- 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 their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher. The lead inspector met with the chair of the proprietor body and other governors. Inspectors met with staff, senior leaders, parents and pupils at the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents. These included: school policies, safeguarding records, curriculum plans, pupils' attendance and behaviour records, health and safety records and the single central record.
- The lead inspector carried out a tour of the premises to check compliance with the independent school standards.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in a range of different classes and at different times of the day. They talked to pupils informally about bullying, behaviour and welfare.
- Inspectors focused on the following subjects during the inspection: early reading, mathematics, music and PSHE education. As part of this focus, they met with curriculum leaders and class teachers and talked to pupils. Inspectors visited lessons, accompanied by leaders. They also looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. This included free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.

## **Inspection team**

Christopher Stevens, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Eve Morris

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
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