



Ridgeway Academy

'Everybody can achieve'

School information
2021/22



Respect | Responsibility | Relationships

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Demonstrating improved outcomes at KS4 and KS5

Key Staff

Headteacher	Mrs S Mitcherson	Business Manager	Mrs M Ring
Deputy Headteacher	Mr D Smith	Site Manager	Mr R Colmenares Diaz
Deputy Headteacher	Miss J Smith	ICT Manager	Mr C Di Bernardo
Assistant Headteacher	Mrs L Hyde	Headteacher's PA	Mrs H Smith
Assistant Headteacher	Miss H Jenner	Office Manager	Mrs K Biss
Assistant Headteacher	Miss L Jesson	Finance Manager	Mrs S Dale
Associate Assistant Headteacher	Mrs C Maddocks	Chair of Governors	Mrs A Garland
Associate Assistant Headteacher	Mrs E Kemp		
	Mrs S Merrigan		

The School

'Everybody can achieve' - Ridgeway Academy is an inclusive, comprehensive school. As a member of the Alban Academies Trust we are committed to becoming an outstanding school. We are a growing school, with over 700 students, aged 11-18, including a Sixth Form.

Our site has had a number of recent significant developments, with a Sports complex, a window refurbishment programme, fire prevention work across the school site and updated computer rooms. We constantly develop our buildings to create an improved environment for learning.

School Admissions

Hertfordshire Local Authority manages the transfer and entry to Ridgeway Academy. You will have received the booklet 'Moving on'; this outlines the Local Authority admissions policy and gives advice and information on finding the right school for your son or daughter. If you have decided that you would like your son or daughter to come to Ridgeway Academy you will need to complete a Secondary Transfer Form naming the school as your preference. Step by step guidance on filling in this form and how to apply online is given in the 'Moving on' booklet.

We welcome visits from parents/carers and would encourage you to visit the school in action between Monday 20th September and Friday 24th September 2021. You must book in advance (from Monday 6 Sept) to attend an Open Morning tour - email admin@ridgeway.herts.sch.uk or phone **01707 351350**, on arrival in Reception you will be met by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

The school day:	
8.25am	Morning bell
8.30am to 8.45am	Registration/Assembly
8.45am to 9.45am	Period 1
9.45am to 9.50am	Movement time
9.50am to 10.50am	Period 2
10.50am to 11.10am	Break
11.10am to 12.10pm	Period 3
12.10pm to 12.15pm	Movement time
(12.10pm to 12.50pm)	Lunch 1 (Yr 7,9 and 11)
12.15pm to 1.15pm	Period 4 Yr 8 and 10
12.50pm to 1.50pm	Period 4 Yr 7,9 and 11
(1.15pm to 1.50pm)	Lunch 2 (Yr 8, 10 and Sixth Form)
1.50pm to 1.55pm	Movement time
1.55pm to 2.55pm	Period 5
3.00pm	Extra-curricular activities

The Curriculum

We offer a personalised and flexible curriculum so all our students can achieve their full potential. This is constantly reviewed and updated so it is relevant to the needs of our students.



Key Stage 3 (Year 7 - 9)

We offer a balanced and broad curriculum in line with the National Curriculum. We place significant emphasis on the development of students as rounded individuals and all students follow a programme of study including Philosophy and Ethics and Personal development which includes career guidance, personal, social and health education. In Year 7 all students will develop into effective and confident learners.

In Key Stage 3 students study:

- Computer Science
- Dance
- Drama
- English
- French/Spanish
- Geography
- History
- Language Acquisition
- Mathematics
- Music
- Personal development
- PE
- Philosophy & Ethics
- Science
- Technology (*Food, Graphic Design, Resistant Materials*)
- Visual Arts

Key Stage 4 (Year 10 - 11)

At Key Stage 4 students continue to receive a broad and balanced curriculum leading to GCSE or Level 2 equivalent qualifications. Students have the opportunity to select from a wide range of optional courses as well as completing statutory subjects.

Compulsory subjects:

- English Language
- English Literature
- Mathematics
- PE (Core)
- Personal development
- Science (Combined or Triple)

Additional Key Stage 4 subjects:

- Business Studies
- Computer Science
- Dance
- Drama
- Art
- Hospitality and Catering
- French
- Sociology
- Geography
- History
- Media studies
- Music
- Design and Technology
- Philosophy and Ethics
- Vocational courses including Health and Social Care, Cambridge Technical Sport and Enterprise

Key Stage 5 (Year 12 - 13)

Ridgeway Academy is part of the thriving Welwyn and Hatfield Sixth Form Consortium and this enables us to offer a wide range of Level 3 courses.

Extra-Curricular Life

We encourage all our students to take advantage of the array of extra-curricular enrichment activities available in recognition of their role in supporting the growth of self-confidence, skills, qualities and attributes in our students. The main programme of activities includes:

- An extensive programme of educational visits, offered through our curriculum and by our Directors of Learning, support our students in learning outside of the classroom. These are also facilitated through Extended Learning Days. These range from culture based museum and heritage site visits to theatre performances and opportunities to see elite performers in action. Modern Foreign Languages offer a cultural visit to France, where students can practise their speaking and listening skills and embed themselves in the culture.
- Ridgeway Academy's Character Offer is built around our core values of respect, responsibility and relationships. The Character Offer maps opportunities for students to widen their participation and engagement in character building initiatives across their seven year journey as a Ridgeway student. Certificates are awarded at bronze, silver and gold levels. Achievement badges are issued to students who earn two gold certificates for the same school value.
- A strong extra-curricular sports programme provides sporting opportunities for everyone and includes a Sports leaders qualification and enrichment activities in sporting contexts
- Out of school activities such as: Challenge 12, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DoE) and a Camps International Expedition develop teamwork, communication and leadership skills.
- Faculties are encouraged to run their own extra-curricular offer, which will be recorded through SoCs from 2021/22. For example, The Performing Arts annual stage productions provide opportunities for our students to develop and showcase their performance talents in drama, dance and music and technical prowess in stage management, lighting and sound.
- Our House system provides the structure through which students are encouraged to participate in the wider life of the school. Organised into four Houses: Anderson, Hawking, Lytton and Mandela, with each one consisting of students from every year group - a Head of House, together with their House Captains, run events throughout the year in a spirit of healthy competition.
- A number of subjects offer Student Leadership programmes, which provide opportunities for our students to lead activities for their peers and for children in our Primary feeder schools. Our Student Literacy Leaders support our Accelerated Reader Programme as well as facilitating other literacy initiatives. Competitions are entered in Maths, pitching our students against their peers across the globe. Regular STEM trips are organised including, in 2018-2019, Sixth Form students spending time at Roche and Key Stage 3 students taking part in a three-day STEM trip to University of Hertfordshire, Oaklands College and Leonardo, a leading engineering and defence company based in Hertfordshire. We invite guest speakers to inspire our students with their achievements and how they have overcome barriers to achieve success such as Ben Smith who ran 401 marathons in 401 days. Eleven of our Key Stage 4 students were recently invited to spend the day at Selwyn College, Cambridge University: meeting the Master, touring the College, lunching in the College dining room and learning successful interview techniques.

It is important to us that these opportunities are inclusive for our students and we operate systems which support access to this enrichment.

Academic Support

We are committed to working with parents/carers in partnership so that all our students make maximum progress in their learning.

A key part of this partnership is providing parents/carers with accurate and regular feedback about their child's progress which is achieved by:

- **Progress Reports**
- **Parents' Evenings**

Additionally, we hold annual Consultation Days for parents/carers of students with SEND at which parents/carers, student and members of the SEND team discuss and agree strategies for implementation to accelerate student progress.

One of the strategies used to achieve the best outcomes for students is effective data tracking and intervention. This requires targets for students to be set in each subject.

We set all students new targets each year which will challenge them to attain above national expectations.

Students should be aware of their targets for each subject and progress towards them will be shown on the termly reports that are sent home.

Recognising Achievement

Recognising and rewarding achievement is central to our philosophy for success and supports our core values of respect, responsibility and relationships. We have a powerful system of rewards to encourage positive attitudes to work and learning. The system develops as students progress through the school and we expect all students to be fully involved in receiving the various rewards for their endeavours.

Throughout the year students receive achievement points for excellent work which contributes towards various levels of awards presented to students. We monitor attendance closely and special prizes are given to students with exceptional attendance.

At the end of each term there is an assembly to celebrate our successes where students receive recognition for their achievements. There is also a formal awards evening which is held for students to receive their examination certificates and other prestigious awards.

Home Based Learning

All students are expected to complete home based learning, to support their studies. Students should record their home based learning in their Student Planner and also use the online Google Classroom platform to organise themselves. Parents/Carers should check the planner regularly, signing it each week.

Public Examinations

It is school policy that all Year 11, 12 and 13 students are entered for GCSE/BTEC and A Level for all subjects in which they have followed a course. The only exceptions to this are where the school believes that a student will not achieve a pass because they have failed to complete a compulsory element of the course. In these rare circumstance's parents/carers will always be informed of the decision to withdraw an entry.

Meeting the needs of all students

It is Ridgeway Academy's belief that all students should be catered for according to their needs. Students of all abilities may, at some time, need extra support or encouragement with particular aspects of their work. At transition, information received from Primary Schools is carefully noted and baseline testing on entry ensures that we identify students with additional learning needs. More able students are also identified early by data analysis and teacher recommendations. Departments are aware of the more able students and plan for their provision, including extension tasks within their schemes of work.

We have a dedicated Learning Support Team of Teaching Assistants and Higher Level Teaching Assistants led by our SENDCO. They work with our students in the classroom to support, give guidance and challenge throughout their time in school. This enables students to experience a curriculum which is challenging and accessible. The diversity of skills within the team ensures we are able to support specific learning difficulties, for example, dyslexia. Our staff play an important pastoral role within the school; they provide essential support for all students. This is especially important for students transferring from Primary School and mentoring our older students as they approach their final exams.

Growth mindset

At Ridgeway Academy we promote a Growth Mindset environment and all members of our community are encouraged to develop a Growth Mindset.

Growth Mindset is the recognition that everyone grows, develops and achieves more through continued effort. Research by Developmental Psychologist Dr Carol Dweck of Stanford University points to people having one of two mindsets:

- **Growth**
- **Fixed**

When students believe they can get smarter, they understand that effort makes them stronger. Therefore, they put in extra time and effort, and that leads to higher achievement, this is a Growth Mindset.

From a practical point of view, our staff recognise students with a fixed mindset, those who are: scared to contribute to class discussion for fear of looking silly; who take one bad test result as a sign that they cannot do the subject; believe they are going to fail and therefore give up; who will not try anything new for fear of getting it wrong; who will persevere with the same approach to their learning even when it is not working. Through our academic approach and pastoral programmes, we support and encourage students to challenge their negative thinking and to develop a Growth Mindset.

Students learn that in order to develop a Growth Mindset they need to develop: focus, optimism, resilience, creativity and energy.

Pastoral Care

In our experience, problems that arise can usually be dealt with most effectively through a discussion with your child's Form Tutor, who is best placed to resolve most difficulties. The Director of Learning will also be able to help if you are unhappy about any aspect of your child's education or their experience in school. However, when problems cannot be resolved in this way we would advise parents/carers to contact the member of the Senior Leadership Team who is linked to your child's year group.

Behaviour and Discipline

Any large community needs a set of clear, simple guidelines in order to ensure there is a calm and purposeful environment in which to work and learn. Ridgeway Academy's Code of Conduct is constructed around the 3 'Rs' of:

- **Respect**
- **Responsibility**
- **Relationships**

Ridgeway Academy does not tolerate bullying. Students are encouraged and expected to report all incidents and parents/carers can be assured that the school will deal with such incidents swiftly and effectively.

The school's Anti Bullying Policy is available on the school's website. Our Behaviour for Learning Policy sets out, in detail, how general discipline is maintained in the school. This is achieved principally through the pastoral curriculum and is firmly based on positive reinforcement; our rewards system further enhances this. Ridgeway Academy does not tolerate inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour and students are constantly reminded about the standards of behaviour expected. A copy of the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy is available on the school's website.

Philosophy, Ethics and Collective Worship

Assemblies are an important part of our school day providing an opportunity for students to reflect on a wide variety of moral, philosophical, religious and social issues. It is also an important time for the staff and student to gather as a community.

Philosophy and Ethics is a strong curriculum area at Ridgeway Academy. In line with statutory requirements, students at Key Stage 3 study aspects of the six major world faiths of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism. In the course of their study we try to ensure that students are able to relate the beliefs and practices to areas of their own lives. For example, when studying Pilgrimage, we encourage students to reflect on journeys that have significance for them.

Some students at Key Stage 4 study GCSE Philosophy and Ethics, which involves a comprehensive study of Christianity and Islam. Topics include attitudes to the media, abortion and social injustice. At Key Stage 5 A Level Philosophy and Ethics is offered as part of the Welwyn and Hatfield Sixth Form Consortium. Philosophy and Ethics is also taught as part of the Sixth Form Enrichment Programme.

It is very rare for a parent/carer to exercise their statutory right to withdraw their child(ren) from this valuable and rewarding experience. Where this is the case, however, parents/carers should contact the Headteacher in the first instance in order to discuss the type, quality and standard of work that they need to provide as an alternative.

Careers Advice and Guidance

All students from Year 7 onwards have a formal careers programme which they follow in PSHCE lessons and through enrichment activities and days. In addition, all students and their parents/carers meet with staff to discuss their options for GCSE and the implications of these choices for their Post-16 education, training or employment. These individual interviews are also conducted in Year 11 to support students with their Post-16 choices. Information and the careers library are based in our Careers Room. We also work with Oaklands College to ensure students have a full understanding of the options they offer. All students and parents have access to the Unifrog programme which guides each student through their career pathway.

The school offers an individual support programme for students utilising the expertise of external careers advisors. This takes place from Year 9 on a referral basis. All students in Year 10 have the opportunity to undertake a week of aspirational/career experience. Local business, industry and service organisations are very supportive of the school and we are always able to place our students in worthwhile workplaces.

Break & Lunchtime

A cashless canteen and catering pod, operated by Edwards and Blake, provides hot and cold meals and snacks before school and during their mid-morning and lunchtime breaks. Full details of the cashless system are issued to all parents/carers of new students. We provide indoor and outdoor spaces for students who bring packed lunches.

Health Education

We have a Sex and Relationships Policy in line with legislation. Our aim is to prepare students for the physical and emotional changes that they will undergo during their time at school and for the future. Sex and Relationships education is taught both by the Science Department and by PSHCE teachers. The School Nurse also visits the school to discuss the health aspects of Sex Education. It is unusual for parents/carers to exercise their statutory right to withdraw their child from Sex and Relationships Education.

School Uniform

All students in Years 7 to 11 wear school uniform. The uniform is very smart and distinctive and encourages a sense of pride in Ridgeway Academy. A high standard of appearance is expected at all times as students are excellent ambassadors for the school. We ask that all items are clearly labelled with the student's name. A detailed uniform list is available on our website and in the Student Planner.

Students in the Sixth Form have a smart dress code which reflects their role as lead learners in the school and prepares them for the world of work.

Ridgeway School Policies

Attendance

We place a very high value on attendance and expect all students to attend the full school day. There is a clear link between student attendance and attainment – if a student is not in school they will not reach their full potential.

When it is necessary to withdraw students from education a letter must be sent to the Headteacher. Please note that permission for holidays will not be granted and as such, will be noted as unauthorised absence.

Percentage Attendance 2020 - 2021:

89.7% - This figure reflects COVID related absence

Charging and Remissions Policy

The Local Governing Body recognises the value of the contribution that a wide range of additional activities can make towards a student's personal, social and educational development. The Local Governing Body reserves the right to make a charge in certain circumstances for activities organised by or on behalf of the school which includes:

- Residential activities
- Individual instrumental tuition
- Activities outside school hours
- Examination Fees

The full policy is available on the school website.

Communications

All parents/carers and students are asked to sign the Home School Agreement/Partnership. This document sets out what parents/carers and students can expect from the school and details the responsibilities of both parents/carers and students. The intention of the partnership is to ensure that the basis for supportive relationships between home and school are established.

Accessibility and Equality

Ridgeway Academy is totally committed to equal opportunities for all and we strive to advance equality of opportunity for students, staff and others using the school facilities, ensuring that no individual is discriminated against or treated less favourably. The arrangement for the admission of students with disabilities is in line with Hertfordshire Schools Admissions Policy. (See 'Moving on booklet').

The Local Governing Body monitors the School's commitment to equality and accessibility and has a Single Equality Policy in place that ensures that the curriculum, facilities, information and procedures comply with statutory accessibility and equality requirements. The school's compliance with this policy is regularly reviewed by Governors.

Complaints

Any parent/carer contacting the school with a complaint can be sure of an efficient and courteous response. The complaints procedure is available on the school website.

Child Protection

At Ridgeway Academy we recognise that we have a duty of care for the welfare and safety of all students. We attempt to create an ethos in which students feel secure, valued, listened to and taken seriously. All staff employed by the school are subject to Enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks. Supply staff employed on a daily basis are from agencies that carry out the same checks. Staff are trained by the Local Authority in how to recognise and report child protection issues to our Designated Senior Person (DSP).

We operate within a statutory framework set out by 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018)'. This requires all schools to follow the procedures for protecting children from abuse, which are established by the Herts Safeguarding Children Board. Our DSP for Child Protection, Mr D Smith, deals with all matters surrounding the safety of our students. We also have five Deputy DSPs, Mrs S Akers, Miss M Frost, Miss A Atkins, Miss J Smith and Mrs C Maddocks, who support the DSP and work closely with the School Counsellors. The Child Protection Policy follows the Local Safeguarding Board's guidance and is reviewed annually.

Demonstrating improved outcomes at KS4 and KS5

GCSE and A Levels continued to show an upwards trend in outcomes for students, reflecting the hard work and dedication students put in to providing evidence through assessments and classwork over the course of the year.

English and Maths GCSE continued to perform well and good results in a range of subjects have supported a record number of students continuing to study with us in 6th form subjects.

100% of A level students achieved A* to E grades allowing all students to progress to their desired next steps which included reading Medicine, Law, Physics and International Relations amongst a range of other subjects at universities as well as a number of higher-level apprenticeships.





Ridgeway Academy

Headteacher - **Sarah Mitcherson**

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A member of the Alban Academies Trust

Please note that the information given in this brochure was correct as at September 2021. It should not be assumed that there have been no subsequent changes before the start, or during, the academic year 2021/2022.