

Starhurst School

Chart Lane South, Dorking, RH5 4DB

Inspection dates

3– 4 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
<hr/>			
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students at Starhurst achieve well from often low starting points when they join the school. All groups of students make equally good progress.
- Students make good progress in communication and numeracy skills, especially in reading, speaking and listening and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers are enthusiastic, have good subject knowledge and use time very effectively to help motivate students.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Adults build very good relationships with students over time. The combination of care, consistent behaviour management and support helps to build students' self-esteem and confidence.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have maintained the good achievement, quality of teaching and behaviour since the previous inspection.
- The interesting and varied curriculum gives students many opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Teachers are not given sufficient individual support and training from leaders and managers in order to improve their teaching to being consistently outstanding.
- Teachers do not always help teaching assistants to support students' learning.
- They do not give the work that is planned for more able students early enough in lessons.
- Delete this bullet symbol
- A small number of students do not attend regularly.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons, two of which were joint observations with the headteacher.
- The inspector took account of the online survey of parents' and carers' opinions (Parent View). She also looked at the school's own surveys and read comments from annual reviews and letters to the school.
- Meetings were held with various members of staff, representatives from the governing body and the local authority. The inspector spoke to many students, met with a small group and looked at behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- She also looked at documentation about students' progress, teaching and planning. The school's documents on safeguarding were scrutinised together with records of attendance and students' behaviour.
- The inspector listened to students reading in lessons and looked at their work, both in lessons and in books from the previous year.

Inspection team

Helen Howard, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Starhurst is a residential special school for up to 50 boys aged 11 to 16 who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. All have a statement of special educational needs. Many have additional needs such as autistic spectrum disorder or learning difficulties.
- Twelve students currently choose to be residential for different amounts of time during the week. The residential provision was inspected separately in June 2013.
- The majority of students are White British. Approximately two thirds of students are eligible for pupil premium funding (additional funding given by the government for students who are eligible for free school meals, students from service families and those in care), which is much higher than the national average.
- Nearly two thirds of the students join or leave the school at different stages of their school career. This is much higher than the national average.
- Some Key Stage 4 students attend college placements at Central Surrey and East Surrey Colleges. A few attend a range of local work experience placements or alternative provision at 'STEPS' run by The Surrey Care Trust.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - making sure that teachers give work to the more-able students earlier in the lesson, so that they can make faster progress
 - ensuring that leaders and managers consistently provide training and support for individual teachers, based on information gained from observations
 - giving teaching assistants more opportunities to support students' learning.
- Improve overall attendance by planning individual, targeted support for a small number of students, in partnership with other agencies.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students join Starhurst with attainment that is below expected levels. Many have additional learning difficulties or have missed parts of their education. School records show that most have weak communication and numeracy skills. By the time they leave school they make good progress. All of them achieve basic qualifications in literacy and numeracy. Students who remain at the school from Year 7 to Year 11 and those who are residential make even better progress because they form very strong relationships with staff and get more support over time.
- The school enters students early for examinations in literacy and numeracy and for geography entry level qualifications and this helps to boost students' self-confidence. Adults are especially skilful in motivating students to take qualifications in Year 11. Each student has a carefully planned programme that matches their needs and increasing numbers of them gain six or more GCSEs, including English and mathematics. A few students achieve grade C for mathematics as a result of outstanding teaching. Combinations of work experience and college placements ensure that students are very well prepared for their next stage.
- The school carefully monitors the progress of a few students who use alternative off-site placements to make sure that they also make good progress. Almost all students go on to college or work when they leave school.
- In lessons, there is a strong emphasis on reading and writing. Students are encouraged to read aloud in class and complete reading logs, which record how much they have read each week. All teachers use key words which help students learn and use vocabulary that is linked to the topic being studied. For example, in a Year 9 food technology lesson, students were given a sheet with a choice of adjectives to help them describe different cheeses. They became increasingly confident in speaking and writing about the textures, colours and tastes and made good progress. Older students develop an enjoyment of literature, by reading for example, William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*.
- Students make good progress in mathematics and some make outstanding progress over time. This is because teachers' high expectations, subject knowledge and enthusiasm motivate the students to do well.
- The school promotes equal opportunities well. All groups of students, including those who receive pupil premium funding, make the same good progress. The school has used pupil premium funding to provide outdoor education and to support college placements for individual students. As a result, many students gain qualifications, including climbing, mountain biking, kayaking and construction. The boost to their confidence means that, for many students, the success they experience leads to greater engagement with learning in lessons.
- Many students join the school at different times, often in Key Stage 4. The school sets challenging targets for progress, based on starting points, and is successful in settling students over time so they can re-engage with learning and make good progress while at the school.
- School records show that parents and carers think that their child is achieving well and students agree: as one said, 'I have learnt so much more since coming here.'
- Achievement is not outstanding because the more-able students are not always enabled to make the rapid progress they could.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers and other adults have high expectations of what students can achieve. They use information about students' progress to plan activities that match most students' needs and adapt their teaching to make sure that students understand what they have to do. Students speak warmly of how much teachers help them to do well.
- Teachers are given time to work together to plan lessons and this, together with regular meetings with care staff and teaching assistants, helps students to make good progress,

Headers '3–4'

academically and socially.

- Teachers are enthusiastic and this helps motivate students. They use humour well and make tasks interesting. For example, a Year 11 mathematics lesson focused on reading questions properly for examinations. Students were given a set of problems that ended with, 'Only do the first question!' Students agreed that this was an effective and amusing way of making a serious point.
- Lessons are well structured and very little time is wasted. Teachers give short, timed tasks that keep students focused. Lessons start very quickly and students respond well to this fast pace.
- Students learn best when teaching is practical and memorable. They thoroughly enjoy outdoor lessons, art, gardening and sports. The quality of artwork is especially high throughout the school.
- Teachers mark students' books regularly and give comments about how to improve work. Mostly, they give precise information about how to improve work as lessons are happening, to support those students with weak reading skills.
- Although teaching assistants support and manage behaviour well, they are not consistently involved in supporting learning and sometimes do not have enough to do when the teacher is talking. This means that students do not always make the rapid progress they could with the extra available help.
- Teachers do not consistently give more-able students their higher-level work quickly enough in lessons. As a result, these students do not always make the fast progress they could.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Students generally behave well during lessons and around the school despite their high level of social and behavioural needs. Students say that adults never give up on them: as one said, 'They have the patience of saints.'
- Students make good progress in their social skills. Adults model the behaviour they expect of students at all times and students learn over time how to relate to others. They are welcoming and polite towards visitors, for example, holding doors open for them. At lunchtime, staff and students eat together, creating a calm and relaxed atmosphere.
- School records show that over time, behaviour improves for individuals. As one parent wrote, 'You saw the potential in this lost and confused teenager and surrounded him with care, compassion, opportunities and choices. You gave a mum some hope.'
- Staff, especially teaching assistants, who move with the class to every lesson, know the students very well and are skilful in managing behaviour.
- As students move through the school, they are given increasing opportunities to become independent and take on responsibilities. The reward system allows students to earn grades and certificates for work, effort and behaviour, which link to a choice of Friday activities: as one said, 'Some might pretend not to care but we all do really'. Older students spoke approvingly of the reading 'bling', a medal awarded by the school for reading progress.
- The school tackles discrimination effectively. Students are very aware of what bullying is, including the different types. They say that it does sometimes happen but that they all have an adult they can trust and that the school deals with it seriously. They conduct themselves safely about the school and in lessons. Staff ensure that students behave equally well in college or work placements.
- Although the proportion of fixed-term exclusions is high it has reduced significantly over three years, as has the number of students who are excluded. The school uses exclusion for a small number of days as a last resort for aggressive behaviour. Records show that this has the effect of improving behaviour over time for individuals and of keeping students and staff safe. This year, there have been very few serious incidents needing physical intervention and these have decreased over time. Students say they feel safe and parents and carers who responded to the school's own survey agree.
- Overall attendance has improved since the previous inspection but remains below average. This

Headers '3–4'

is because a small number of students do not attend regularly enough. In order to improve attendance further, the school has recently begun to make home visits and provide a home tutor course to engage these students. This has not yet had enough time to have an impact.

The leadership and management

are good

- Leaders and managers have maintained the students' good achievement and good behaviour, and the overall quality of teaching since the previous inspection. This demonstrates that they have capacity for further improvements.
- Subject and key stage leaders are developing their skills and becoming increasingly confident in monitoring and evaluating their areas of responsibility. They use data well to identify strengths and areas for development. They hold frequent meetings to discuss students' progress and plan support for those who may be underperforming. They are well supported by governors, who hold them to account through regular meetings and presentations to the governing body.
- There is an effective programme of whole-school training for all staff, including for behaviour management and teaching, which helps staff to reflect on their own teaching and to ensure that they all manage behaviour consistently. Teachers have the opportunity to work with local mainstream schools to ensure that they keep up to date with recent curriculum developments.
- Although there is a whole-school programme to maintain good teaching overall, leaders and managers do not consistently provide support or training for individual teachers, based on information gained from their lesson observations in order to improve teaching to outstanding.
- The local authority has very recently begun to offer more support to the school for leadership and to improve teaching further. So far, this has helped to check that leaders' and managers' judgments about teaching are accurate and has enabled them to further develop their self-evaluation, which is used to inform planning for the future. External consultants now support individual teachers with subject content and improvements in teaching. There has not yet been enough time to show the impact of this.
- An effective procedure for performance management gives individual teachers targets for improvement and links to the school development plan. This has been reviewed and a new system is in place this year. There has not been enough time to evaluate the impact of this on raising standards further.
- The curriculum offers a wide range of academic and vocational subjects. It is broad and varied, with good opportunities for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including 'diversity' evenings, where students consider cultures from around the world, and many artistic and sporting opportunities.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effectively in place in school and for off-site placements. The school works very well with other agencies to ensure students' well-being, including those who may be vulnerable because of their learning difficulties.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body have a good range of skills to hold senior leaders and managers to account. They regularly visit the school to monitor its work and make strong links with subject leaders. Their records show increasing levels of challenge and support. They are knowledgeable about students' performance data and they know how pupil premium funding is spent, together with the resulting impact on how well students have done. They know the quality of teaching and check that teachers' pay progression is linked to their performance. They tackle underperformance decisively. They ensure that resources are used effectively. The local authority is undertaking a review of governance as part of its support plan for the school.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	125464
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	426399
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	41
Number of boarders on roll	11
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eileen Close
Headteacher	John Watson
Date of previous school inspection	10–11 November 2010
Telephone number	01306 883763
Fax number	01306 889819
Email address	info@starhurst.surrey.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

