

# The Gatwick School

23 Gatwick Road, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 9TP

## Inspection dates

17–18 May 2017

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders act successfully to achieve their vision for the school. The whole staff is committed to the ongoing development of this new school as it grows. Staff are rightly proud of what they realise collectively for the pupils in their care.
- Since taking up his post in September 2016, the head of school has built effectively on the work of his predecessor. He works closely with the executive headteacher to provide clear direction supported by well-structured systems. This ensures that the school continues to improve.
- The school provides well for learners who have a wide range of needs. The number of pupils on roll is growing rapidly, showing the confidence pupils and their parents have in the school. Pupils who join the school mid-year flourish because of the individual support they receive.
- Pupils have good relationships with their teachers, which enables them to engage purposefully with their learning. Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to plan learning effectively across a range of subjects at both key stages.
- Teachers do not always match learning activities closely with the needs or starting points of individuals. As a result, disadvantaged pupils and those with high prior attainment do not make such rapid progress as other groups of learners.
- Secondary-age pupils thrive on opportunities to contribute to their growing community. They look after younger pupils well. All pupils are very well cared for and flourish because of the wide range of opportunities that contribute to their personal development.
- Pupils' attendance and behaviour are good and improving because of the successful systems in place. Some pupils who did not attend school regularly in the past do so now because of leaders' effective work with them and their families.
- Pupils make increasingly rapid progress with their learning. Those who join the school mid-year, who speak English as an additional language, or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make accelerated progress.
- Provision for children in the early years foundation stage is good. Leaders evaluate strengths and weaknesses in the early years accurately. They take appropriate action where necessary, which is securing ongoing improvement.
- Children in the early years foundation stage are happy and confident. They learn well, particularly in phonics. Leaders recognise that pupils' learning of number is not currently as secure as it is in other areas of the curriculum.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build the wider leadership across the school as it expands, so that leaders at all levels support the ongoing journey of school improvement.
- Refine lesson planning at both key stages, so that:
  - learning activities match the needs and starting points of different groups of pupils more closely
  - pupils of all abilities are challenged to make equally rapid progress over time.
- Improve outcomes for pupils, so that:
  - a larger percentage of pupils achieve a greater depth of learning by the end of key stage 1
  - disadvantaged pupils make consistently rapid progress and diminish the differences in their attainment compared with other pupils nationally
  - pupils with high starting points at the end of key stage 2 make good progress and achieve high outcomes by the end of Year 11.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The head of school took up his post in September 2016. Working effectively with the executive headteacher, he is building on his predecessor's legacy. As the school expands rapidly, systems and processes are adapting to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. This is leading to increased rigour and accountability at all levels, which is helping standards to rise.
- Many pupils join the school at times other than the start of Reception and Year 7. They are accepted readily into the school by pupils and staff alike. Pupils, particularly those in key stage 3, value the extra help teachers give them to catch up with their peers. This is particularly true for pupils who arrive at the school mid-year who speak English as an additional language or who have had less positive experiences in education in the past.
- The school curriculum is appropriately broad and is evolving to meet the changing needs of the school. In the primary phase, cross-curricular topic work complements core learning in English and mathematics effectively. Across key stage 3, a similar approach provides pupils with access to a rich diet of humanities-based learning. Leaders are reviewing and adapting the curriculum as pupils move into key stages 2 and 4, to ensure that it remains suitably broad.
- All pupils benefit from a rich range of opportunities to enhance their learning in class. Primary-age pupils are looked after well at breakfast and after-school wrap-around care, which they enjoy attending. Secondary-age pupils participate in a wide variety of lunchtime and after-school clubs, covering sports, music, creative writing and other activities, which develop their wider skills and experiences. Key stage 3 pupils relish the opportunities that their extended day gives them to benefit from extra learning time and individualised support from their teachers.
- Leaders check carefully and regularly how well all staff contribute to pupils' achievements and progress. They provide helpful feedback, training and support to individual staff, which helps them improve the quality of their work. Staff value the good-quality support they receive, which they feel prepares them well for their respective roles in school.
- Leaders use additional funding well to support disadvantaged pupils and those who join Year 7 needing to catch up in English and mathematics. The head of school has reviewed how funding was used in the past, and has adapted plans so that they more effectively remove barriers that individual pupils have to their learning. Consequently, pupils who begin key stage 3 with low literacy and numeracy levels make rapid progress. Disadvantaged pupils make typically good progress, but are not currently catching up with their peers consistently across year groups and subjects.
- Leaders use the sports premium effectively to ensure that pupils in the primary phase access high-quality sports provision. Curriculum learning is enhanced by the opportunity to participate in after-school sports clubs. Leaders recognise the need to develop further how this funding is used to ensure that the quality of sports provision becomes sustainable in the longer term.

- Supported well by senior leaders, the recently appointed special educational needs coordinator is effective in her role. She knows pupils well and checks regularly to see how well they are achieving, to make sure extra help meets their individual needs carefully. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress over time.
- At this relatively early stage in the life of the school, wider leadership is in the early stages of evolution. Senior leaders and those responsible for governance continually review and adapt leadership structures across the school. This ensures that the leadership team remains fit for purpose and enables the school's effectiveness to remain secure and develop further.

### **Governance of the school**

- The Aurora Academies Trust provides governance to The Gatwick School. It delegates responsibility for learning and teaching at the school to a local academy board.
- Trustees challenge school leaders effectively. They visit regularly to check how well the school is performing. Their frequent and detailed reviews help leaders to maintain their focus on continuous improvement while retaining the school's unique character.
- The trust provides helpful access to high-quality support and training for staff across the school. Leaders value the opportunity to liaise with colleagues from across the trust, which helps them become even more effective in their roles.
- The local academy board shares a commitment to ensuring that pupils are well cared for and have access to high-quality education. They visit the school often to lend their support and to test out what leaders tell them about standards in the school. Their recently appointed chair brings useful professional expertise, which is supporting the local academy board in developing its rigour and effectiveness.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff know pupils well and are highly vigilant in relation to their welfare. Consequently, pupils say that they feel safe and very well cared for. Their parents support this view, appreciating how their children are known as individuals in this close-knit community.
- Leaders ensure that robust systems and procedures are in place to keep pupils safe. Staff attend regular and helpful training that reflects relevant local issues. This enables them to act swiftly and appropriately on any concerns that may arise.
- Leaders provide effective support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. They work closely with relevant support from beyond the school where this is needed. They keep careful records of this work.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers use their sound subject knowledge to plan carefully structured learning activities across the curriculum in both the primary and secondary phase. They provide helpful and stimulating resources that help pupils to access and succeed with their learning. Typically, additional adults support pupils well in their lessons, ensuring that pupils can make good progress.
- Across the range of subjects and year groups, pupils' work is appropriately challenging for their age. Cross-curricular topic work in key stage 1 enables pupils to make links between their subjects. A similar approach to learning in humanities in Years 7 and 8 helps pupils to use their skills and deepen their understanding of how different learning fits together.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make very rapid progress because the extra support they receive to develop their English is highly effective. Similarly, pupils who join the school part-way through key stage 3 and needing to catch up engage quickly with learning. This helps them to make accelerated progress from their typically low starting points.
- Parents understand and appreciate the information leaders share with them about how well their children are achieving. Leaders communicate effectively with pupils and parents about the school's developing assessment system, which helps parents to support their children to make good progress.
- Teachers have consistently high expectations for pupils' behaviour across all areas of the school. They know pupils well and encourage them to behave appropriately. As a result, there is a calm and purposeful learning environment in most lessons. On occasion, if pupils become distracted or do not meet teachers' high expectations, they respond well to prompts from adults, which help them to regain their focus.
- Pupils receive useful homework to support them with their learning. At key stage 3, homework complements well the extra structured learning time that pupils have as part of their school day. Most parents feel that their child receives appropriate homework for their age. A small proportion of primary-aged pupils feel that they get too much homework and that it doesn't inspire them to learn.
- Teachers use feedback effectively to help pupils improve. During lessons, high-quality conversations direct pupils clearly to their next steps. Teachers use the school's marking policy routinely to provide pupils with feedback about how to improve their written work. Some pupils use this feedback well and regularly to make rapid progress with their learning, although this is not consistently the case across the school.
- Pupils are supported well in lessons by teachers and other adults, who understand their individual needs. However, pupils do not typically have the resilience to persevere or help themselves if they 'get stuck'. This sometimes slows their progress or leads to distraction while they wait for an adult to help them.
- Although learning in lessons is structured well, some teachers do not match lesson activities sufficiently closely to the prior learning or starting points of different groups of learners. Consequently, some pupils' progress is less rapid than others.

**Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Leaders have established a unique sense of family across this all-through school. Pupils, parents and staff are proud to be members of the school community. Older and younger pupils exist harmoniously alongside each other. As a result, pupils are confident, articulate and welcoming.
- Pupils, particularly in the secondary phase, benefit from rich opportunities that support their personal development. Lunchtime and after-school clubs cater for a wide variety of interests, such as creative writing, the arts and a number of different sports. Some of these clubs are run by or at the request of key stage 3 pupils. Staff give freely of their time during non-teaching time to ensure that every pupil who wishes to attend a club has the chance to do so.
- Pupils and adults are highly accepting of others within their community. They understand and celebrate what makes them different from each other. During the inspection, members of the recently formed LGBTQ club spoke maturely to key stage 3 pupils in assembly about their club and how it seeks to raise other pupils' awareness of gender issues. They were received and supported sensitively by other pupils. This symbolised the culture of respect that is evident throughout the school.
- Leaders make extremely effective use of opportunities to inspire pupils about their future choices. They engage successfully with local businesses and higher education institutions, who provide visit experiences and work with pupils in school. This helps to raise pupils' aspirations and prepares them well for their next steps.
- Leaders ensure that high-quality support is readily available for any pupils who may need it to support their social, emotional and mental health needs. This is valued by all pupils, especially those who need help with particular challenges or who might otherwise have disengaged from attending school and learning well.
- Leaders celebrate pupils' academic and personal achievements extremely well. The relaunched rewards system focuses closely on recognising and celebrating achievements. Pupils celebrate together in assembly, sharing their talents through performance and talking proudly about their successes. Around the school, leaders and teachers interact with pupils on a level that shows how well they know and understand them as individuals.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe at a level appropriate to their age. In both key stages, pupils learn about aspects of personal safety, including safe use of the internet, through their personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons and a coordinated programme of assemblies. This helps them to manage risks effectively.

- In both phases of the school, a 'student leadership' group supports the staff very well, with pupils acting as ambassadors in the local community. They represent the views of other pupils to school leaders as well as helping pupils resolve their conflicts. They contribute thoughtfully to discussions about the ongoing development of the school. These opportunities help pupils of all ages to develop the skills that will help them to become future leaders.
- Older and younger pupils are managed extremely well as they move around the school, despite the current challenges posed by the evolving site and the limited outside space. Senior student leaders greet pupils at the start of the day, walking them to their play space so that they feel secure. Designated areas for primary- and secondary-aged pupils at busy times of the day ensure that risks are minimised and pupils of all ages are safe.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils respond positively to staff's high expectations for their conduct, based around the school's '4Ps principles' of pupils being 'polite, prepared, positive and productive'. Pupils are courteous and friendly towards each other in lessons and when moving around the school. They are respectful towards adults and their school environment.
- Pupils report that bullying is rare. They are confident that adults take effective action if it occurs. Parents largely support this view, saying that any concerns they raise are addressed promptly. The number of reward points pupils receive is increasing over time as the number of behaviour points reduces, showing the impact of the emphasis on positive expectations and recognition.
- Pupils' attendance has improved over the past three years and is now broadly in line with the national average. Disadvantaged pupils do not currently attend school as regularly as others. Leaders work tirelessly with individual pupils and their families where extra support is needed to ensure that they attend school regularly. As a result, the percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from school is reducing quickly.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils make increasingly rapid progress across their range of subjects in both the primary and secondary phases of the school. In the secondary phase, current progress puts pupils on track to achieve above-average outcomes at GCSE by the end of Year 11. In the primary phase, the proportions of pupils achieving at least the expected standard for their age are increasing year on year.
- The proportion of primary-age pupils achieving the standard of the Year 1 phonics check is increasing over time, as a result of effective teaching. Pupils make strong progress in this aspect of their learning, and those currently in Year 1 are set to achieve well above national figures. Pupils who did not meet the standard by the end of Year 1 in 2016 are making good progress towards achieving it this year.

- Pupils with typically low starting points make strong progress over time and are catching up with their peers in school. This is particularly the case for pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is because the individualised support they receive is very effective.
- Pupils attain increasingly well in reading, writing and mathematics across key stage 1. Overall, outcomes in writing for pupils in Year 2 are not as good as for those currently in Year 1. Those who are further behind, some of whom have joined the school since the start of key stage 1, are improving steadily and beginning to catch up with their peers in school.
- The percentage of pupils in key stage 1 who are achieving a greater depth of learning in reading, writing and mathematics is below the 2016 national average, particularly in Year 2. The most able pupils do not always make as strong progress as those with typically lower starting points. Outcomes are higher in Year 1 than in Year 2, showing that standards are rising. Leaders are focused on ensuring that all pupils make similarly good progress so that they achieve their potential and are prepared well for key stage 2 and beyond.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as their peers in school. They are making increasingly rapid progress, which is helping them to catch up with their peers, especially in key stage 3. They will need to maintain this rate of progress in order to catch up with other pupils nationally.
- Although pupils generally make good progress across their range of subjects, this is not consistently the case. Leaders have taken effective action to address areas of underperformance in relation to boys, the disadvantaged and the most able. As a result, these groups now make better progress than their peers in school but have not yet caught up with others nationally.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- The early years foundation stage provides a stimulating environment which children enjoy. This helps them to learn a broad range of skills. As a result, children flourish and are well prepared for their key stage 1 learning.
- Children engage in purposeful activity that supports their development across all the different areas of learning. Adults support them well by building and adapting activities around children's needs and interests. They use the inside and outside learning areas creatively to move children's learning on.
- The children in the early years are confident and inquisitive. They work and play nicely together, persevering with their chosen activities when they become 'tricky'. Adults use questioning effectively to further children's knowledge, skills and understanding. Consequently, they make good progress across the different areas of learning.
- The primary phase leader has an accurate understanding of the strengths of the provision as well as the priorities for ongoing development. She has taken effective action to improve children's outcomes over time. She ensures that adults' assessments of children's learning are accurate and are used to track their progress and direct future learning. This helps the children to achieve well.



- Staff work closely with parents, families and local pre-schools to make sure that they know children well before they join the school. This helps children to settle quickly and to make good progress. Parents value how staff work with them to share learning from school at home so that they can support learning in school with activities they do at home.
- Outcomes in early years are improving year on year. In 2016, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development was well above the national average. Children currently in the early years foundation stage are achieving similarly well, and their phonics knowledge is particularly strong, as a result of how effectively this is taught.
- Leaders recognise that children's learning in number is not currently as strong as it is in other parts of the curriculum. Teachers are adapting the activities that children participate in so that they provide high-quality opportunities to develop this aspect of children's learning more quickly.

## School details

Unique reference number	141038
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10032503

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	345
Appropriate authority	Local academy board
Chair	Ms Sara Boyle
Headteacher	Mr Mark Roessler (Head of school), Mr Paul Reilly (Executive headteacher)
Telephone number	01293 538 779
Website	<a href="http://www.gatwickschool.org.uk">www.gatwickschool.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@thegatwickschool.org.uk">info@thegatwickschool.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The Gatwick School is an all-through free school for pupils aged four to 16. It opened in September 2014, and was re-brokered from The Crawley Free School Trust to become part of the Aurora Academies Trust in October 2016. It currently only has pupils in early years, key stage 1 and key stage 3.
- The school is expanding rapidly, with high proportions of pupils joining the school at times other than the start of Reception Year and Year 7. It anticipates growing to become a school for 1,020 pupils by 2,020, when it will have pupils in every year group.
- The percentage of girls is below that seen nationally in primary and secondary schools. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils (those supported by the pupil premium) is broadly typical of that seen nationally. More of the disadvantaged pupils are in key stage 3 than in the early years or key stage 1.

- Just under a quarter of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. An increasing proportion of pupils in the school speak English as an additional language.
- Approximately a tenth of pupils are classed as requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is slightly below other schools nationally. There are four pupils in the school with an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs.
- The school runs a number of after-school clubs for pupils in all year groups. It also provides wrap-around childcare for pupils in the primary phase, via a breakfast and after-school club.
- The head of school took up his post in September 2016. The chair of the local advisory board (which supports the trustees in holding school leaders to account for teaching, learning and leadership) has only been in her current post for two months.
- The school is not currently judged against the floor standards that the government expects pupils to achieve, as it has no pupils in key stages 2 and 4.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with school leaders, teachers, pupils, and representatives from the Aurora Academies Trust and the local academy board. They reviewed a wide range of documents relating to the school's self-evaluation, checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements. Inspectors also considered safeguarding procedures, child protection arrangements and school policies, including those on the website.
- Inspectors visited all classes in the early years and key stage 1, as well as lessons across a broad range of subjects at key stage 3. Some of these lesson visits were carried out alongside school leaders. During these visits, inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and looked at their work.
- Inspectors considered 17 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire, but inspectors gathered pupils' views by meeting groups of pupils formally, as well as speaking to them informally over the course of the inspection. Inspectors also reviewed 81 responses to the Parent View online survey, including 52 free-text responses. Inspectors also met with a group of parents, and spoke to others informally at the start of the day.

## Inspection team

Kathryn Moles, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Linda Taylor	Ofsted Inspector
Colin Lankester	Ofsted Inspector

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