

Inspection of a good school: Horringer Court Middle School

Glastonbury Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 2EX

Inspection dates:

5–6 March 2020

Outcome

Horringer Court Middle School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this school. They acknowledge its strong community feel. Year 5 pupils enjoy having a Year 8 buddy to help them to settle in. Pupils and parents like the specialist teachers and facilities, and the range of subjects on offer. Pupils appreciate that these give them more opportunities in the future. Staff are proud to work at this school. They have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils respond by working hard and behaving well.

Pupils are kind and considerate of each other, including when moving around the school. Pupils feel safe and know they can talk to any adult if they have concerns. Bullying is rare but if it does happen, staff are quick to resolve it. Pupils told us that staff go the extra mile to help and support them.

Pupils value the many opportunities beyond the classroom. They talk enthusiastically about sports clubs and trips such as the key stage 3 computer science trip to Adastral Park. Pupils take part in activities involving the trust's primary and upper schools such as the United Nations debating competition.

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

Leaders are ambitious for pupils and expect them to achieve well across all subjects. The curriculum is broad and taught as separate subjects in both key stages 2 and 3. All pupils study French and in Year 8; some learn German. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They use this to good effect when planning lessons.

Across most subjects, curriculum plans are well-organised. In mathematics, modern foreign languages (MFL) and history, curriculum leaders have set out the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn as they move through the school. Teachers know what they are going to teach to pupils and when. However, planning in a few subjects is not as developed.

Pupils love reading. They enjoy the 10-minute reading session that starts every lesson. By the end of Year 8, most pupils have gained the knowledge and skills they need to become confident, fluent readers. However, in key stage 2, pupils who have fallen behind with their reading are not given the support to catch up quickly.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is strong. Leaders and teachers ensure that pupils with SEND are fully involved with school life and learning. Parents of pupils with SEND are overwhelmingly positive about the personalised support their children get and the strong progress they make while at the school. During Year 8, to prepare for secondary school, leaders organise additional experiences for pupils with SEND, such as extra visits and meetings with the staff who will support them. This helps pupils with SEND settle quickly and have a positive start at their next school.

Leaders make sure staff understand and apply the school's behaviour policy consistently. Pupils behave positively in lessons. Learning is rarely affected by poor behaviour. Parents like the immediate feedback they get about their children's behaviour and the reward points their children achieve.

Pupils' personal development is promoted well. They take on roles and responsibilities such as being a house captain. Trips and visits add significantly to pupils' learning and enjoyment. These include visits to other schools to take part in learning days in mathematics, science and English, and a trip to France. While much is done to broaden pupils' experiences and develop their confidence, pupils do not receive enough information about future careers to help them make informed choices.

Leaders support staff with effective training and professional development. Leaders are considerate of staff workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure staff receive the necessary training in order to carry out their roles successfully and keep children safe. There is a strong culture of vigilance. Staff understand and use the school's procedures correctly to raise concerns about pupils who might be at risk. Records are kept securely. They are appropriately detailed, including actions taken and whether issues have been resolved.

The designated safeguarding leader works extremely well with external agencies to protect pupils from harm. Procedures for checking whether staff are suitable to work in school are thorough. The school site is safe and secure.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teaching in some subjects is not as well-planned and sequenced as in others. Plans do not always help pupils build on what they already know. Senior leaders need to provide

further training and support so that across all subjects, curriculum leaders plan teaching and learning effectively.

- In key stage 2, pupils who have fallen behind with their reading do not catch up quickly enough or make sufficient progress. This hinders their ability to learn successfully across subjects. Leaders should develop and implement plans to make sure that all pupils gain the knowledge and skills they need to become confident, fluent readers.
- Pupils do not get enough information about future careers. This means that they do not have sufficient guidance to help them make choices later in life. Leaders should make sure pupils are provided with an effective careers education.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 13–14 February 2013.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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 school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	137179
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10121472
Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	9 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	350
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Christine Quinn
Headteacher	Steven Palmer
Website	www.burytrust.org/horringer
Date of previous inspection	14 June 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Bury St Edmunds Academy Trust which is an all-through trust made up of one primary school, two middle schools and one upper school.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The current headteacher joined the school in September 2018.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- During the inspection, we met with pupils to talk about their work and school life. We also spoke to pupils during lessons and around the school site. We held meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders, governors and teachers. We spoke to a representative of the local authority, the lead headteacher of the Bury St Edmunds Academy Trust and the vice-chair of the board of trustees, by telephone.
- We reviewed documentation, which included leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

- We did deep dives in reading, mathematics, MFL and humanities. In these subjects, we met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, spoke with pupils, met with teaching staff and looked at pupils' work.
- We considered the 84 responses made by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the 83 comments to Ofsted's free-text system. We took account of the 28 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.

Inspection team

Sue Pryor, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Rowena Simmons

Ofsted Inspector

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