

Inspection of a good school: Furze Platt Senior School

Furze Platt Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 7NQ

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 November 2021

Outcome

Furze Platt Senior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are friendly, courteous and polite. They say that they are happy and that they feel safe. Pupils' relationships are shaped by the ACHIEVE values of the school, which stands for 'Ambitious, Collaborative, Happy, Integrity, Endurance, Versatility, Excellence'. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They told us that bullying is rare and, when it does happen, staff deal with it quickly.

Pupils are knowledgeable about women's rights, black history, diversity and equality. They are well versed in terminology relating to sexual orientation and gender identity. They appreciate the different contributions that everyone can make. Younger pupils welcome the support offered by sixth-form students for their welfare and well-being.

The school is rightly proud of its extra-curricular provision. It offers over 50 different clubs and activities before, after and during school. Provision covers sport and music as well as mathematics, psychology, confidence, cookery, gardening and Latin. Pupils are also actively involved in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

Governors and leaders are ambitious for what pupils can achieve academically and how they can develop personally. The curriculum is broad and personalised. It is designed well to meet the needs of all pupils. Parents and guardians speak enthusiastically about the school. They value the school's commitment to academic and personal development.

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

Leaders and staff are ambitious for pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have a good understanding of the school priorities and address them with determination and commitment. Governors are ambitious and knowledgeable about the school.

The curriculum is aspiring. Starting points reflect what pupils already know and the curriculum has been carefully tailored to help pupils catch up. The programme for

personal, social and health education (PSHE) covers careers, citizenship, relationships and sex education.

Middle leaders articulate how the curriculum has been matched to the national curriculum and beyond. For example, in history, the curriculum includes lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ+) history. The theme is sensitively picked up across other subjects in the curriculum.

The English department has worked hard to address shortcomings in pupils' writing skills. Reading is emphasised across the school. Oracy is encouraged through deep questioning. Subject-specific vocabulary is highlighted. Sixth-form students receive reading lists that help to expand their knowledge beyond the taught curriculum.

Pupils with SEND are well supported and achieve as well as their peers. Disadvantaged pupils are known to the teachers, who have a range of strategies to support them. However, these pupils are still not achieving as well as their peers, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Teachers' subject knowledge is particularly strong. Most teachers are subject specialists. They use their knowledge to support pupils and identify common errors and misconceptions. Teachers ensure that assessment opportunities are planned and carefully moderated.

Behaviour is calm around the school site and conducive to learning in lessons. Interactions are courteous and respectful. Teachers quickly pick up any inappropriate behaviour. Behaviour in the sixth form is exemplary. Sixth-form students are good role models for the rest of the school.

Pupils are confident about the support available to teach them to be safe. This includes online information and communication technology lessons, assemblies, tutorials and PSHE work. Pupils are respectful to one another, and polite and friendly to visitors. All pupils spoken to enjoyed school and showed pride in being part of the school community.

British values, and pupils' moral and social responsibilities, are strongly supported across the curriculum. Content has been cross-referenced to identify where these topics are incorporated into the curriculum, but the school accepts that further development work is needed.

The school is committed to careers education. It aims to ensure that pupils and students are ambitious in their career aspirations, as well as having the versatility to adapt to the modern-day job market. Disadvantaged pupils, including those with SEND, are particularly well supported to make appropriate and aspirational career choices.

Sixth-form students study hard and achieve well. A significant number join the sixth form from other schools. Students act as mental health ambassadors and look after younger pupils. They understand consent and know about healthy relationships. Last year, 115 students went on to study 83 different courses at 46 different universities.

School leaders are ambitious for the school. They enjoy positive relationships with the rest of the staff and work with them to ensure the success of the school. Teachers are grateful for the support offered in terms of induction and the consideration given to their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safety, welfare and well-being of the whole school community form a priority for leaders at the school. Leaders are appropriately trained and suitably qualified. They ensure that all staff are aware of their legal and moral responsibilities to ensure that all pupils are always safe. The single central record meets all statutory requirements.

Pupils say that they feel safe, and they are safe. The teachers know them well, and pupils are suitably supported. They appreciate the advice received on keeping themselves safe and avoiding risks. They learn about healthy relationships and understand consent. They know that they can talk to staff if they have any concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Disadvantaged pupils are still not achieving as well as they should. Their attendance, engagement and aspirations are not as high as their peers. Leaders should continue their work to increase attendance, improve behaviour and support disadvantaged pupils to make better-informed decisions about career pathways.

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 outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2016.

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 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	137740
Local authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	10200068
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1459
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	300
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Gavin Tisshaw
Headteacher	Andrew Morrison
Website	http://www.furzeplatt.com
Date of previous inspection	20 and 21 September 2016

Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average mixed secondary school for 11- to 18-year-olds. The school has a resource base called the Shine ASD Resource Base for pupils with autism spectrum disorder.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is above the national average. The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at four registered education providers as well as one online alternative provision provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical educational qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- During this inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science, history and PSHE. This involved meeting with leaders of subjects, visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work and talking to pupils and staff.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other staff. They reviewed documentation and actions taken to safeguard pupils and promote their welfare, health and safety. Some meetings were held online in instances where staff were isolating.
- Inspectors looked at curriculum documents, school policies and the single central record. The lead inspector met with governors and early career teachers as well as staff who were new to the school.
- Inspectors considered 127 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and a further 96 written responses from parents. Inspectors also considered the survey responses from 76 members of staff and 191 pupils.

Inspection team

Paul Metcalf, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Beverley Murtagh	Ofsted Inspector
Taj Bhambra	Ofsted Inspector

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