

Inspection of Durrington High School

The Boulevard, Worthing, West Sussex BN13 1JX

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 March 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend this happy and ambitious school. They know their teachers want them to go 'beyond their best'. They work hard to meet these expectations, confident that their teachers will support them. Pupils enjoy the range of subjects on offer at the school and feel well prepared for the next steps in their education or training. One parent wrote, 'This is an excellent school that encourages my child to be their best and exceed their goals.'

There is a positive atmosphere around the school, built on strong relationships between teachers and pupils. Pupils greet their teachers warmly when arriving to lessons. The vast majority of pupils behave well at the school. When bullying or unkindness occurs, leaders deal with it quickly and effectively. Pupils are actively encouraged to demonstrate the school's 'KAPP' values of kindness, aspiration, perseverance and pride.

Pupils benefit from the broad range of exciting activities offered through extra-curricular clubs and events. Participation is high. Opportunities include sports, such as football, basketball and boccia, as well as academic activities, such as coding and debating. Pupils look forward to opportunities to showcase their talents, for example through drama performances and dance competitions.

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

Building on the work of their research school, leaders at Durrington High have developed a curriculum informed by evidence about what works. They have been ambitious when deciding what pupils should learn. Leaders' aspirations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are equally high. These pupils achieve well because teachers carefully adapt lessons to meet their needs.

Subject leaders are highly knowledgeable and passionate. They provide training to ensure that teachers have expert knowledge of each topic. This contributes strongly to the quality of pupils' learning across the school, which is consistently effective. Teachers explain concepts clearly and provide opportunities for pupils to practise their learning with increasing independence. In most lessons, teachers check regularly that pupils understand new ideas before moving on, but this is not consistent.

Pupils' successes are celebrated often. This has become a part of the school's culture through awards and assemblies. This has a high profile in the school. Pupils enjoy receiving recognition for demonstrating the school's KAPP values.

Leaders have considered carefully the curriculum for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. They have listened to pupils and thought specifically about what they need to know. For example, there is a strong focus on supporting pupils to care for their mental health. This programme has been introduced more

recently than some other parts of the curriculum. Although it has been designed well, it is not yet fully embedded.

Teachers ensure that lessons are calm and focused. They set clear boundaries and pupils respond well to this. This extends into other areas of the school, such as corridors and social areas, where staff are highly consistent in reinforcing minimum expectations. Leaders apply exclusions fairly in response to more extreme behaviours because they recognise that everyone in the school has the right to feel safe. At the same time, they have worked hard to establish a respectful culture in the school. Permanent exclusions remain high but are reducing quickly. Leaders use innovative approaches to improve the attendance of particular groups of pupils. This has had a positive impact on reducing the number of pupils who do not attend school regularly enough.

Leaders have drawn on the strengths of the multi-academy trust to recruit, retain and develop staff. This includes making use of the school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) programme and research school to offer high-quality training. Many staff have stayed at the school for a long time and taken up leadership posts. This approach has added strength and depth to the school's staffing. Staff appreciate that leaders consider their workload when making decisions. They feel satisfied in their roles because they recognise the impact of their work on pupils.

Governors are knowledgeable about the school's work. They talk in detail about the standard of education at the school and challenge leaders when appropriate. They work closely with leaders and trustees to shape the school's vision.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide regular training for all staff and governors. They use their understanding of their community and pupils to ensure that this is relevant and useful. Staff are vigilant and know how to report concerns. They do so regularly. Leaders take timely and effective action in response to concerns where necessary. This includes working with external agencies to secure support as required.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including through the school's PSHE programme. For example, they learn about healthy relationships and the dangers of addiction. Pupils know that there is someone in school they can talk to if they are worried or concerned.

Leaders have recently introduced a new recording system for logging concerns about pupils. They understand the importance of bringing all their records together and they are in the process of doing this.

Governors are knowledgeable about their role in keeping children safe. They ask questions and check record-keeping to assure themselves that the school's procedures are up to date and compliant.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, teachers do not check pupils' understanding before moving on through the curriculum. Leaders have identified the use of questioning as an area for further development and are in the process of providing additional training in this area. This will help to ensure that opportunities to identify and unpick misconceptions in lessons are more consistently exploited.
- The curriculum for PSHE is not yet fully embedded. Leaders should continue with their plans to develop this aspect of the school's work. This includes planning where aspects of the PSHE curriculum can be meaningfully linked to other subject areas. As this work becomes more established, it will help to ensure that pupils develop a mature understanding of sensitive or challenging topics.

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	140713
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10201345
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1619
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Digby
Headteacher	Sue Marooney (Executive Headteacher) Chris Woodcock (Head of School)
Website	www.durringtonhighschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of a multi-academy trust which includes a research school, SCITT and a local primary school.
- The school uses three registered alternative providers and one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 11 receive information about the full range of options available to them for post-16 education and training. This includes opportunities to talk with representatives from local training providers, colleges and apprenticeship schemes.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held meetings with a range of leaders, including the executive headteacher, the head of school and members of the senior leadership team. They also met with subject leaders, pastoral leaders and a range of non-teaching staff.
- Inspectors spoke with governors and trustees about their roles.
- Inspectors carried out six deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, physical education, geography and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors considered survey responses from parents, pupils and staff.
- Inspectors judged the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding procedures by meeting with leaders, scrutinising the single central record, sampling safeguarding records and talking with pupils, teachers, non-teaching staff and leaders about this aspect of their work.

Inspection team

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