

Inspection of Millais School

Depot Road, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 5HR

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 September 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected eight years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Inclusivity, fairness and respect for pupils' individual differences are at the heart of relationships in this school. Pupils understand that staff are there for them if they need support.

Staff know pupils well. They are extremely ambitious for pupils and have very high expectations. Pupils mostly achieve very well by the time they leave Year 11. This prepares them well for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

Pupils embrace the varied leadership opportunities on offer enthusiastically. Many put themselves forward for elections as form captains or sports captains so that they can represent their peers' views. Helping younger pupils is a common theme at Millais. Older pupils are trained as reading ambassadors so that they can support younger pupils in their reading.

The school is a harmonious and orderly place. Pupils socialise well at lunchtime and breaktimes, and they behave sensibly in lessons. Pupils feel safe and know who to go to if they are worried about themselves or a friend. If there are bullying or friendship issues between pupils, staff respond effectively and swiftly.

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

Leaders have designed a broad curriculum that offers pupils a rich range of opportunities, particularly in key stage 4. Pupils achieve extremely well in all examination subjects by the end of Year 11. They particularly excel in the English Baccalaureate subjects. These subjects form the bedrock of the curriculum.

Leaders have ensured that, in almost all subjects, the most important knowledge that should be taught and the best order in which to teach it has been carefully considered. This supports pupils to build on what they know and apply their learning effectively. Leaders' curriculum planning is especially successful in subjects such as science, mathematics and history.

In a small number of subjects, such as religious education (RE) and physical education (PE), leaders have not selected and organised knowledge with enough precision. Consequently, by the time some pupils reach key stage 4, they struggle to recall important elements of the knowledge and skills that they have learned previously.

Teachers have expert subject knowledge. They use well-chosen and varied resources to make learning interesting. This helps pupils to work hard and concentrate in lessons. When needed, teachers make adaptations to the curriculum to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to learn the same curriculum as their peers. Pupils who struggle with reading are identified quickly and supported to improve by well-trained staff.

Teachers use assessment to ensure that they are fully informed about how much pupils understand and what they can do. Teachers use this information to identify where pupils need extra support to fill gaps in their learning. Teachers and teaching assistants support pupils with SEND by crafting well-developed explanations or by following the strategies put in place by the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and the deputy SENCo.

Personal development is a strength. Pupils develop an extensive understanding of issues such as discrimination, healthy relationships and staying safe. Assemblies, often led by pupils, inform pupils about other important issues such as democracy, racism and tolerance. Many pupils are eager to participate in the school's extensive extra-curricular programme. A well-designed careers programme ensures that pupils receive impartial careers information from a range of sources.

Governors hold leaders to account well. They regularly review how well policies promote equality. Leaders and governors consider staff's workload when introducing new initiatives and are considerate of staff's well-being. Positive changes have been made in the past by leaders when workload issues have been identified. This has helped teachers to focus on strengthening teaching even further. Leaders are aware that although many parents are extremely complimentary about the school, a significant proportion of parents continue to have concerns, particularly about communication. Leaders and governors are working to ensure that they engage parents more effectively in the future.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have put in place strong systems to safeguard pupils, particularly vulnerable pupils. Staff are well trained in safeguarding. Those that join the school during the school year receive the same high-quality training as all other staff do at the start of the school year.

Leaders ensure that staff are confident in identifying signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. Recent additions to the pastoral team have further increased staff's vigilance in spotting pupils who need extra support.

Leaders work very well with external agencies so that vulnerable pupils and those at risk of harm receive the support they need quickly.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, such as PE and RE, leaders have not prioritised the most important knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn or the sequence in which they should be learned. This means that some pupils do not embed their

learning over time as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that the selection and organisation of knowledge and skills are equally strong in all subjects.

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.

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	126066
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10205508
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,341
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Elizabeth Barnes
Headteacher	Alison Lodwick
Website	www.millais.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 and 16 May 2014

Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in September 2015.
- A small proportion of pupils attend alternative provision at Brinsbury College, Pulborough and West Sussex Alternative Provision College, Burgess Hill.
- 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 education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 the headteacher, senior leaders, the SENCo, the deputy SENCo, subject leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- On the first day of the inspection, inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, history, RE and PE. This meant that in each subject, inspectors met with subject leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans in other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff from meetings with groups of staff and from the 96 staff who responded to Ofsted's confidential questionnaire.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils from meetings and informal conversations and from the 436 pupils who responded to Ofsted's confidential questionnaire.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, including the central record of recruitment checks on staff.
- Inspectors considered the views of 279 parents who responded to the confidential Ofsted parent questionnaire and 243 parents who provided free-text comments.

Inspection team

Harry Ingham, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Owen McColgan	Ofsted Inspector
Antonia Spinks	Ofsted Inspector
James Rouse	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Willman	Ofsted Inspector

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