

# Inspection of a good school: Garston Manor School

Horseshoe Lane, Garston, Watford, Hertfordshire WD25 7HR

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Inspection dates:

20 and 21 October 2022

## Outcome

Garston Manor School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love their school and the opportunities it offers them. They come into school happy and eager to achieve. All staff meet and greet pupils in a friendly, caring way which settles them into the day. One parent reflected the views of others when they stated, 'Garston Manor has an amazing ethos. No one is left behind and everyone is encouraged to do their best.'

Behaviour in lessons and at social times is calm and purposeful. Pupils are taught ways to manage their own behaviour through identifying when they are anxious or tense. They also learn and successfully use ways to help them to settle themselves down.

Pupils are safe at school. They feel included and work hard. Pupils state that if bullying were to happen, staff would deal with it quickly and effectively.

Pupils are well supported to access the ambitious curriculum on offer. Pupils work hard to meet the high expectations that staff have of them. The curriculum 'pathways' are designed to meet the particular needs of pupils, including those with more complex communication needs. They ensure pupils are supported to be successful.

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

Leaders have high expectations and are ambitious for all pupils to achieve well. The curriculum is broad. It reflects pupils' needs and supports them to continue developing their skills and knowledge in different areas. It is generally well organised to reflect the different starting points of the pupils when they enter the school.

Leaders use a clear progression system which monitors pupils' progress and provides information on the next steps for learning. Teachers use this information to support pupils to develop their knowledge and skills to apply in their everyday lives and to gain success in achieving external accreditations. Teachers provide pupils with appropriate, additional

levels of support to help them achieve, such as the use of visual apparatus in mathematics.

While most curriculum areas are well considered, in some subjects the current planning is not as precise. It does not clearly specify how the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn should be delivered and assessed. In these cases, there is a reliance on individual teachers' knowledge of the steps required. This can lead to some inconsistency in the experience pupils have in lessons.

Reading and writing skills are given an appropriate priority. A personalised phonics programme supports pupils' development of any missing phonics knowledge. Leaders link reading and communication development to the education, health and care (EHC) plan so that pupils develop fluency in reading as much as possible. Staff are well trained to deliver phonics across the school. Pupils who need help with visual communication, through the use of symbols and visual activities, are provided with appropriate support. Pupils are happy to access reading materials appropriate to their age and stage of development.

Leaders consider pupils' personal development to be crucial. Pupils accept each other and their differences, and understand they have different needs. They are polite, helpful and respectful to each other and adults. Leaders provide a range of experiences which the majority of pupils take part in. Pupils access a detailed programme of work, including opportunities to develop relationships and sex education (RSE).

All key stage 4 pupils have effective independent careers advice and guidance. Carefully planned transitions into the next stage of education ensure pupils successfully access further education. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their life and adulthood.

A minority of parents say that they do not feel fully included in understanding how their children are progressing in all their subjects. They state they are unclear what is happening each day in school.

Staff report feeling that the workload is proportionate to their roles.

Many governors are appropriately skilled and experienced to fulfil their roles effectively. They visit the school regularly and provide effective support and challenge to leaders.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and all staff have detailed knowledge of pupils' needs and ensure processes are secure and followed through. Daily briefings ensure that staff are aware of any concerns. All staff are appropriately trained. Identification of safeguarding concerns and processes are clear and staff all know how to manage these.

The governance and checking of safeguarding procedures are appropriately challenging and also supportive of the school.

Leaders ensure that pupils are safe in school. The well-planned curriculum helps pupils to stay safe in the community. This includes practical experiences such as learning to cross the road safely and using the internet appropriately.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- There are some minor inconsistencies in the way the curriculum is planned and sequenced. Leaders should ensure that the knowledge and concepts pupils need to learn in all subjects are clearly set out. Leaders then need to ensure that pupils are appropriately supported to learn the planned curriculum.
- A significant minority of parents do not feel that communication between home and school is secure and given enough value. Leaders should work with families to ensure communication home is clear and proportionate. Leaders need to ensure parents feel fully included and communicated with about their children's education and progress.

## **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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in December 2012.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117667
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240107
<b>Type of school</b>	Special school
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	150
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	David Canning
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christine deGraft-Hanson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.garstonmanor.herts.sch.uk">www.garstonmanor.herts.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Garston Manor provides for pupils with learning difficulties, autism spectrum disorder, and speech, language and communication needs, and some with associated social, emotional and mental health needs.
- All pupils who attend the school have an EHC plan.
- The school has increased in size since the previous inspection and there are an increasing number of applications for places available at the school.

## 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 leaders and have taken into that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, subject leaders, teachers and some non-teaching staff.
- The lead inspector met with members of the school's local governing body.

- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority by telephone.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, physical education, and personal development (including personal, social and health education, and RSE). Inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some of the pupils about their learning, heard some children read and looked at samples of their work.
- The lead inspector met with the school's designated safeguarding lead. She reviewed the school's safeguarding records, relevant policies and other safeguarding documentation. The lead inspector also reviewed the processes leaders use to identify and help pupils who need support. In addition, inspectors scrutinised the school's records of checks carried out on adults who work at the school.
- Inspectors visited lessons across the school, as well as activities at the start and end of the day and lunchtime.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally and informally, through the school council and during lessons and breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents.
- Inspectors considered the 58 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 55 free-text responses and 40 responses to the staff survey. They also took account of 123 pupil responses to the Ofsted pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Jackie Mullan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Lynda Walker

Ofsted Inspector

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