

Inspection of a good school: Warlingham School

Tithepit Shaw Lane, Warlingham, Surrey CR6 9YB

Inspection dates:

9 and 10 November 2022

Outcome

Warlingham School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Warlingham is a welcoming, friendly school. A staff member described it as a 'massive family'. The relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils themselves, are very positive. Pupils trust and value their teachers and support staff. Pupils are happy and feel safe.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils. The school's values of 'courage, commitment and kindness' run through every aspect of school life. Leaders are ambitious for pupils' learning. Pupils speak positively about this expectation, and they live up to it. Consequently, pupils achieve well.

The majority of pupils behave well. They are polite and courteous in lessons. At social times, they mingle happily and act with consideration. Some pupils need extra help with their behaviour. These pupils value the support they get from staff at 'The Bridge' and 'The Maple Room'. Staff deal well with any bullying incidents. Most pupils are confident that bullying is taken seriously.

Pupils have access to a large selection of activities outside the classroom, including clubs, sports and trips. Many pupils take part in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. The annual activities week, which includes trips to the Lake District and Paris, is very popular. Sixth-form students enjoy volunteering activities, such as working with local charities and reading with younger pupils.

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

The headteacher, governors and staff from the trust have a clear vision for the school. Governors bring a wealth of experience to their role. There is a great sense of collegiality. Everyone wants the school to be the best it can be. Staff are proud to work at Warlingham. They believe that leaders consider their well-being and workload. Staff at all levels feel supported, including teachers in the early stages of their careers.

Across subjects, the curriculum is well planned. Key stage 3 is broad and balanced, providing a strong foundation for later study. Pupils can choose from a wide range of options at key stage 4 and in the sixth form. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) follow the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders recognise that more pupils would benefit from studying a more ambitious curriculum, such as represented by the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). While numbers studying humanities subjects are high, currently too few pupils take modern foreign languages.

Leaders have thought carefully about the knowledge and skills they want pupils to acquire, and in what order. Subject leaders have designed courses that revisit key knowledge at a more advanced level, as pupils work their way up the school. Teachers use their specialist knowledge to help pupils link new learning to what they already know. For example, in Year 10, pupils learn about children and the Poor Law in preparation for studying Charles Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol'.

In lessons, pupils are generally keen to learn and set to work quickly. Activities are well planned. On occasion, some pupils with SEND need a little more help to begin some learning activities. Many teachers use a range of strategies, including questioning, to uncover gaps in pupils' understanding. However, teachers do not always use this information effectively and adapt their teaching to address these knowledge gaps.

Staff know their pupils well. They work hard to provide support when they have identified a particular need. Many pupils with SEND make good strides forward because they benefit from extra interventions. Staff also provide strong pastoral support. One parent wrote: 'The school has supported my child's well-being and put in place ways to help him engage with school when he's been struggling.'

All pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure. Leaders have ensured that they have specific programmes in place for struggling readers, and these are proving very successful. They have plans to develop this provision further.

Leaders ensure that pupils and sixth-form students are well prepared for their next steps. Careers provision is a strength of the school. Pupils in Year 10 and the sixth form benefit from annual work experience placements. Younger pupils begin to explore career opportunities at an early stage. Sixth-form students get appropriate advice and support, which they greatly appreciate. Many go on to higher education or apprenticeships.

Leaders have thought carefully about developing pupils' understanding of the world around them. Pupils told us that they value their 'society, religion and well-being' lessons, which teach them how to stay safe and look after their health and well-being. This programme is readily adapted to respond to issues that arise locally or nationally. Pupils regularly enjoy debating current affairs topics, such as the voting age. There are many opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities, such as being LGBTQ+ ambassadors, sports captains and student governors.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Effective communication and systematic record-keeping ensure that leaders are well informed about vulnerable pupils. There is a large safeguarding team, which is well led and managed. Pupils say that they feel safe, and they know that concerns about their well-being will be dealt with quickly.

Staff are vigilant and know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil. They work well with external agencies to ensure pupils get the additional support they need swiftly. Leaders provide regular, high-quality training for staff and governors. Governors' oversight of safeguarding is particularly strong.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Too few pupils in key stage 4 choose to study a modern foreign language. This means that the proportion of pupils gaining the EBacc is low and below the government's and school's ambition. Leaders should take action to ensure that more pupils study languages into key stage 4.
- Not all teachers use assessment information well enough to adapt learning to meet pupils' needs. As a result, sometimes pupils are not embedding their knowledge well enough. Leaders should ensure that teachers use assessment of learning to adapt their teaching to pupils' needs, so that knowledge embeds securely in pupils' long-term memory.

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 February 2017.

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	138928
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10211461
Type of school	Secondary
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	1,434
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	240
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Steve Burn
Headteacher	Paul Foster
Website	www.warlinghamschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Warlingham School is part of the Tandridge Learning Trust.
- The current headteacher joined the school in June 2020.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at five alternative education providers.
- 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff, pupils, the chair of the governing body and four other governors. An inspector had a meeting with the chair and the chief executive officer of the trust. An inspector also held a telephone discussion with a member of staff at two alternative providers.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, history, science, religious studies and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector also visited lessons in some other subjects.
- Through discussions with leaders, governors, pupils and staff, inspectors considered how effectively pupils are safeguarded. They also viewed the school website and policies. They looked at records related to safeguarding, including checks on adults working at the school.
- Inspectors spoke to staff, including early career teachers, about behaviour and their workload in school.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils and staff through the responses to Ofsted's confidential surveys. The views of parents were considered through the 228 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Paula Sargent, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Baker	Ofsted Inspector
Ben Bond	Ofsted Inspector

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