

Inspection of Gillotts School

Gillotts Lane, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire RG9 1PS

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 June 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high ambitions for all pupils at the school. Pupils thrive because of the high-quality teaching and care they receive. All pupils are supported to make exceptional progress. Pupils rise to this challenge and achieve highly.

Pupils know that leaders see them as individuals. They value the school's inclusive and highly welcoming environment. Leaders keep the school's motto, 'not by ourselves alone', at the centre of their work. Pupils are very happy at the school. As one parent said, 'Gillotts is an outstanding environment for children to learn and achieve their full potential.'

Leaders place a high value on the well-being of pupils. Pupils have exemplary attitudes to learning. They engage well in lessons and are enthusiastic to learn. Pupils appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer. These include sporting, artistic and dramatic experiences. They also enjoy taking part in the increasing number of school trips.

Pupils feel safe. Bullying is rare and dealt with swiftly if it occurs. Pupils are highly respectful of difference. There are strong, purposeful and friendly relationships between pupils and staff. One pupil said, 'We feel like one big community'.

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

The school's curriculum is broad, balanced and highly ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have set out clearly the most important knowledge that pupils need to learn in all subjects. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. In lessons, they present information clearly and check pupils' understanding routinely. They expertly identify and address any misconceptions. As a result, all pupils achieve exceptionally well.

Leaders prioritise reading. They have established a strong culture of reading across the school. Pupils at the early stages of learning to read receive carefully targeted support, which helps them to catch up quickly. They develop confidence and fluency. In English, pupils read a wide range of texts, which broadens their vocabulary and deepens their understanding of how language works.

Leaders have high ambition for pupils with SEND. Pupils' needs are known well. Strong leadership and high-quality teaching result in high levels of progress through the planned curriculum. Leaders provide a wide range of training so that all staff know how to meet pupils' needs consistently well. Adaptations in lessons are carefully considered and effective. Tailored support for pupils with SEND, including the effective use of outside agencies, ensures that all pupils achieve highly.

Leaders have helpful systems for managing behaviour and providing individual support for pupils when required. Pupils proudly exhibit the school's values of

kindness, respect and not doing harm. They also enjoy making a positive contribution to their school and to the wider community. Leadership roles through the school council enable pupils to help improve their school. Activities such as supporting charities and collecting food for the local food bank allow pupils to learn about the importance of being a good citizen.

Leaders' work to support pupils' personal development is exceptional. Pupils have many opportunities to develop resilience and self-confidence. For example, many enthusiastically take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and represent the school in sports teams. Pupils appreciate learning about their health, well-being, and ways to stay safe. Leaders have ensured that careers education, information, advice and guidance are of a very high quality so that all pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their lives.

Leaders, including governors, are highly ambitious for all. They are committed and reflective and are determined to improve the school even further. Staff training is given a high priority, and teachers are keen to continually develop their knowledge of teaching and learning. Governors support all leaders and staff through considering their well-being and workload. Staff are given the opportunity to provide feedback, and their views are considered. Staff report that they enjoy working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a clear and distinct culture of safeguarding. All staff know their responsibilities and the system for reporting concerns. Pupils feel safe and listened to. They know they can go to any staff member to report concerns. Leaders have strong monitoring processes and systems to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. They make swift referrals to outside agencies, when necessary, to ensure that pupils and their families get the help they need. Through regular training, leaders ensure that staff have up-to-date information on the signs of neglect and abuse. Leaders ensure that all staff are safe to work with pupils. Governors check safeguarding records regularly.

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	137921
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10256314
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	951
Appropriate authority	Governing body
Chair of governing body	David Gorsuch
Headteacher	Catharine Darnton
Website	www.gillotts.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 and 5 February 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses one registered provider and one unregistered provider of alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 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 met with the headteacher and other senior leaders throughout the inspection.

- The lead inspector met representatives from the governing body, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science, history, art, and religious education. 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 visited tutor time.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors met with designated safeguarding leaders and held discussions with pupils and staff. They also scrutinised a range of records, including the records of recruitment checks.
- Inspectors talked to groups of pupils, both formally and informally, at break and lunchtimes. They also considered 358 responses to the pupil survey.
- Staff views were sought through discussions and the staff survey, which was completed by 94 members of staff.
- Inspectors considered 260 written responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents and carers, Parent View.

Inspection team

Julie Summerfield, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Cooksey	Ofsted Inspector
Julia Mortimore	Ofsted Inspector
Yvonne Garvey	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023