

Inspection of a good school: Hawkswood (Therapeutic)

Antlers Hill, Chingford E4 7RT

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 November 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils start to enjoy learning again here. The placement helps them to overcome their anxiety about schooling. Pupils are safe in this calm and nurturing environment. They appreciate the small class sizes. Pupils develop warm professional working relationships with staff. If they have any worries, they can share them with anyone and know they will be acted upon.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' learning and attendance. Leaders work closely with colleagues in mainstream schools. Together they ensure that pupils experience a smooth transition. Pupils quickly build up to full attendance at Hawkswood.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. They are keen to catch up on the learning they have missed due to absence from mainstream. Subject staff plan an engaging curriculum. This aligns with what pupils would be learning in their school.

Pupils value the personalised therapeutic input which complements their academic learning. They develop confidence because their social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs are well met. Pupils of all ages get on together. Older pupils are well prepared for life after their placement. Through the carefully planned careers curriculum, they develop positive aspirations for their futures.

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

Leaders provide an ambitious curriculum. It prioritises the important content that pupils need to know and remember. For example, in English, pupils recap poetic techniques.

They gain an understanding of the context of the poet. They move on to explore the impact of the writer's language choices on the reader. Teachers build on pupils' prior learning so that important knowledge and skills are recalled securely.

Pupils complete assessments when they arrive at the school. Subject staff get to know pupils' individual needs quickly. They make helpful adaptations which meet pupils' academic and SEMH needs. In lessons, teachers systematically check pupils' understanding before moving on to new content. They adapt the curriculum so that it is increasingly personalised. This individualised approach extends to the therapeutic offer. Through interaction with pupils, parents and carers, leaders draw up a suitable programme. Pupils appreciate therapies such as art, drama and music. Pupils in need of extra emotional support enjoy spending time with Sally the school's therapy dog.

Leaders prioritise reading and vocabulary development. They identify the pupils who lack fluency in reading when they join the school. These pupils receive one-to-one support to help them gain confidence. Staff make sure that they direct pupils to books which match their stage of reading. Pupils have time in the well-stocked school library each week. They read aloud in class regularly. Teachers identify the key subject-specific vocabulary they want pupils to learn. They give pupils helpful strategies to aid their comprehension of new words.

The school provides an environment where pupils can flourish. Their behaviour is excellent. Most pupils arrive with a history of very poor attendance at school. Leaders work with mainstream schools and families to remove any barriers to full attendance. As a result, pupils' attendance improves significantly when they settle here.

Leaders provide pupils with many opportunities for development outside of their subject lessons. Pupils learn how to look after their physical and mental health. They attend social skills groups each day. Pupils enjoy having a say in the running of the school such as the role of uniforms. Pupils learn from visiting speakers. They enjoy forest walks and trips to the zoo and the theatre. Pupils have participated in an art and poetry competition to celebrate trailblazing Black women in the local area. Leaders arrange for pupils to meet employers and to visit colleges. This gives pupils the information they need to plan for their next steps.

Staff are proud to work at this school. Therapists and teachers work closely to achieve the best outcomes for pupils. Staff work closely with parents. Parents value the expertise of all staff in improving their child's mental health and academic prospects.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 July 2013.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

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| Unique reference number | 137677 |
| Local authority | London Borough of Waltham Forest |
| Inspection number | 10255531 |
| Type of school | Pupil referral unit |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 17 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Juan Hernandez |
| Headteacher | Nathalie Fitzgerald |
| Website | www.hawkswoodgroup.org.uk |
| Dates of previous inspection | 7 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The headteacher has been in post since January 2021.
- The school caters for pupils with SEMH needs.
- Typically, pupils attend the school for a 20-week placement before returning to mainstream school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with leaders and staff in the school, including those responsible for the quality of education, behaviour, attendance, pupils' wider development and safeguarding.

- Inspectors met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in art, English and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and inclusive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Lisa Strong, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Fawzia Govender

Ofsted Inspector

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