

Inspection of an outstanding school: Grey Court School

Ham Street, Ham, Richmond, Surrey TW10 7HN

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 February 2024

Outcome

Grey Court School continues to be an outstanding school.

The headteacher of this school is Christopher Rhodes. This school is part of Every Child Every Day Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Ash Ali, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Bill Watkin.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where all pupils flourish. Pupils are kept happy and feel safe in the school. All pupils, including students in the sixth form, experience a high quality of education. They enjoy their learning and meet the highest expectations set by the school. As a result, pupils thrive and become independent and responsible learners.

The ambitious curriculum supports all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils are always keen to improve their learning. They appreciate their valuable teacher feedback. There are strong working relationships between staff and pupils. The mutual respect displayed contributes to the positive, stimulating environment.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Staff and pupils value the restorative approach to behaviour, which results in a culture of kindness and care. This extends into the community, where pupils support others in a neighbouring school.

Pupils value contributing to the school and beyond. For instance, older pupils were proud of their work cleaning up the banks of the River Thames. The school council has introduced a messaging service for pupils to share any worries they may have. Pupils also speak about talking with a trusted adult. Families and pupils value the academic and pastoral support that is always available.

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

The curriculum is carefully planned, challenging and ambitious. Teachers are skilful in the way they adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with

SEND. Staff enable pupils to build up their knowledge, skills and understanding in a logical order. For example, in Year 7 history, pupils learn about cause and consequence when learning about the Tudors. They apply their understanding of this when learning about other topics, such as the Holocaust in Year 9.

Teachers know their subjects well. They present information clearly. The work given to pupils enables them to build on what they already know. This means pupils are confident when they learn new content. For instance, students in the sixth form discussed the character of Othello with confidence. Pupils recall well their learning of other Shakespearean plays studied in earlier years. Staff enable pupils to develop an excellent standard of technical language and vocabulary across subjects.

Teachers routinely check pupils' understanding in the classroom. They ensure that any gaps in pupils' knowledge are identified and addressed quickly. Teachers adapt the curriculum and precisely teach to ensure important knowledge and skills are learned deeply. As a result, pupils achieve highly across the curriculum.

The school promotes a love of reading with all pupils. Reading is prioritised to ensure that all pupils read fluently. Those who struggle to read when they join the school are given the right support. This means they catch up quickly. Pupils read widely as part of their learning across the curriculum.

Pupils with SEND achieve highly because their teachers know their individual needs and apply effective strategies to support them. Pupils' needs are identified from the time they join the school. This is due to the excellent transition work between the school and local primary schools.

The school ensures that parents/carers and pupils know why it is important to attend school every day. Strong systems reinforce the high expectations set for attendance. This leads to high pupil attendance rates. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They value their teachers' passion for their subjects. Pupils behave very well. This creates a calm, purposeful atmosphere.

High-quality careers guidance runs throughout the school. Pupils are well informed about their next steps. The school organises bespoke careers fairs and work experience for sixth-form students. Pupils benefit from the links made by the school with employers, who provide opportunities to learn about different careers. Students in the sixth form move on to a wide range of appropriate destinations, including universities, apprenticeships, and workplaces.

Leaders have carefully planned for the wider experiences of all pupils so that they develop their talents and interests. The exceptional sporting programme includes high numbers of pupils taking part in daily sport and competitions. Pupils speak highly of interhouse competitions and activities. Students in the sixth form are excellent role models for leadership. They support younger pupils and run events such as the International Festival. There is a wide range of educational visits on offer, including overseas trips, which support pupils with their learning of modern foreign languages.

Staff, including early careers teachers, are very positive about being part of the school. They appreciate how leaders review processes and routinely consider workload. Staff feel valued and enjoy working in a caring community. Governors and trustees take time to know staff and pupils. They are committed to their vision to 'go above and beyond' for pupils across the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in January 2018.

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

Unique reference number	138825
Local authority	Richmond Upon Thames
Inspection number	10296728
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
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	1,594
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	363
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of Governors	Julian Knott
Headteacher	Christopher Rhodes
Website	www.greycourt.richmond.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 January 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school uses two registered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: art, English, history, mathematics, and modern foreign languages. 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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and representatives from the trust, including the chair of the trust, other trustees, and the CEO. Inspectors also met with the chair of governors, other members of the governing body and the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at break and lunchtime and visited a sample of clubs.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors also considered online survey responses from parents, staff and pupils, as well as correspondence that was given to them during the inspection.

Inspection team

Janice Howkins, lead inspector

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