

# Inspection of The Gatwick School

23 Gatwick Road, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 9TP

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Inspection dates: 1 to 2 May 2024

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

The principal of this school is David Marillat. This school is part of the Aurora Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), James Freeston, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Martha Burnige.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils feel part of 'one big family' in this ambitious and unique all-through school. They recognise the many recent positive changes that have been made. A refreshed culture of aspiration is now building pupils' confidence and helping them to flourish in their learning. Pupils strive to achieve their best because staff have high expectations of what pupils will achieve. Pupils learn well because teachers explain things clearly. A sense of calm and order throughout the school ensures that pupils feel safe and happy to come to school regularly.

The school celebrates diversity. Many pupils speak English as an additional language, with some joining the school throughout the school year from countries from all over the world. These pupils initially join the 'United Nations' tutor group, where they quickly make new friends. Staff then identify the language support pupils need to learn. Everyone receives a warm welcome.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective help to learn well. Staff communicate effectively about the strategies required to help pupils achieve their best. Pupils with SEND and those who need help to manage their social, emotional and mental health needs are well supported in 'The Nest' and 'The Warren'. Here pupils learn how to recognise and manage their emotions so that they can communicate confidently.

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

The school recognises that pupils have not achieved as well as they should in the past. Significant leadership and staff changes, as well as a previous lack of clarity around effective teaching approaches, have resulted in some pupils having large gaps in their understanding. However, the school is tenacious in addressing these issues. New staff have been recruited into key positions to improve the school. Furthermore, the school has refined its curriculum. There is greater clarity about what pupils must know at each stage of their education. The curriculum revisits common concepts and skills regularly. This helps pupils to practise using important knowledge, enabling them to know and remember more.

In addition, staff receive regular training to help them identify and close gaps in pupils' understanding. Additional catch-up support is effective in improving pupils' academic progress. Staff have expert subject knowledge. They use this to teach with clarity and precision. Most staff check and address misconceptions effectively as they teach new topics. Staff typically design learning in a way which helps pupils understand the smaller ideas that underpin larger concepts. Consequently, pupils gain a coherent understanding of newer learning as a result of these teaching approaches.

The school places a strong emphasis on literacy and reading. When children first join the school, they learn to read well through a systematic phonics approach. Staff provide additional reading support to children who need it. Across the school

phases, staff provide a wide range of books for pupils to read at tutor time and in library sessions. Consequently, most pupils are able to read with confidence and develop an enjoyment of books and literature.

Children get off to a positive start when they join Reception. They form warm nurturing relationships with caring staff. Staff notice additional needs quickly. Detailed plans set out the precise support that children need. Children play kindly with one and other. They learn to take turns and take care of their personal needs. Visits from professionals, such as the paramedic and fire services, inspire awe and wonder. Children talk confidently about these important roles in society.

Clear and consistent school routines make it easy for pupils to know what staff expect of them. Most pupils attend school regularly and are punctual to lessons. Classrooms are orderly places where pupils can learn well. A culture of mutual respect fosters warm relationships between pupils and staff. Most pupils report that there has been a positive change in the behaviour of most pupils. Leaders keep meticulous records of behaviour incidents. They intervene quickly to encourage positive pupil behaviour to avoid the use of suspension.

Pupils benefit from an extensive range of student leadership opportunities, such as being an 'Autism Ambassador' or a member of the school council. Pupils host assemblies to promote inclusion and awareness of characteristics protected by law. Pupils are aspirational about their future and receive appropriate guidance to apply for colleges and apprenticeship routes. The school is ambitious to continue to develop the careers provision further.

The interim executive board provides effective challenge to ensure that pupils are on a path to success. The school understands exactly what they must do to realise its unflinching ambition for pupils to achieve all that they can. Staff feel empowered and enormously proud of the rapid improvements that they have achieved so far.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- The school's ambitious plans for pupils to achieve exceptional outcomes and benefit fully from the school's provision are not fully realised. There is still work to do to ensure that all staff in all subjects consistently and expertly close gaps in pupils' learning. The school must continue to implement its approach to school improvement to ensure pupils achieve all that they can.

## 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 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	141038
<b>Local authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10296403
<b>Type of school</b>	All-through
<b>School category</b>	Academy free school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	935
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Martha Burnige
<b>CEO</b>	James Freeston
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Marillat
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thegatwickschool.org.uk">www.thegatwickschool.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	10 and 11 January 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of Aurora Academies Trust.
- The trust has implemented an interim executive board to provide governance of the school.
- The school uses three registered providers and five unregistered providers of alternative provision for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 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.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also met with the representatives from the board of trustees, including the chair of trustees. They also met with representatives of the interim executive board and the CEO.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, physical education and history. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, teachers and pupils, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector also listened to pupils read. Inspectors also looked at other aspects of the school's curriculum.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including the free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff survey and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- 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 reviewed and scrutinised a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' plans for improving the school, minutes of the interim executive board meetings and records of attendance and behaviour incidents, including the use of suspension and exclusion.

## Inspection team

Michelle Payne, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Simon Woodbridge	His Majesty's Inspector
Tracy Good	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Enser	His Majesty's Inspector

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