

Inspection of a good school: Sackville School

Lewes Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 3TY

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 May 2024

Outcome

Sackville School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is ambitious for all pupils to enjoy learning and achieve highly. Pupils benefit from the emphasis on developing skills and attitudes that support them to learn well. Across the school, pupils have a purposeful approach to learning. They explain how, through the 'Futures' programme, they explore the different employment and education possibilities and develop personal goals for life beyond Sackville. Pupils talk about how this helps to build their motivation to try their best.

Across the school, the majority of pupils show courtesy and consideration to others. Sixth-form students act as strong role models for these attributes. There is a sharp focus on pupils' well-being, with the five 'Communities' being at the heart of this. Pupils feel safe and appreciate the pastoral support available. They talk confidently about being able to share concerns and seek advice from staff in their 'Community'. Importantly, pupils feel known in this large school.

Pupils benefit from the broad extra-curricular programme which provides many opportunities to try new things and develop interests. They are encouraged to participate in the wide range of clubs, trips and opportunities to participate in competitions or drama productions. Pupils particularly like how aspects of trips are linked to their learning.

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

The school curriculum is carefully designed and broad. Pupils value the range of subject choices in key stage 4 and the sixth form. Across subjects, curriculum thinking identifies and arranges the precise knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn. This helps pupils to build increasingly complex understanding from Year 7 to Year 13. The careful consideration given to breaking knowledge into steps supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to achieve well. For all pupils, the deliberate re-visiting of earlier learning across the curriculum helps them to know and remember more over time.

Teachers' subject knowledge is secure. Across subjects, they use this to explain new ideas clearly and to highlight areas of knowledge that can potentially be confusing. This helps pupils to develop an accurate understanding. Learning activities support pupils to apply their knowledge and skills well. Staff draw on details within individual plans to adapt activities appropriately for pupils with SEND. Teachers mostly use questioning effectively. However, on occasion, this does not clearly identify how well all pupils understand. Assessments provide pupils with a clear picture of the progress they are making and help them to identify where they have knowledge gaps. Teachers use the outcomes of these assessments to re-teach aspects of knowledge that pupils have not securely understood.

Pupils' enjoyment of reading is prioritised across the curriculum. They are engaged in regular reading of a diverse range of texts woven through the different subjects. The profile of reading is raised further by sixth-form students, who read with lower-school pupils. For individuals at the early stages of learning to read, there is bespoke support in place for them to quickly catch up.

While the school has clear expectations of pupils' behaviour, some aspects are not consistently reinforced around the school. Across lessons, pupils work with focus, and there are few examples of low-level disruption. If this does occur, teachers address it quickly. They use the school's clear behaviour steps consistently to re-focus pupils on their learning. However, around the school, there are some inconsistencies in how staff address lower-level behaviours, such as pupils wearing incorrect uniform items, or using mobile phones outside of permitted areas. This does not support all pupils to achieve the school's high behaviour expectations. When pupils exhibit more challenging behaviour, consequences and support, such as behaviour plans, are put in place promptly. There is a similarly sharp approach to tracking pupils' attendance, with effective actions being taken to reduce absences when needed.

The school's approach to personal development is thoughtful and well considered. Through the 'Learning for Life' curriculum, pupils explore how they can manage the challenges and opportunities found in wider society. This is supplemented by the 'Beliefs and Values' curriculum, which develops pupils' understanding of diversity. There are opportunities for pupils to contribute positively to the school and local community. 'Student Voice' provides them with increasing opportunities to share their views and contribute to changes in the school. Different leadership roles provide pupils across year groups with valuable experience of responsibility.

The school is focused on continual improvement. It has an accurate understanding of its strengths and areas where further work is needed. The nature of changes is carefully considered, a process which is supported by effective challenge from governors. Staff feel that the school listens to their views and values efforts to keep their workload manageable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some aspects of the school's behaviour expectations are not consistently reinforced by staff. As a result, not all pupils are supported to see the importance of these, with some openly ignoring school rules such as uniform and mobile phone expectations around the buildings. The school needs to ensure that all its expectations of pupils' conduct are consistently upheld by all staff.

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 March 2015.

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	126089
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10321911
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Community
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	1,656
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	304
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Emmeline Kane
Headteacher	Jo Meloni
Website	www.sackville.w-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Mid Sussex Federation of Schools.
- The school uses three registered alternative providers and one unregistered alternative provider.
- 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 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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, assistant headteachers, subject leaders, community leaders and teachers. The lead inspector also met with governors, including the chair of the governing body, and spoke to the local authority's school improvement adviser.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, geography, history and art. 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 observed tutor time, break and lunchtime activities.
- 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.
- The inspectors considered the responses to the staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school. They looked at the school's self-evaluation documents and school improvement plan.
- The inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and the additional free-text responses.

Inspection team

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