

Inspection of The Magna Carta School

Thorpe Road, Staines, Surrey TW18 3HJ

Inspection dates:	24 and 25 September 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Craig Adams. The school is part of Unity Schools 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), Michael del Rio, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Chris Howorth.

What is it like to attend this school?

A sharp focus on improvement since the previous inspection is highly evident. Pupils and staff are rightly proud of the progress made in all aspects of school life. The school's high ambitions for pupils' behaviour and achievement are known by all. Pupils rise to meet these high expectations consistently. The 'Magna Carta Way' underpins this. Pupils treat each other with courtesy and respect. Lessons are purposeful and pupils work hard. Success is celebrated. Pupils benefit from excellent pastoral care. They learn how to treat people with different beliefs and backgrounds respectfully. As a result, pupils describe their school as, 'really inclusive, where you can just be yourself'.

Pupil's wider personal development is a priority. Personal, social and health education (PSHE), delivered expertly, teaches pupils vital knowledge and skills to prepare them for life in modern Britain. A comprehensive programme of extra-curricular activities supports and extends pupils' talents and interests. Pupils' commitment to these activities is impressive. They develop valuable leadership skills and positive character traits through activities such as student council and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

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

The school's curriculum is well designed, ambitious and meets the needs of all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A growing number of pupils gain qualifications in the English Baccalaureate. The school's recent focus on curriculum development is evident. In some subjects, for example mathematics, history and physical education, teachers ensure that pupils' learning carefully builds on the knowledge and skills that they have learned previously. Here pupils' progress is strong, and they achieve well. However, not all teachers' checks on pupils' learning are as effective. Some pupils have gaps or misconceptions that are not addressed before teachers move learning on. This is more evident in key stage 3 than key stage 4.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They benefit from a comprehensive programme of ongoing professional development. The needs of pupils with SEND are well known by all staff. Where practice is most effective, staff use this information to adapt the curriculum carefully to ensure that pupils with SEND achieve their best outcomes. However, in some lessons, teachers' adaptations to support pupils with SEND are in their infancy. There is a strong focus on improving pupils' reading. However, many of the strategies to support weaker readers are new and not yet embedded.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are positive. Staff apply the effective behaviour management system consistently. As a result, the school is calm and orderly. The school has focused on improving the attendance of all pupils. In most cases this has been successful. However, persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils, particularly those eligible for the pupil premium, remains too high. These pupils routinely miss too much school.

Support for pupils' well-being is a priority. Pupils learn about the importance of maintaining their own mental and physical health as part of the weekly tutor programme.

PSHE lessons equip pupils with vital knowledge about how to keep themselves safe, including online, and they learn vital age-appropriate sex and relationships education. Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities, including visits to other education settings, to prepare them for their next steps effectively. Careers education and advice is strong and provides pupils with valuable information to make informed choices about their future.

The school faced significant challenges last academic year due to problems with some of the school's buildings. Leaders, staff and pupils dealt with this difficult period remarkably well. Trustees and the local governing council have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and where further improvement is required. They provide valuable support and appropriate challenge. Staff value the school's focus on improvement and feel proud of the contribution they continue to make. Staff appreciate the support they receive from leaders and know that leaders are considerate of their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Work to check pupils' learning in some subjects is in its infancy and needs sharpening. Not all teachers check that pupils have secured key knowledge and skills before they move on. The school needs to ensure that all teachers accurately identify gaps and misconceptions in pupils' knowledge and skills and adapt their subsequent delivery of lessons to rectify these.
- Precise adaptation of the curriculum and strategies to support pupils with SEND are still being refined. The support that some pupils receive in lessons is not as effective as it could be. The school should continue its work to enhance and embed good practice in all subjects and ensure systems for oversight are consistently robust.
- While there are processes in place to improve attendance, too many disadvantaged pupils are persistently absent. This means that these pupils miss vital learning and are at risk of falling further behind. The school needs to redouble its efforts to ensure that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils improves rapidly.

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	137116
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10341684
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,077
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Chris Howorth
CEO of the trust	Michael del Rio
Headteacher	Craig Adams
Website	www.magnacarta.surrey.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	28 and 29 June 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Unity Schools Trust.
- The current headteacher joined this academic year.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers and organises online tuition and mentoring to meet the needs of 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 and engagement 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form

provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued 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: mathematics, science, history, modern foreign languages and physical education. 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 visited lessons in other subjects to consider the school's work to support disadvantaged pupils.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders of the school, members of staff and pupils. The lead inspector held a meeting with the chair of the trust, the chair of the local governing council and some trustees. She also met with the CEO.
- 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 took account of a range of other information, including the school's development plan, school policies, and minutes from governor and trustee meetings.
- The inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the free-text comments that were submitted. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff survey and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

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