

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: The Hurst School

Brimpton Road, Baughurst, Tadley, Hampshire RG26 5NL

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Inspection dates:

15 and 16 October 2024

## **Outcome**

The Hurst School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

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

The school puts pupils at the heart of everything it does. Pupils who told inspectors that 'they don't just hear, they listen' summed this up. Pupils feel happy and safe, which is reflected in their high attendance. The school goes to great lengths to support pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The Wellbeing Centre, the 'Hub' and the 'Lodge' play an important part in ensuring that vulnerable pupils attend school regularly and are well prepared for their next steps. Pupils value the support they receive from the dedicated staff. Pupils achieve well in most subjects, but there are some variations. There remains more to do before the school's ambitions for all pupils are fully met.

The majority of pupils consistently meet the school's high expectations for behaviour. Pupils understand the clear routines that ensure they are ready to learn throughout the day. Pupils are polite and respectful to each other and staff. They describe how everyone is treated equally and that discrimination is not tolerated.

There are ample opportunities for pupils to demonstrate leadership skills and participate in the wide range of extra-curricular activities available. For example, large numbers of pupils take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Year 11 pupils value the additional revision classes provided.

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

In most subjects, the ambitious curriculum is delivered well. The school has thought carefully about the knowledge and skills that pupils need and how they learn. Teachers usually use this information to plan and teach stimulating lessons that build on what pupils have previously learned. This is particularly the case in the core subjects. Staff have strong subject knowledge. They usually adopt the 'no opt-out' policy to check pupils'

understanding and ensure that they keep up in lessons. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning lead to a purposeful atmosphere in most lessons. However, teachers' expectations are sometimes less clear, and lesson time is not always used productively. When this occurs, pupils develop gaps in their learning, and lessons are occasionally disrupted.

Pupils benefit from a broad curriculum. The introduction of discreet lessons in religious studies has recently strengthened the curriculum in key stage 3. Pupils choose from a wide range of academic and vocational subjects in key stage 4. Staff support pupils to make sure that the curriculum is right for them. There is more to do to increase the number of pupils who study the English Baccalaureate pathway. Pupils' achievement in public examinations has risen in recent years. However, there is some variation in subjects where they do not achieve as well as they should. The school is working determinedly to raise standards in the subjects that need improvement.

The school's dedicated efforts to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils are delivering positive results. These pupils now attend school more regularly due to the school's relentless determination to identify and address barriers to attendance. In school, these pupils benefit from additional support that helps prepare them for the next stage of education or training. The school has developed strong support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Staff are well informed about the needs of these pupils. However, not all staff routinely use the information to ensure all pupils can access the curriculum.

The school encourages pupils to read regularly and carefully identifies those who are struggling with reading. These pupils receive additional support from specialist staff, including phonics assistance. As a result, they quickly gain the knowledge and skills they need to become confident and fluent readers.

The school provides well for pupils' broader development. All pupils follow a comprehensive personal development programme. These lessons help them to be healthy, build respectful relationships and understand how to keep themselves safe. Pupils are interested in the subject matter and discuss topics enthusiastically. These lessons are supplemented by a range of other activities that prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.

Leaders at all levels are highly focused on improving the school further. For example, pupils now benefit from a broader personal development curriculum in key stage 4. The dedicated governing body provides effective support and challenge to school leaders. The great majority of staff and parents and carers support leaders' ambitions for the school. Staff value the steps the school takes to consider their workload and well-being.

## **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 curriculum is not securely and consistently embedded across all subjects. In some subjects, lessons do not build pupils' knowledge and skills successfully. The school should ensure that it keeps a careful oversight of how well the curriculum is being implemented, and provides support so that it is of a consistently high standard in all subjects, enabling all groups of pupils to achieve well.
- Staff do not consistently adapt their teaching for pupils with SEND. This means the achievement of these pupils is variable. The school should ensure that all staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills to adapt their teaching and rigorously check the impact of the curriculum for pupils with SEND.

## Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in May 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	116422
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10341458
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,014
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Hayden Atkinson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jayne McLaren
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thehurst.school">www.thehurst.school</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The current headteacher and several senior leaders have joined the school since the previous inspection.
- The school currently uses one registered alternative provision.
- 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

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 held meetings with a range of leaders, including the headteacher and senior leaders, subject leaders, pastoral leaders and the special educational needs coordinators. They also met with representatives from the local governing body.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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.
- In addition, inspectors considered a range of information, including the school's plans for improvement and behaviour records.
- Inspectors considered the views of members of staff who responded to Ofsted's online staff survey. The views of parents were taken into account from the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and free-text responses. Inspectors met with groups of pupils formally and informally to discuss their views of the school and considered their responses to the Ofsted survey.

### **Inspection team**

Mark Bagust, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Jane Cartwright

Ofsted Inspector

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