

# Inspection of Hurstmere School

Hurst Road, Sidcup, Kent DA15 9AW

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Inspection dates:

27 and 28 September 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

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

Pupils are kept safe. They appreciate the positive working relationships that they have with adults in this school. This helps them to feel secure. Although pupils said that bullying does occasionally happen, they are clear that staff respond quickly to any concerns that they raise.

Most pupils do their best to demonstrate the behaviour and attitudes that leaders and staff expect. These behaviours are based on the 'R-Trails' of respect, teamwork, resilience, ambition, integrity, leadership and self-belief. Pupils like that they receive certificates and badges when they display these behaviours. They feel that behaviour is improving because these expectations are made clear. However, in some lessons, pupils' behaviour interrupts learning.

Leaders want every pupil to succeed. The curriculum has been designed with the goal of ensuring that pupils learn and remember more over time. However, teachers do not focus sufficiently on the most important concepts that pupils need to know. They do not check well enough what pupils have already learned and understood.

Some pupils take part in different extra-curricular activities. These include a range of sports clubs, the 'Harmony Army' school choir, Spanish and beekeeping. Pupils have leadership opportunities in the school, for example to become house captains.

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

Pupils learn a broad and balanced curriculum that generally aligns well with what is expected nationally. Typically, leaders have considered the important knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember. They organise learning so that pupils increase their understanding of important ideas and tackle more complex learning. For example, in English, pupils deepen their understanding of different narrative techniques in a logical way. Similarly, in physical education, pupils move from working in small groups to large teams to practise more complex techniques in different sports.

In most subjects, teaching is not focused sufficiently on the important concepts that pupils need to learn and remember. Teachers do not check carefully what pupils have understood before moving on to new and more complex ideas. This means that gaps in pupils' knowledge are sometimes missed and persist over time. Pupils struggle to apply what they have learned previously to more demanding learning in these subjects.

In some lessons, pupils' behaviour interrupts learning. Pupils spoken with said that this was typical of their experience in school.

Clear routines are in place to monitor and support pupils with attendance and punctuality. This includes working with external agencies when required.

Teachers are aware of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They adapt lessons with the aim of ensuring that these pupils access the curriculum. However, leaders have not ensured that staff have all the information they need about these pupils. This means that some adaptations to learning do not support pupils with SEND sufficiently well. Over time, pupils with SEND struggle to access the curriculum and fully understand their learning.

Leaders identify pupils who have difficulties with reading. They ensure that these pupils receive some help to catch up. However, teachers are sometimes unclear about how to support these pupils with reading in different subjects. Leaders have not put in place a clear approach to support those pupils who are at the earliest stages of learning to read. Leaders have plans to introduce a structured phonics programme with the aim of helping these pupils to become fluent and accurate readers.

Leaders and staff support pupils' personal development. For example, they make sure that pupils learn about cyberbullying and the importance of healthy relationships and consent. However, some aspects of the personal development provision have not been planned and sequenced well. Pupils, including those with SEND, struggle to understand and discuss important concepts and themes, such as those related to diversity. This is because there is insufficient opportunity for pupils to revisit, develop and deepen their understanding of these ideas.

Leaders have put in place a programme for careers advice and guidance that meets the statutory requirements. However, pupils with SEND do not always receive appropriate support and guidance with their next steps.

Staff appreciate the support they receive from school leaders in managing their workload and well-being.

Leaders are focused on improving the school and have identified the right priorities. Those responsible for governance have received training and are taking steps to improve their oversight of the school's work. Nevertheless, while the governing body understands the school's priorities for improvement, it has not been sufficiently rigorous in overseeing these areas.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have robust systems in place to identify and manage safeguarding concerns. They have created a culture of vigilance and ensure that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Staff are well trained and know how to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm.

Leaders understand the risks faced by pupils in the local community and work well with a range of external agencies. This ensures that pupils and their families get the help they need in a timely way. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe

through the content covered in the personal, social and health education curriculum. For example, they learn about keeping themselves safe online and in the local area.

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

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

- Sometimes, leaders do not provide teachers and support staff with precise information on how pupils with SEND can be supported. Clear information is not always shared about the specific strategies needed to support pupils' learning. This means that these pupils do not always receive the help needed to access the curriculum and learn effectively. Leaders must provide staff with the information they need to ensure pupils with SEND develop their knowledge and understanding.
- In some subjects, some of the work pupils are asked to complete does not focus sufficiently well on the most important concepts. As a result, pupils struggle to understand and recall these ideas. Leaders must ensure that teachers focus on the core knowledge and understanding identified in each subject. This will help pupils to secure their knowledge before moving on to new and more complex learning.
- Sometimes, teachers do not check well enough what pupils have learned. This means that gaps in pupils' knowledge can be overlooked and, in turn, continue. Leaders must ensure that teachers check what pupils have understood so that they can address any misconceptions swiftly.
- The provision for pupils' personal development is not clearly planned and defined. Pupils do not develop their understanding of some important issues. Pupils with SEND do not always receive appropriate careers guidance. Leaders must ensure that all aspects of the provision for personal development are planned effectively and, in turn, provide meaningful opportunities for all pupils to learn about the wider world, including their next steps after school.
- Leaders' expectations for behaviour are not implemented consistently. In some lessons, pupils' learning is disrupted by the behaviour of others. Leaders must check that all staff are consistent in their expectations and application of the systems for managing behaviour.

## **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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137368
<b>Local authority</b>	Bexley
<b>Inspection number</b>	10227409
<b>Type of school</b>	Modern (non-selective)
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1065
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Eleanor Allen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lynn Bennett
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.hurstmere.org.uk/">www.hurstmere.org.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	18 and 19 September 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- There has been a change in headteacher since the previous inspection.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- A small number of Year 10 pupils are completing a course one day a week at Shooters Hill Sixth Form College.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, 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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors spoke to the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team and two school improvement partners. One of whom was linked to the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, geography, modern foreign languages, music and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects, including art and design, computing, design and technology and mathematics.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents and records linking to behaviour, pupil movement, school improvement documentation and records of governance.
- Inspectors spoke to the designated safeguarding lead and reviewed safeguarding records. Staff and pupils were also spoken to about safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, parents and staff through discussions and responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Sophie Healey-Welch, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sam Hainey	His Majesty's Inspector
John Blaney	Ofsted Inspector
Lisa Strong	His Majesty's Inspector

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