

# The Hermitage School

Oakwood Road, St John's, Woking, Surrey GU21 8UU

## Inspection dates

26–27 February 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The new headteacher and her leadership team have taken effective action to bring about improvements across the school.
- Leaders have set high expectations. They have introduced a range of successful strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Middle leaders are developing their leadership skills well, with support from the Swan Trust and the local mathematics hub. As a result, they are beginning to have a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. They provide school leaders with an effective balance of support and challenge.
- While leaders monitor the impact of additional funding, monitoring lacks sufficient rigour.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They give clear, accurate explanations which help pupils to develop their understanding, particularly in reading and writing.
- There is some variability in the teaching of mathematics. Although the teaching is generally effective, at times, the work that pupils are given is not demanding enough.
- Overall, current pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are making good progress from their starting points.
- The school's curriculum offers pupils a range of interesting learning experiences. However, leaders acknowledge that this requires further development. Consequently, the quality of teaching in some subjects is inconsistent and the progress that pupils make is variable.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is calm and orderly. They take pride in their work and have positive attitudes to their learning.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They know who to talk to in school if they have any worries.
- Safeguarding is effective. Leaders ensure that pupils' welfare is given a high priority. Consequently, pupils are kept safe from harm.

## Full report

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

- Further develop the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - improving the planning and implementation of the wider curriculum
  - extending the skills of middle leaders so that they have even more impact on the quality of teaching and learning and on pupils' outcomes
  - sharpening leaders' monitoring of the impact of additional funding.
- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, particularly in mathematics, by embedding across the wider curriculum the successful strategies that have already been introduced elsewhere.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Since the last inspection, leaders have taken effective action, both to address the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report and to raise standards. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning across the school and outcomes for pupils are now good.
- The newly appointed headteacher has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Aply supported by her leadership team, she has set high expectations and has targeted the work of leaders to secure further improvements in teaching and learning.
- The Swan Trust provides effective support and challenge for school leaders. The headteacher and her team embrace the opportunities that this provides. Leaders and teachers have enhanced and developed their effectiveness through working collaboratively with other schools and undertaking appropriate training.
- Middle leaders have also benefited from external support, for example from the local mathematics hub, working with a specialist leader of education. As a result, they are beginning to develop the effectiveness of their leadership. This has resulted in improvements in the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics, although leaders acknowledge that this requires further work.
- The coordinator for special educational needs knows individual pupils very well. She has a good understanding of each pupil's special educational needs, including those pupils who attend the Orchard Centre. She ensures that plans are in place to support their needs and, consequently, pupils with SEND are making good progress overall. At times, however, leaders do not monitor the impact of their actions for these pupils sharply enough.
- Leaders carefully monitor the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils. They use the pupil premium funding to provide appropriate interventions and support for these pupils. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are making strong progress overall. Leaders are not as sharply focused as they could be when monitoring the impact of individual interventions.
- Leaders use the physical education and sport premium funding to provide pupils with opportunities to participate in an increasing range of sports and physical activity. However, leaders' plans are not focused sharply enough and some targets are not measurable. Consequently, leaders are not currently monitoring the impact of this spending with sufficient rigour.
- Leaders ensure that pupils experience learning in a range of subjects across the curriculum. Pupils' experience is enhanced with interesting educational visits and outdoor learning, for example in the forest school. This effectively supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their understanding of fundamental British values. However, leaders acknowledge that the curriculum needs improving further so that the quality of teaching in foundation subjects (subjects other than mathematics and English) matches the quality of the best teaching in the school.
- The majority of parents and carers are supportive of the work of the school and

welcome the changes that have been implemented by the new headteacher. For example, one parent said: 'The new headteacher has made great strides in improving the school already and things are definitely progressing in the right direction.' This view was shared by many.

## **Governance of the school**

- Since the last inspection, the governing body has taken robust action to improve its effectiveness and to address the areas for improvement highlighted in the previous inspection report. Governors are passionate about their roles and have high aspirations for pupils in the school.
- Governors have sought support and training from the Swan Trust to enable them to fulfil their duties effectively. They have also ensured that the information they are given by school leaders is thorough and detailed. Governors undertake visits to the school to monitor the impact of leaders' actions on teaching and learning and safeguarding.
- As a result, governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors focus their meetings on exploring the work of school leaders to address these issues, providing leaders with appropriate challenge and support.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have established a culture where pupils' safety and welfare are paramount. Pupils are well looked after and are kept safe from harm.
- Leaders provide thorough, regular training for all staff to ensure that they have a very good understanding of their responsibilities to safeguard children. Consequently, staff are vigilant and know how to report any welfare concerns to an appropriate leader in the school.
- The designated safeguarding leads in the school are knowledgeable about their roles, and they maintain thorough safeguarding records. They ensure that all pupils, including vulnerable pupils, are provided with appropriate support to meet their welfare needs.
- Leaders ensure that all of the relevant employment checks are undertaken on adults working in the school. The record of these checks is thorough and well maintained.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Since the previous inspection, school leaders have set high expectations of what pupils are able to achieve. They have introduced a number of successful strategies to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leaders have established a positive culture for learning. Pupils collaborate well in their learning, supporting and challenging one another. They engage in effective dialogue with one another, and with teachers, to explore and deepen their understanding. For example, during a mathematics lesson, pupils listened carefully while their peers gave explanations for their answers. One pupil showed how he deepened his understanding

further, saying, 'I am going to build on his answer.'

- Teachers have strong subject knowledge. Consequently, they provide pupils with very clear explanations, using accurate subject-specific vocabulary.
- The teaching of writing is particularly strong. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, providing them with a range of resources to support their language development. Teachers give pupils the opportunity to draft, edit and improve their writing, and provide clear guidance to enable them to do this well. Pupils respond to this with enthusiasm and willingly commit to making improvements to their work.
- The teaching of reading is also effective. Teachers use high-quality texts to engage pupils' interest and to challenge their thinking. Teachers pose questions that probe pupils' understanding, and challenge them to explain and justify their answers, using evidence from the texts. This enables pupils to learn well.
- There is some variability in the quality of teaching in mathematics. Where there are strengths in teaching, teachers have high expectations of pupils. They make effective use of assessment to plan tasks that are accurately pitched for pupils' next steps in their learning. As a result, pupils are sufficiently challenged and they work with determination and concentration. Where teaching is less strong, however, the work that teachers give pupils is not demanding enough. When this happens, pupils lose interest in their learning, lack focus and do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- The Orchard Centre provides effective support for pupils with SEND. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They plan tasks that are well matched to pupils' needs and this enables them to learn well. When pupils join their peers in mainstream classrooms, however, the quality of teaching is variable. Sometimes, pupils are supported well to enable them to make strong progress. At other times, however, they are not provided with the support that they need to be successful in their learning.
- The teaching of subjects other than English and mathematics is inconsistent. Teaching in some subjects is effective, for example religious education (RE). However, teaching in some other subjects, for example science, is less effective. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their investigative skills in science in order to deepen their knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The school's emotional literacy support assistant provides pupils with the opportunity to discuss their worries and concerns, providing effective support. Pupils appreciate these opportunities and find them very helpful. A number of parents also expressed their appreciation of the support the school provides for their children's emotional needs.
- Pupils take great pride in their learning. The presentation of their work is of a high standard, with neatly joined handwriting.
- Throughout the school's curriculum, pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe.

For example, pupils have been taught about firework safety and internet safety. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

- Pupils have a good understanding of what bullying is and they know who to talk to if they have any concerns. Records show that incidents of bullying are low. Most pupils are confident that, on the rare occasion that bullying does happen, teachers deal with it appropriately. There is a small minority of pupils and parents, however, who do not feel that bullying is always dealt with as effectively as it should be.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are friendly and welcoming and their conduct around the school is calm and orderly. At breaktimes, pupils play together sensibly and they chat happily in small groups over lunch.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. During lessons, pupils work with concentration and commitment. They collaborate well with their peers, offering one another challenge and support. At times, however, when work is not sufficiently challenging, pupils lose interest in their learning and do not focus fully on their work. While this does not disrupt the learning of others, these pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- The majority of pupils attend school regularly and overall attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Leaders are taking appropriate action to address the persistent absence of a small number of pupils, in particular those who are disadvantaged. Consequently, the attendance of individual pupils is beginning to improve. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils, however, remains below the national average.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- As a result of improvements in the quality of teaching and learning across the school, pupils' outcomes are improving. Over the last two years, the proportion of pupils who attained age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics combined at the end of key stage 2 has improved. In 2018, it was in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining a high standard also improved.
- The progress that pupils made in reading and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 also improved in 2018 and was in line with the national averages. Despite improving in 2018, the progress made by pupils in writing, however, remained below the national average.
- While there are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in mathematics, overall, current pupils in the school are making strong progress from their starting points.
- Pupils develop effective strategies to enable them to read confidently. Teachers challenge pupils' thinking with demanding texts, and pupils enjoy their reading. Consequently, pupils make good progress in their reading.
- As a result of effective teaching, current pupils are making strong progress in writing,

including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. Pupils quickly develop a secure knowledge of spellings and apply these with increasing accuracy in their writing. Their understanding and application of language and punctuation also develop rapidly. By Year 6, pupils have become confident writers. They write with imagination and flair, producing writing of a high quality.

- Variability in the quality of teaching in mathematics means that pupils' progress in this subject is inconsistent. Where teaching is strong, pupils make good progress in their acquisition of key skills. They apply their knowledge with confidence to reason and solve problems. However, where teaching is less strong and expectations are not high enough, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Historically, the progress made by disadvantaged pupils by the end of key stage 2 has been below the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Furthermore, in recent years, only a small proportion of disadvantaged pupils have attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result of improvements in teaching and learning, and higher expectations, the progress of disadvantaged pupils currently in the school is strong.
- As a result of good teaching and effective support, pupils with SEND are making strong progress from their starting points.
- The progress that pupils make across the wider curriculum is variable. In some subjects, for example RE, pupils are developing a secure understanding of a range of different religious beliefs. In other subjects, however, pupils' knowledge is not developed well enough and pupils' progress is limited, for example in science.

## School details

Unique reference number	140594
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10088169

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	337
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mr Tim Clay
Headteacher	Mrs Jo Harrup
Telephone number	01483 472 047
Website	<a href="http://www.hermitage.surrey.sch.uk">www.hermitage.surrey.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@hermitage.surrey.sch.uk">info@hermitage.surrey.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	11–12 January 2017

## Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the school has appointed a new headteacher. She joined the school in September 2018.
- The school is part of the Swan Trust, an umbrella trust of five schools working as equal partners. The schools work together collaboratively to provide one another with support and challenge. The school also works with a local mathematics hub to support school leaders with their work to improve the quality of teaching in mathematics.
- The school has an additionally resourced provision, the Orchard Centre, offering 18 places for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Pupils are educated in the centre during the morning session and join mainstream classes for the afternoon.
- The school is larger than the average-sized junior school.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is in line with the national average. However, the proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is above the national average.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The vast majority of pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in all year groups and classes, across a range of subjects. They also observed learning in the Orchard Centre. Most sessions were observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors looked at the quality of pupils' work, both during lessons and through a focused scrutiny of work in books.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other school leaders and staff. They also met with the trust's school improvement partner, a headteacher representing the Swan Trust and the governing body. They met with the school's designated safeguarding leads.
- A wide range of documentation was reviewed, including information on pupils' attainment and progress, attendance and behaviour. Information about governance, including the minutes of the governing body's meetings, was examined. The school's self-evaluation summary, school development plan and supporting evidence were scrutinised, together with information on the school's website.
- Inspectors met with parents at the beginning of the school day and took account of the 84 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 54 free-text comments.
- The views of the 33 staff who completed Ofsted's confidential online survey were considered.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked with pupils in lessons and around the school to gather their views. They also met formally with groups of pupils and took account of the 138 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed in lessons, around the school, during assembly and during lunchtime.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding records and the single central record of recruitment checks on adults working with pupils.

## Inspection team

Leah Goulding, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sam Nowak	Ofsted Inspector
Nick Hitchen	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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