

Inspection of a good school: West Hatch High School

High Road, Chigwell, Essex IG7 5BT

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 November 2023

Outcome

West Hatch High School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Daniel Leonard. This school is part of West Hatch High School Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Daniel Leonard, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Adrian Harris.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a large school, which achieves its aim of feeling like a family. Pupils are happy and safe. They say their school is a tolerant and inclusive community. Pupils know that the school expects them to work hard, and they do. Teachers use engaging approaches in lessons, which pupils enjoy. This contributes towards their hard work and their regular and prompt attendance.

Pupils treat others with respect and care. They move around the site very calmly. Pupils know that if they do not get things right, teachers will deal with it quickly and fairly. Sixth-form students are excellent role models for other pupils.

Pupils love the range of activities on offer. These extend their passions and kindle new interests. They can learn performance skills for school productions, or how to provide technical support for them. Many pupils take part in school clubs. Pupils enjoy school trips focused on important world issues. These include studying conflict at the Imperial War Museum and threats to the environment on the Essex coast.

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

The curriculum is ambitious and interesting. It is well linked to pupils' potential careers. This helps pupils see the relevance of what they learn. In Year 9, pupils get to experience a range of subjects that they would typically only meet later.

The school recently introduced the teaching of French as well as Spanish in key stage 3 to increase the number of pupils studying modern foreign languages at key stage 4. The

range of post-16 courses is closely matched to the needs and aspirations of sixth-form students.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They emphasise subject-specific vocabulary. Teachers address the big questions in their subject and the building blocks of knowledge pupils need to answer them. However, in some lessons, teachers do not always design activities that ensure this knowledge is firmly fixed in pupils' minds.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are very well supported. Teachers are supplied with detailed information about the best ways to help individual pupils with SEND. Teachers use this guidance to help pupils with SEND learn the same curriculum as everyone else.

Pupils overwhelmingly love to read. The school helps any pupils who struggle with reading effectively. They are given individual support to help them catch up quickly. Teachers make sure that all pupils have reading books that develop their fluency and comprehension.

Teachers use a range of strategies to check what pupils know in lessons. This usually helps them to monitor whether pupils have kept up with their work. On occasion, a minority of teachers do not notice the gaps that emerge in the learning of a small number of pupils in their classes.

Respectful relationships between staff and pupils create a purposeful learning environment. Incidents of poor behaviour are usually well managed by staff so that learning is only rarely interrupted. A very small number of pupils do not work as hard in lessons as the majority of their peers.

All staff encourage pupils to attend regularly. Pupils know they are missing out if they fail to attend. This ensures very strong attendance.

Pupils enjoy the friendly rivalry created by the house system. They actively engage in weekly opportunities to compete. The school gives all pupils the chance to become leaders through a range of positions of responsibility. Sixth-form students act as buddies and mentors for pupils in the lower school, and some are trained to support the learning of other pupils in lessons. The school encourages all pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities, and leaders meticulously monitor which pupils attend them.

The school has grown considerably in recent years, and the curriculum has been revised to meet changing needs. Staff feel confident that these changes have been made with consideration for staff well-being and workload.

The school prepares pupils well for their next steps. The careers programme is very well planned, including in the sixth form. Pupils get excellent opportunities to experience the world of work. They particularly appreciate the strong financial education they receive. The guidance they get helps them make sensible choices about their destinations after they leave school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On some occasions, teachers do not place enough emphasis in lessons on ensuring that pupils remember new content as well as they should. As a result, these pupils are not as well prepared as they could be for the next learning in the curriculum. The school needs to ensure that all staff are sufficiently supported and trained in pedagogical approaches that encourage pupils to commit what they have studied to their long-term memory.
- In a small number of lessons, teachers do not check what pupils know and understand as rigorously as they should. As a result, these teachers do not identify where pupils develop gaps in their learning. The school needs to train all staff to assess the learning of the pupils in their classes systematically so they can provide the support necessary for these pupils to catch up quickly.

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 September 2013.

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	136758
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10295030
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	1,514
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	270
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Adrian Harris
Headteacher	Daniel Leonard
Website	www.westhatch.net
Date of previous inspection	21 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a single academy trust, West Hatch High School Academy Trust.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers and two unregistered alternative providers.
- 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 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 met with leaders, including six trustees, the headteacher, two deputy headteachers, four assistant headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator and two pastoral leaders.
- Deep dives were carried out in English, mathematics, science, geography and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors evaluated a range of school documentation, including school policies, curriculum plans and the school's summary of its self-evaluation.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors reviewed records of behaviour, including incidents of bullying. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed 126 responses, including 122 free-text responses, submitted to Ofsted Parent View during the inspection. Inspectors considered 94 responses to the staff survey and 525 responses to the pupil survey. Additionally, inspectors met with members of staff and spoke with pupils to gather their views on the school.

Inspection team

Paul Lawrence, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Cathy Barr	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Fowler	Ofsted Inspector

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