

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Howard of Effingham School

Lower Road, Effingham, Leatherhead, Surrey KT24 5JR

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 March 2025

Outcome

Howard of Effingham School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The principal of this school is James Baker. This school is part of The Howard Partnership 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), Louise Lee, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ian Wilson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel proud to attend the Howard of Effingham School, where they experience a wide range of opportunities and a strong sense of community. They appreciate that their teachers have high expectations of what they will accomplish during their time at the school, and they achieve well. Many pupils describe how school prepares them for their next steps in life because of its focus on developing their character and building resilience.

Corridors and classrooms are calm and orderly, which enables pupils to learn without distractions. Pupils typically treat each other with kindness and respect. Although they are a rare occurrence, incidences of unkindness are dealt with effectively once reported, and most pupils agree that this is the case.

A key part of what pupils value about their school is the extra-curricular offer. They enjoy opportunities such as performing in the local theatre, singing in the choir or competing in sporting fixtures. Pupils also benefit from a range of trips linked to the curriculum, such as overseas trips in languages and history. Many take advantage of opportunities such as the Duke of Edinburgh's award or the wide range of clubs, which includes robotics and art and textiles.

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

The school offers an ambitious curriculum, and pupils achieve well. In most subject areas, pupils' attainment and progress is well above the national average. Students in the sixth form achieve exceptionally well and go on to an impressive range of destinations.

The school has identified that more pupils would benefit from studying a broad range of academic subjects as represented by the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). To achieve this, they have made improvements to the curriculum and its delivery in languages. Although these changes are in the process of being embedded, the initial impact is clear. More current pupils are now opting to study a full range of EBacc subjects and are learning well.

Teachers are passionate about their subject areas and have impressive expertise. They draw on this to deliver the curriculum effectively. New concepts are explained clearly. The school uses a range of methods to check that pupils are learning. Sometimes the information these strategies provide could be used more effectively to make adaptations to the curriculum. This would benefit all pupils by helping to address gaps in their knowledge but would particularly help those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). More generally, the needs of pupils with SEND are identified quickly and additional support is put in place where required. Equally, there is an effective approach to identifying and supporting pupils who find reading difficult so that they can catch up with their peers. Reading for pleasure is strongly encouraged for all pupils, and the school runs a range of popular book groups.

Character development is a priority here. The school recognises that, as well as high academic attainment, pupils need to be rounded, confident and resilient to succeed in the future. Recently the school has introduced specific provision to support pupils with their well-being and to build their resilience. This has been successful, particularly at encouraging identified pupils to attend school regularly and participate fully in their learning. Students in the sixth form especially enjoy taking on leadership roles such as mentoring younger pupils or becoming a mental health first aider.

The school provides a comprehensive programme of personal development. This includes age-appropriate teaching about healthy relationships from Year 7 through to sixth form. There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to learn about future careers and different pathways to success, including apprenticeships and vocational options. Pupils are inspired and informed by careers events, talks from employers and visits from school alumni.

School and trust leaders have a detailed and accurate understanding of their school, including its strengths and areas for development. The school's values of ambition, opportunity and inclusion are at the centre of their decision-making. Trustees have systems to ensure that they have oversight of the school's performance and priorities. The trust is committed to looking outwards to develop further. For example, the school benefits from expert visitors, work with other schools and a programme of peer reviews, which all add new perspectives and facilitate improvement. Staff appreciate the school's

extensive programme of professional development, which helps them to refine their practice. This includes teachers in the early stages of their career who value the quality of the mentoring and training they receive. Teachers enjoy working at the school. They value the culture of collegiate support and appreciate the school's consideration of their 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 checks for gaps in pupils' knowledge but does not always make full use of this information to adapt the delivery of the curriculum. This means that some pupils do not always learn as well as they could. The school should ensure that teachers draw on their expertise to adapt the curriculum in a way that is more consistently responsive to pupils' needs and prior knowledge.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in December 2019.

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	136833
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10362394
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy convertor
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	1510
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	326
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ian Wilson
CEO of the trust	Louise Lee
Principal	James Baker
Website	www.thehoward.org
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 December 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Howard Partnership Trust.
- The school currently uses nine alternative provisions. Five of these are registered with Ofsted.
- 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 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 met with a range of senior staff during the inspection, including the principal, vice-principals and assistant principals. Inspectors also met with representatives of the trust. The lead inspector met with representatives of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- Inspectors visited the school's well-being provision and spoke with pupils and staff about this aspect of the school's work. They considered the school's personal development offer and the delivery of the curriculum in personal, social, health and economic education.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during social times. They spoke to pupils and leaders about this aspect of the school's 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.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys completed by parents, pupils and staff.

Inspection team

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