

Inspection of Hinchley Wood School

Claygate Lane, Hinchley Wood, Esher, Surrey KT10 0AQ

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteachers of this school are Maria Cachia and Lucy Macdonald. This school is part of the Hinchley Wood Learning Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Ben Bartlett, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andy Sellers and Claudette Atkinson.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Hinchley Wood School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Hinchley Wood School to be outstanding before it opened as an academy.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils embrace the school's values of determination, independence, enthusiasm, confidence and consideration. The curriculum extends beyond the academic and actively fosters pupils' personal development. Leaders have ensured that all pupils have access to a wide-ranging and rich set of experiences. The school has high expectations and, as a result, pupils achieve highly.

Behaviour in and around school is of an exceedingly high quality. Pupils are pleasant, polite and respectful to their teachers and guests. In lessons, there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils say bullying is extremely rare and dealt with well by the school. Pupils feel safe and happy in the school.

There is a wide range of culturally enriching trips, such as visits to the theatre, art galleries and religious buildings. 'Enrichment Wednesday' offers sixth-form students many options, including sign language and an extensive range of sporting activities. The provision consistently and extensively supports the health, welfare and well-being of all pupils.

The school is responsive to pupils' views and interests, developing their character and leadership skills. Sixth-form students regularly support younger pupils in their lessons. Students and pupils make an excellent contribution to the local community. The school supports other schools by generously sharing best practice and expertise.

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

The curriculum is carefully planned, suitably sequenced and implemented effectively. Routines and expectations are embedded and exert a positive impact on the behaviour and learning of pupils. There is a strong learning culture across the school. Pupils develop a deep body of knowledge. This is reflected in external examination results, which are consistently well above the national average. Increasing numbers of pupils study languages beyond key stage 3 due to the effective work that leaders have done to improve this aspect of the school's provision.

There is high ambition for all pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged. The small number of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding are well supported and integral to school decision-making. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) thrive because their needs are identified and catered for precisely. This includes pupils supported by the NAS Cullum Centre, who access the full curriculum in a way that is thoughtfully personalised to build upon their prior knowledge and develop their interests and aptitudes.

Teachers are experts in their field. Their explanations are clear and well modelled. They probe expertly when questioning and check for whole-class understanding before moving on. Relationships forged between staff and pupils are rooted in a

genuine atmosphere of mutual respect. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning and relish being at school. They value the experiences offered, both inside and outside of the classroom.

Subject-specific vocabulary, literacy skills and reading are suitably highlighted and extended by the school's curriculum. Pupils feel comfortable taking risks as part of their work and enjoy opportunities for independent learning and research. Assessment provides pupils with clear feedback that helps them to achieve their next steps in learning. It also gives staff a clear appreciation of areas in which the curriculum might be further enhanced or remodelled. Ongoing curriculum improvement is a strong feature of the school.

Pupils have extensive opportunities to take on leadership responsibilities, including supporting younger pupils with their learning. Overall, attendance is high, including in the sixth form, because pupils want to come to school. Where attendance is lower, such as for a small number of disadvantaged pupils, leaders' persistent work is showing signs of improvement. Across the school, suspensions and exclusions are low.

Through the curriculum, pupils are given opportunities to consider ethical issues. For example, they recall considering ethical energy choices in science and using recycled materials in textiles. The development of pupils' character is exemplary. The school's personal development programme, which includes relationships, sex and health education, is thoughtfully considered and highly regarded.

Careers education is well supported. All departments have a 'careers champion', who provides support for subject-based careers advice. The school works in partnership with local businesses, colleges and universities to support careers education. As a result, 'staying on' rates into the sixth form are high, and students continue their education, including by progressing to degree-level apprenticeships, at a range of highly regarded universities.

Professional development is entirely focused on the individual needs of staff. Time is spent thoughtfully developing teaching pedagogy and subject expertise. Middle leaders are actively supported through effective line management and personalised training. Early career teachers are exceptionally well supported. Leaders are considerate of staff workload and well-being. Staff are proud to be part of the school.

Trustees and governors are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities. They attend school regularly and have a well-informed understanding of the school. Trustees' and governors' meeting minutes confirm their engagement and their probing questions. Leaders are fully held to account for the school's performance.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	137855
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10267954
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	1,355
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	253
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chairs of trust	Andy Sellers and Claudette Atkinson
CEO of the trust	Ben Bartlett
Headteachers	Maria Cachia and Lucy Macdonald
Website	www.hinchleywoodschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 November 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Hinchley Wood School is well above the averaged-sized 11 to 18 mixed school, with sixth-form provision larger than the average size. The school is part of the Hinchley Wood Learning Partnership, which consists of one secondary school and two primary schools. When the predecessor school was inspected in September 2011, it was judged to be outstanding.
- The school has a local authority specially resourced provision for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder on site. The NAS Cullum Centre was opened in September 2016 and has capacity for 20 pupils, with places allocated by Surrey local authority.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at four registered education providers and three unregistered education providers.

- 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

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in English, mathematics, geography, art, modern foreign languages and religious education, which covers philosophy, religion and ethics. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, talked with teachers, spoke to pupils and students, and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors spoke with a group of early career teachers and their mentors about training and support.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders, staff, students and pupils. They looked at school policies, curriculum documentation, behaviour logs, attendance records and destination statistics. They spoke with leaders at the three unregistered alternative provision schools. The lead inspector met with trust leaders, trustees and governors.
- 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 considered responses to the Ofsted Parent View online questionnaire and additional written comments from parents. They reviewed the survey responses completed by staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Paul Metcalf, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Webster	Ofsted Inspector
Christian Kingsley	Ofsted Inspector
Jason Philipsz	Ofsted Inspector
Julia Mortimore	Ofsted Inspector

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