

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

Owlsmoor Road, Owlsmoor, Sandhurst, Berkshire GU47 0SD

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 December 2024

Outcome

Sandhurst School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Gareth Croxon. This school is part of the Corvus Learning 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), Stuart Matthews, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Justine Waight.

What is it like to attend this school?

Sandhurst is a caring and welcoming school. Pupils are happy and safe thanks to the warm relationships with staff and strong pastoral care. They know they have staff they can talk to if they have any worries. Pupils live up to the school's values, showing respect for others and contributing to a positive school environment. The innovative 'Reaching Rwanda' project exemplifies the school's exceptional work in instilling a sense of responsibility and global awareness among pupils.

High expectations of pupils' behaviour are now paying dividends. The school is calm and orderly, and there are clear routines that pupils understand and follow. Most pupils behave well in lessons, during breaks and at lunchtime. They enjoy being rewarded for meeting the school's expectations. Some targeted provisions within the school, for example learning in the outdoor woodland, support the needs of vulnerable pupils and those who need to improve their behaviour, attendance or attitudes to learning.

The school has high expectations of what pupils can achieve. The school and the trust have markedly improved the curriculum and how it is delivered. Many pupils achieve well as a result. However, in some subjects, where curriculum improvements are new, pupils do not achieve as highly as they could.

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

The trust has worked effectively with the school to make some necessary improvements, which are helping pupils get back on track after the pandemic. Pupils' regular attendance and good behaviour have been a top priority. The school is doing impressive work to help pupils attend school more regularly. All groups of pupils are attending better. Pupils and staff appreciate the improvements in behaviour due to new routines introduced this year. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning lead to a purposeful atmosphere in most lessons.

All pupils have access to a broad and ambitious curriculum, including the full range of English Baccalaureate subjects at key stage 4. The number of pupils studying a modern foreign language in key stage 4 is increasing. However, it is still below the government's national ambition for schools. The school has ensured that the curriculum in all subjects is well designed so pupils build knowledge over time.

The school has introduced clear expectations for high-quality teaching. For example, teachers use agreed strategies to help pupils recall previous knowledge. This helps pupils to remember what they have been taught and produce high-quality work. Staff identify pupils' additional needs, including any special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. Staff use information about these pupils carefully to make appropriate changes to learning activities. Overall, pupils now learn better than they did. However, in some subjects, staff are still developing their understanding of the school's new approaches to how the curriculum should be delivered. In these subjects, pupils do not remember their learning as well as they do in others.

The school has made reading a priority. Pupils read regularly during tutor time, and older pupils support younger pupils in reading more confidently. The school quickly identifies any pupils who need support with reading. However, the weakest readers continue to struggle because they do not receive the expert help they need with phonics. This hinders how well these pupils access the curriculum in other subjects.

The school's provision for pupils' broader development enriches the curriculum and ensures pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The LIFE lessons teach pupils how to be safe online and in the community. Pupils also learn about healthy lifestyles and relationships. They have a secure understanding of fundamental British values. The school has received national recognition for its work on Holocaust education. This exemplifies its commitment to ensuring pupils are well informed about moral issues. Pupils benefit from good-quality careers advice and guidance. This helps to inform them about their next steps in education.

The school is well led. Staff feel supported and are on board with the leaders' drive to improve the school further. Staff appreciate how the school considers their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and the appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not securely and consistently embedded in some subjects. In these subjects, teachers do not support pupils to build their knowledge and skills successfully. The trust should support the school to build staff expertise so that new teaching approaches are implemented well in these remaining subjects, enabling all groups of pupils to achieve well.
- Pupils who are at the early stages of reading do not benefit from an effective phonics curriculum. Consequently, some pupils who struggle to read do not receive the support that they need to catch up quickly. The trust should ensure that there is high-quality teaching of phonics, so pupils benefit from the support they need to help them learn to read well.

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 predecessor school, Sandhurst School, to be good for overall effectiveness in November 2017.

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	148850
Local authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	10341903
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	996
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Justine Waight
CEO of the trust	Stuart Matthews
Headteacher	Gareth Croxon
Website	www.sandhurstschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined the Corvus Learning Trust in February 2022.
- The current headteacher joined the school in September 2023.
- The school closed its sixth form in 2024 and no longer has any post-16 provision.
- The school opened a specialist resource provision for pupils with SEND in September 2024. The provision supports pupils with speech, language and communication needs. Currently, three pupils attend this provision.
- The school currently uses two registered and five unregistered alternative provisions.
- 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

- 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 held meetings with a range of leaders, including the headteacher and senior leaders, subject leaders, pastoral leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. They also met with members of the board of trustees and of the local governing body.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' 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.
- In addition, inspectors considered a range of information including the school's plans for improvement and behaviour records.
- Inspectors considered the views of members of staff who responded to Ofsted's online staff survey. The views of parents were taken into account from the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and free-text responses. Inspectors met with groups of pupils formally and informally to discuss their views of the school and considered their responses to the Ofsted survey.

Inspection team

Mark Bagust, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Mike Serridge

Ofsted Inspector

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