

West Hill School

Kingston Road, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 7PW

Inspection dates 1–2 April 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher and governors, is highly ambitious for the students. The team shows this by the excellent way in which the members have maintained the outstanding achievement and personal development of students over a very long period of time.
- Excellent personal and academic opportunities ensure that this school turns students' lives around. From often poor starts to their education, students are prepared extremely well for their futures.
- All groups of students achieve outstandingly well during their time at the school, gaining qualifications in English, mathematics, science art, religious education, vocational and functional skills and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Teaching is outstanding and regularly challenges students to work hard and do their very best. As a result, a high proportion makes excellent progress from their starting points.
- An innovative approach to the teaching of reading and, in particular, the sounds letters make ensures that students improve their reading and writing skills from the start.
- Behaviour by all groups is exemplary in and around the school. Students attend regularly and told inspectors that they enjoy school and feel very safe and secure.
- Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children are happy and safe.
- The rich range of subjects and topics makes a very positive contribution to students' enjoyment of learning and their excellent progress. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted extremely well.
- Leaders rigorously maintain the excellent teaching by providing high quality training and through their positive partnerships with the local authority and local schools.
- Governors have a wide range of skills to meet the needs of the school. They are fully involved in monitoring and provide excellent guidance and challenge to leaders.
- The governing body ensures that there is sufficient funding to support the performance of staff and to ensure that all students, including those who are eligible for additional funding, achieve equally as their peers.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons across the school, some jointly with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made a few short visits to observe students' learning.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior staff, several members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and some students.
- The inspection team observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including information about students' progress, planning and monitoring documents, safeguarding information and some students' books.
- Inspectors took account of the 22 responses to the online survey (Parent View) and used them to form a judgement about parents' views. Some parents also wrote to the inspectors to give their views. The inspection team also considered the 10 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Denise Morris, Lead Inspector

Additional Inspector

Jason Hughes

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school caters for secondary-aged pupils from across Surrey who have moderate learning difficulties and/or who have a diagnosis of autism. A few have severe learning difficulties, visual or hearing impairments and/or physical disabilities
- Almost all students are of White British heritage and a few speak English as an additional language. There are far more boys on roll than girls.
- The proportion of pupils in this school supported by additional government funding, including those eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority, is above average.
- The school receives additional funding for all Year 7 students to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Key Stage 4 students attend East Surrey College each week to undertake work-related courses.
- Early entry examinations in GCSE mathematics are taken by a few of the most able students
- Provision also takes place at The Link, which is based at a local school. There were no students there attending this training during the inspection.
- The school provides outreach support for other local schools.
- This school is a Teaching School, providing and supporting the training of teachers new to the profession as well as to other teachers across Surrey.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the outside learning space so that it better supports the range of subjects and provides additional work-related opportunities for older students.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students enter the school with levels of skill that are well below those expected for their age, due to their moderate or severe learning difficulties and/or their autism spectrum disorders, sensory impairments or physical disabilities.
- All groups make outstanding progress at the school so that, by the time they leave, students acquire nationally recognised qualifications including GCSEs in English, mathematics and science or work-related accreditation that will support them well in their futures.
- Students' excellent progress in reading and writing is due to the challenging whole-school approach to literacy which ensures regular daily practice in using the sounds letters make, along with three planned reading sessions daily.
- Teachers provide regular opportunities for students to practise their writing, through challenging questioning which extends their skills and understanding. In Years 8 and 9, for example, students were able to complete pre-prepared sentences using alliteration. For example, one student wrote, 'The sky is a beautiful blue.' This showed his creative outcomes and excellent learning.
- Progress in developing communication skills is outstanding because of the way in which students are given the confidence to speak in lessons, and present their findings to others. Those who find communicating difficult make successful use of signing and symbols to express themselves, respond to questions or speak in class.
- Students make outstanding progress in mathematics. This was evident in Year 7, when students eagerly tried explain the differences in shapes. Successful collaboration and discussion with their classmates enabled pupils to increase their understanding as they all helped each other.
- Achievement in science is very strong. Students enjoy the subject and use their numeracy skills extremely well to develop different formulae and solve scientific problems. The most able students achieve grade C in their science GCSE.
- Parents are rightly very pleased with the school. As one parent reported, 'This school has changed both our lives for the better. It has been like a breath of fresh air knowing my son is coming to a school that knows and understands his difficulties.'
- There is no difference in the achievement of different groups. Those students eligible for additional government funding and those who need extra help make outstanding progress. This is because of very high expectations that help students to work on their own and to be successful. Students in Year 7 benefit from the additional funding which enables them to quickly improve past inadequacies in their reading, writing, speaking and mathematics through additional support.
- Students have good opportunities to learn about the world of work through their visits to East Surrey College, which prepares them well for their futures.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Outstanding teaching across the school ensures that all groups of students make excellent progress in their lessons. Strong relationships ensure that students want to attend lessons and know what teachers expect of them.
- Careful checking of students' skills contributes very well to suitable work being set at the right level and tasks that are not too easy or too difficult. This ensures that each student can achieve to the best of their ability and move forward.
- Lessons are very well planned and organised to meet individual needs, building very well on previous learning. Teachers know the students very well and provide individually-planned tasks that will help each individual achieve their challenging targets.
- Reading is taught extremely well to all students. It is the key to students' increasing successes

because it helps them to achieve better in all subjects. There is a very strong focus on regular spelling and writing tasks, with a clear emphasis on the teaching of grammar. Students write in a wide range of subjects and for many different purposes.

- The teaching of mathematics is very strong and students benefit from the high quality resources which engage them very well, so that they enjoy their learning.
- Teaching in science is exceptional. In Years 10 and 11, students demonstrated that they could use their mathematics skills very well to develop formulae for their GCSE investigations. Outstanding use of scientific language and very high expectations by the teacher ensured that all achieved their tasks very well.
- Teachers challenge all groups of students very well by having high expectations and planning tasks that encourage students to think for themselves and try out new things. As a result, students try to be the first to finish and work hard to complete their tasks.
- Resources are used very well to support students' learning, but there are few additional adults. This is because the school enables students to do things for themselves.
- Marking is regular and helpful, with several different ways in which students can respond so that they can all find a way of improving their work.
- The most able students benefit from high levels of challenge from staff that help them to find answers for themselves and ensure that they reach their full potential.
- Students regularly take their reading books home and older students benefit from homework linked to their accredited courses. The school makes very good arrangements for students to have access to laptops and modern technologies on a daily basis and for completing their homework.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students' behaviour is outstanding. Students are very happy to come to school. This is evident as they arrive each morning looking smart and greeting staff politely. It is also evident in their rising attendance, which is comparable to mainstream secondary schools and well above that found in most special schools.
- Students get on very well together and work happily in small or large groups. Their attitudes to school and to learning are outstanding.
- Behaviour in lessons and in all areas of the school is exemplary. This has had an excellent impact on students' positive attitudes to learning. Older pupils told inspectors that there is absolutely no bullying of any kind at the school. Records confirm this. Students are well aware of cyber bullying and say they know how to stay safe on the internet.
- Students move around school calmly and with respect for others. They say everyone gets along well with each other. School records show that any issues are quickly dealt with by staff. Parents, students and staff rightly say that behaviour is excellent.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is excellent. Outbursts of poor behaviour are extremely rare and any individual behaviours are very well monitored and managed. A wide range of policies and practices help to keep them safe.
- Students themselves told inspectors that they feel very safe at all times, both in school and in the playground. They say they know how to stay safe in the community and understand about the misuse of drugs.
- Students' spiritual, moral social and cultural development has improved and is now promoted very well through subjects, topics, visits and residential experiences. Students are developing a good understanding of the wider world and know how to respond to others in school and outside.
- Excellent links with East Surrey College enable students to learn about the world of work and prepare them well for their futures.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher has an outstanding vision for the future of the school. She has built a very strong senior leadership team who work very well together for the benefit of all students. Leaders are supported extremely well by the governing body and all members of staff.
- Leaders have improved their previous outstanding provision and outcomes even further. Teaching has improved because of increased monitoring and higher expectations. New checking procedures now provide a very accurate view of individual students' achievements.
- Leaders make very effective use of the national Teachers' Standards to develop and manage the performance of teachers and other staff so that they can improve and progress up the pay scale. Senior leaders have had a positive impact on improving the skills of other leaders and staff, to improve students' achievement. There are many examples at the school of how high-quality training and rigorous monitoring have improved the staff's effectiveness at all levels and led to their promotion.
- Parents are very pleased with the school and fully agree that their children have done very well in their time there, and are well looked after and safe.
- Subject leaders have strengthened the quality of teaching in their areas to ensure that work is set at the right level for all students. They regularly use research and innovations to secure even better outcomes for students.
- Leaders are aware that not enough use is made of the vast outdoor space to create more opportunities for students, particularly older ones, to develop their work-related skills.
- Leaders make sure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed and are not subject to discrimination, as shown by the excellent progress made by students who receive additional government funding. Governors are fully involved in monitoring outcomes for the different groups of pupils at the school.
- There is a strong partnership with the local authority and with local schools which has resulted in school staff supporting children with a diagnosis of autism in other local schools and providing training for mainstream teachers.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures meet current national requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are extremely proud of their school. They have a good range of skills to benefit the school and fully understand the school's information and know how well students are doing, and how their performance compares with similar schools. They take a full and active part in monitoring and evaluating provision and outcomes and are regular visitors, and have a good understanding of the quality of teaching. Governors have undertaken high quality training to meet their responsibilities and receive regular updates from the local authority. Monitoring is regular and members provide excellent support to leaders. Governors are fully involved in managing the performance of staff and provide high quality training, ensuring that the best staff are rewarded. They manage the budget very well and make sure that pupils eligible for additional funding achieve as well as their classmates. Governors know this because they regularly check the outcomes of all groups of students. They make effective use of the government funding to enable Year 7 students to get off to a quick start.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	125463
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	432058

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community Special
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ray Marsh
Headteacher	Judy Nettleton
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 June 2009
Telephone number	01372 814714
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