

Inspection of a good school: Muntham House School

Barns Green, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 0NJ

Inspection dates:

9 and 10 July 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are eager to describe how Muntham House has changed their lives. Inspirational staff rebuild pupils' self-belief and set them on a path to success. Staff show tremendous care to pupils. Every pupil who leaves the post-16 provision goes onto further education, employment or training. This is because of high academic expectations coupled with excellent careers advice which are in pupils' best interests.

Pupils recognise the positive changes in them. Older pupils model important character traits in how they interact with others, work hard and learn to live independently. Pupils hugely benefit from the onsite therapy team's care and work. In the primary phase, staff teach pupils the vocabulary they need to explain their feelings and the habits to learn successfully in a classroom. Across the school, pupils behave extremely well in lessons.

There is an exceptional offer for pupils' wider development. The school provides enriching life experiences. This includes pupils accessing the school's purpose-built farm to develop key skills and knowledge. Some Year 10 pupils learn to be resilient through successfully climbing the three highest UK mountains. Pupils are particularly proud of their sporting success, including the key stage 4 football team becoming national champions. In school, pupils enjoy the freshly-cooked food at meal times which they share with their friends and the staff that help them.

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

The school's curriculum impressively meets pupils' academic and personal needs. School leaders are unwaveringly ambitious to ensure pupils get the best education possible. Every parent surveyed would recommend the school. When pupils first join, staff carefully assess starting points, informed by the key outcomes from pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans. This means that pupils receive a bespoke and personalised curriculum

that enables them to flourish. Wherever possible, this matches the ambition and intentions of the national curriculum. At key stage 4, pupils can take GCSEs or other vocational qualifications. In the post-16 provision, there is an exceptional offer of subjects and pathways. As a result, pupils achieve very highly and are well equipped for future destinations.

Reading is seen as the foundation of pupils' success. Skilled staff ensure pupils learn to read through an ambitious phonics programme and well-designed activities. The youngest pupils thrive because the teaching of phonics and planned learning sequences expertly meet their needs. Across the school, staff provide rapid literacy interventions to support pupils who need additional teaching and practice. In addition, staff do what they can to make sure that every pupil can select books they will enjoy reading.

Knowledge within different subjects is thoughtfully constructed and is well connected across the primary and secondary phases. The teaching of the curriculum is a significant strength because of staff's specialist skills. This enables pupils to excel in different areas, for example, pupils' impressive outcomes in art and music. Teachers also ensure they recap key information regularly to check and strengthen pupils' understanding. Questioning and providing pupils with insightful feedback ensure pupils make consistently strong progress through the curriculum.

In the youngest classes, pupils benefit from activities where pupils can practise their learning through play. Furthermore, resources with different symbols and visual cues provide excellent support for pupils' communication and language development.

Vital therapy work transforms pupils' character. A team of specialist therapists help to unlock pupils' potential and support those pupils with adverse childhood experiences. The school is deliberately outward facing. Staff provide important outreach work to help pupils in other schools too.

A bespoke and highly effective careers education for pupils prepares them well for their next steps in life. It means that work experience opportunities meet pupils' aspirations and desired career pathways. The oldest pupils also learn to drive as part of the school's curriculum. Pupils benefit immensely from a relevant and meaningful relationships and sex education programme. Pupils have a strong awareness of how to be physically healthy and have many opportunities to debate and discuss current affairs.

Pupils consistently meet the school's high standards of behaviour and social interactions. Classrooms are calm and purposeful with exceptional relationships between adults and pupils. Where pupils may struggle to self regulate, staff actively seek to understand this and review and adapt strategies where necessary. The school's attendance strategy is highly effective. Pupils are eager and motivated to come and learn at Muntham House to ensure they rarely miss a day of their positive education.

Governors are knowledgeable and well-informed about the school's continued drive for excellence. The expansion of the school's leadership team has made great impact in assuring exceptional quality across the whole school. Staff are motivated and value the school's counselling service for their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 January 2015.

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	126154
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10321913
Type of school	Special
School category	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils	5 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	116
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	16
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mike Kipling
Principal	Harry Anderson
Website	www.muntham.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 March 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Muntham House supports boys who have social, mental health and/or emotional needs and/or autism spectrum disorder. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The inspectors only inspected the education provision at this school.
- 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 educational qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school is not currently using any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors considered any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection team met with senior leaders and staff from education and therapy. The lead inspector met with four governors, including the vice-chair. He also spoke with the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, design and technology and music. To do this, they met with subject teachers, looked at curriculum plans, had discussions with staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- 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.
- The views of staff and parents were gathered through discussions and Ofsted's online surveys.
- Inspectors talked to pupils from different year groups about their learning and experiences at school.
- The inspection team scrutinised a range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school's self-evaluation and school improvement priorities, policies, curriculum documents, behaviour and attendance records and minutes of governors' meetings.

Inspection team

James Broadbridge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alan Johnson

Ofsted Inspector

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