

Inspection of a good school: Hardenhuish School

Hardenhuish Lane, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN14 6RJ

Inspection dates:

31 October and 1 November 2023

Outcome

Hardenhuish School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Lisa Percy. This school is part of Hardenhuish School Limited, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Kirsty Martin.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Hardenhuish are happy, polite and respectful. True to the school's mission, they are 'inspired to learn' and 'supported to succeed'. Pupils and students in the sixth form forge positive relationships with each other and with staff. These relationships contribute well to a supportive environment in which pupils feel safe. Pupils know that there is someone who they can turn to if they feel upset or worried.

Pupils respond well to the high expectations that the school has of their conduct. Behaviour around the school is calm and orderly. If pupils fall short of the school's expectations, staff follow a consistent approach to address any incidents of misbehaviour effectively. Pupils are known as individuals, and their well-being is a priority.

The grounds at Hardenhuish are appreciated by pupils. They are utilised well by curriculum areas, such as bug collecting in science and orienteering in physical education. There is a wide variety of clubs and trips on offer. Pupils talk excitedly about the immersive experiences on 'Successful Lives' days. Year 12 students enjoy volunteering each week. Pupils are proud of their leadership roles, such as being part of the school parliament or becoming student ambassadors.

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

The school provides an ambitious curriculum. Leaders carefully refine the curriculum to make sure it is both challenging and accessible for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The curriculum is well sequenced so that pupils build on what they already know. Pupils benefit from teachers' strong subject knowledge.

Pupils have a good understanding of important knowledge because teachers have thought carefully about what pupils need to know and do. Teachers explain concepts well. They give pupils the opportunity to practise and consolidate their learning. Teachers spot and address pupils' misconceptions effectively. They ensure that pupils have the resources they need to learn well.

There are effective systems in place to identify pupils with SEND. The support pupils with SEND require is detailed in their individual plans. Teachers and teaching assistants use these plans to make sure that pupils with SEND participate fully in lessons. Staff know pupils and their needs well. This enables pupils with SEND to learn the same ambitious curriculum as their peers.

The school has identified reading as a priority. The school offers a range of programmes for pupils who are at the earlier stages of reading. Staff identify pupils' specific needs and make sure they follow the right programme to help them improve. This helps pupils to gain confidence in reading fluently and at speed. However, not all pupils read widely and often in school and at home. The school has a three-year plan to develop literacy and is one year into this plan.

The school has embedded clear routines for behaviour. Pupils understand the behaviour system. They respond well and rarely disrupt lessons with off-task behaviour. Sixth-form students act as role models for younger pupils. Staff apply the behaviour policy fairly, making reasonable adjustments when appropriate. Pupils value the praise and recognition they receive for achievement, citizenship and effort through the school's 'ACE' system.

Most pupils attend school well. The school has strong procedures in place to support pupils to attend regularly. There is support in place to help those pupils who struggle to attend.

The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is effective. Pupils are provided with strong pastoral support. Pupils understand about healthy relationships and how to stay safe online. There is a wide range of activities in which pupils can participate, from sheep club to debate club. However, the school does not ensure that all pupils make good use of the opportunities provided.

A comprehensive careers programme provides pupils and sixth-form students with helpful support and guidance. They learn about university and vocational routes. The school ensures that pupils have many opportunities to engage with local employers, colleges and universities. Students in the sixth form value the individualised careers input that expert staff provide. Pupils in Years 10 and 12 take part in work experience. Pupils are well prepared for their next stage in education.

The school has a strong moral intent. Leaders make decisions in the best interests of pupils at the school. They are reflective in their practice and review the success of any changes that are made regularly and thoughtfully. Staff feel valued as professionals. Trustees share the passion of senior leaders. They know the school well. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the provision the school provides.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- While various enrichment opportunities are available to pupils, many do not access extra-curricular activities. As a result, the interests and talents of some pupils are not developed. The school should ensure that participation in these rich experiences is carefully monitored and increased so that more pupils benefit.
- Some pupils do not read widely and regularly. This means that they do not develop their experience and enjoyment of reading. The school should encourage pupils to read more widely and often, including out of school.

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 April 2013.

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	136296
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10288172
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	1,563
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	298
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Kirsty Martin
Headteacher	Lisa Percy
Website	www.hardenhuish.wilts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school currently uses 11 alternative provisions, seven of which are registered.
- 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 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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: art and design, English and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, 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.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders and a group of governors.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, as well as responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys. Inspectors also spoke to pupils and staff in meetings and around the school site.

Inspection team

Frances Bywater, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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