

Inspection of a good school: Old Swinford Hospital

Heath Lane, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY8 1QX

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 January 2022

Outcome

Old Swinford Hospital continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils learn together, live together and thrive at Old Swinford Hospital.

Pupils behave well. They are polite, respectful and studious. Pupils know that staff expect them to work hard and do their best. In lessons, they listen to their teachers and work together productively and collaboratively. Pupils' academic and wider study prepares them for life after school.

Staff and pupils get on well together. New pupils and students are warmly welcomed when they join. Leaders have made sure that the Year 7 girls who joined in September 2021 have settled into school. The school is a strong community and staff are proud of the care they provide. Pupils are thoughtful and conscientious. They repeatedly told inspectors that bullying was seldom an issue. Should it occur, they know that staff will deal with it quickly. One parent's comment reflected the views of many, 'The teachers and staff are supportive, nurturing and strive for the children to reach their full potential.'

Staff place a great emphasis on school life outside the classroom. Pupils choose from the broad and varied range of activities on offer. Staff encourage all to take part, and most do. Pupils enjoy and value these opportunities.

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

School leaders lead with integrity, empathy and clarity. Staff are motivated by a shared will to develop pupils into 'the best versions of themselves'. They have high expectations for pupils academically, combined with a determination to see them grow as young adults.

Pupils' needs and aspirations are met through the well-organised curriculum. Pupils can opt to study a broad spectrum of academic courses at key stage 4. However, only a small proportion of pupils currently gain the qualifications that make up the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). This is because a small number of pupils study a modern foreign language. Leaders have given Mandarin and French more time at key stage 3. They

continue to strengthen this area of the curriculum. Leaders are yet to see the product of this work at key stage 4.

Leaders have worked to develop the curriculum within their subjects and across key stages. They have thought carefully about the order in which pupils learn new things. As a result, pupils can draw on what they have learned before. For instance, in mathematics, pupils confidently use their knowledge of linear equations and substitution when solving simultaneous equations.

Teachers are experts in, and advocates of, their subjects. They use this knowledge to craft explanations based on pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils understand, remember and use technical vocabulary well. Teachers choose resources and examples carefully. In each subject, they have a common understanding of 'why, what and when' pupils should be learning new things. However, in some subjects, teachers do not know the methods and approaches pupils have learned before. This means that when pupils change classes, they see new and unfamiliar approaches. Consequently, pupils may become muddled, as different teachers explain ideas and concepts in different ways.

Staff are ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders provide relevant information for teachers on how to support pupils with SEND. Teachers use this information effectively. They take time and care to provide extra explanations and examples when needed. As a result, pupils with SEND learn well.

Staff encourage all pupils to read and develop a love of literature. Pupils enthusiastically told inspectors about the books they are reading. Staff support pupils who find reading difficult. Leaders know the value of reading. As a result, pupils read widely with confidence and fluency. Leaders are introducing programmes to further raise the profile of reading.

The school's work to promote pupils' wider development is commendable. The 'beliefs and issues' curriculum is comprehensive. Through this, pupils learn to understand the wider world and the opportunities and challenges it presents. Pupils receive good-quality careers education. Staff challenge stereotypes and promote inclusivity. Pupils reflect these values in the way that they treat each other, staff and visitors. Pupils can join one of many clubs and activities outside of lessons as part of the co-curriculum. Leaders have made sure that these cater for all pupils. Staff track and actively encourage participation. They are determined that no pupil will miss out.

Following the previous inspection, leaders have taken action to improve the sixth form. They continue to prioritise further improvement, and their actions have been effective. Sixth-form students can choose from a range of qualifications. These support their career pathways, and enable them to successfully take their next steps in education or employment and training. Leaders closely monitor the quality of the curriculum and students' progress. Students enjoy a well-planned tutor programme. This supports their personal development and broadens their horizons.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff are well trained and vigilant. They know the potential signs that indicate a pupil could be at risk. Leaders take timely and appropriate action when staff do report concerns. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and to whom they should report any concerns or worries.

As the school continues to grow, leaders are wise to the extra safeguarding challenges they will face. They know they will need to increase the capacity of the safeguarding team so that they continue to keep children safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The EBacc does not currently sit at the heart of the school's curriculum. As a result, very few pupils opt to study a modern foreign language at key stage 4. Leaders should ensure that they continue to build on the work that they have done so that more pupils continue to study French or Mandarin in Year 10.
- In some subjects, there is a lack of consistency in the way that teachers explain new ideas and concepts to pupils. This means that as pupils move between classes, they are exposed to unfamiliar methods and explanations. Leaders should ensure that specialist and non-specialist staff deliver the curriculum through agreed and consistent approaches.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

| | |
|---|--|
| Unique reference number | 103870 |
| Local authority | Dudley |
| Inspection number | 10211206 |
| Type of school | Secondary comprehensive |
| School category | Voluntary-aided foundation |
| 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 | 693 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 213 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Malcolm Wilcox |
| Headteacher | Paul Kilbride |
| Website | www.oshsch.com |
| Date of previous inspection | 17 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- A significant number of pupils are boarders, either as full boarders or flexi-boarders. Students join the school from other parts of the United Kingdom and abroad.
- In September 2021, 60 girls joined the school in Year 7, in addition to the 80 boys that joined. Approximately half of the girls are boarders. This is the first cohort of girls to join the school at key stage 3. Currently, pupils in Years 8 to 11 are all boys.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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.

- During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders, including curriculum leaders, the head of sixth form, the special educational needs coordinator and those responsible for careers education.
- Inspectors met with teachers and support staff individually and in groups, and spoke to pupils formally and informally at various points in the inspection.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. The inspectors also took account of responses to the staff and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics and geography. For each of these subjects, inspectors met with subject leaders, carried out visits to lessons, spoke to pupils and looked at some of their work.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding arrangements by scrutinising policy documents and meeting with the designated safeguarding lead. This included checking the school's single central record.

Inspection team

Ian Tustian, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Clare Considine

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022