

# Inspection of Hambrook School

Marle Place, Leylands Road, Burgess Hill, West Sussex RH15 8HY

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Inspection dates: 14 and 16 May 2024

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils highly value the support and care provided by this friendly and caring school. Many arrive at Hambrook School following a disrupted education, with extended periods of non-attendance. Some pupils arrive not confident that their needs will be understood or met in a way that supports them to learn well. However, kind and supportive staff go to great lengths to build trust built on strong relationships with pupils and their families. Staff treat every pupil with utmost care and dignity allowing pupils to feel safe and ready to learn. Consequently, pupils attend school exceptionally well, and many are aspirational for their future ambitions.

Pupils benefit from the bespoke support provided that helps them to get ready to learn. This is reflected in the school's flexible and highly personalised curriculum that is in place for each pupil. Initially, pupils learn to communicate with adults and peers in a positive way. Behaviour is typically positive as pupils explore how to manage their worries about change, new places and people. Pupils grow in confidence by running their own clubs such as 'Italian Club' or putting on musical performances for their friends, family and staff. Pupils make a valued contribution to school life, which in turn builds their motivation to achieve well.

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

The school's curriculum continuously adapts to meet pupils' needs. After a period of settling, pupils learn a broad curriculum, including a core offer of mathematics and English, with a specific focus on reading. They also learn a wider curriculum that includes life skills, personal, social and emotional development and subjects such as sports and technology. Older pupils in the secondary phase go on to study a range of suitable qualifications such as functional skills, GCSEs and Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network unit awards. The curriculum in most subjects builds knowledge in an ordered way from primary through to the secondary phase.

The curriculum is well developed in the secondary phase. Staff tailor personalised curriculum plans to help pupils work towards the outcomes outlined in their education, health and care plans (EHC plan). Pupils learn broader life skills such as independent travel, managing finances and taking care of their health and well-being. Pupils keenly develop enterprise skills such as writing 'Dragons Den' bids for projects and trips. The impact of this work is evident in the mature attitudes that many pupils have towards learning. The same deliberate approach is still developing in the primary phase. While pupils learn life skills such as cooking and using money, it is not planned in the same highly personalised way. This limits how successfully pupils' learning experiences contribute towards meeting the outcomes in their EHC plans.

While teachers have an understanding of pupils' individual needs, teaching is not always precisely focused on responding to any gaps pupils have in their knowledge and skills. Staff recognise some pupils' reading and mathematical understanding is

not secure as a result of missed learning in the past. In addition, some staff are new and do not always have the appropriate expertise to ensure pupils can build upon prior learning. This means pupils are not always learning as much as they could.

Pupils read each day from a range of interesting books. Older pupils in the secondary phase enjoy reading thought-provoking texts about neurodiverse characters. They have rich class discussions about how these characters have overcome challenges that they have faced.

Pupils trust staff because relationships between them are relentlessly positive and caring. This is exemplified by pupils' excellent attendance to school. Thoughtful support plans set out the effective strategies pupils need should they become frustrated. Staff follow these plans with consistency and calmness. Consequently, incidents of pupils' distressed behaviour rapidly decrease over time, because pupils are more able to manage their emotions in a positive way.

Pupils told inspectors how much the school has transformed their appreciation of school and education. Older pupils have careers meetings to discuss their ambitious plans for the future. Pupils feel heard and valued by their peers and staff. Pupils from all ages socialise well at lunchtimes, making friends and enjoying healthy meals together. The school nurtures the special interests and curiosities of pupils. A vast range of different clubs such as 'Dungeons and Dragons' and visits to admire street art in Brighton help develop pupils' social and cultural appreciation of the world around them.

The proprietor body and governors know the school very well. They provide robust challenge and support to ensure that the school continues on its journey of school improvement. Staff speak highly of this support and the wealth of training and development on offer. The school meets all of the independent school standards. The proprietor body ensures that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and proprietor)**

- Many staff are new and do not have a robust understanding of the school's curriculum aims in mathematics and phonics. This means staff are not able to identify and address gaps in pupils' learning. The school must ensure that all staff have the expertise that they need to implement the curriculum effectively to ensure pupils are able to know and do more over time.
- The life skills curriculum in the primary phase is not as deliberately designed as it is in the secondary phase. This means that pupils' learning experiences are inconsistent in terms of how purposefully they are planned towards the outcomes

outlined in pupils' EHC plans. The school must ensure that staff have the necessary training and guidance to further develop aspects of the school's primary curriculum where improvements are needed.

### **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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	149912
<b>DfE registration number</b>	938/6020
<b>Local authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10322084
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent special school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	23
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	P Bloom Limited
<b>Chair</b>	Richard Power
<b>Headteacher</b>	Emile Etheridge
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£65,000 to £85,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	01444 220 210
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.hambrookschool.co.uk">www.hambrookschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:info@hambrookschool.co.uk">info@hambrookschool.co.uk</a>

## Information about this school

- All pupils attending the school have an EHC plan that outlines their special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school specialises in providing education for pupils with autism. Pupils may also have a range of associated conditions such as learning difficulties, physical needs and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school uses one unregistered provision of alternative education.
- There were no key stage 5 pupils in the school at the time of the inspection.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

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

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- 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.
- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings during the inspection. These included discussions with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and director of education. They also spoke with a range of staff at different times during the inspection.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the proprietor body and the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, physical development and personal, social and health education. Deep dives included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work and talking with subject leaders, teachers and pupils.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff were gathered through a range of sources, including Ofsted's surveys and discussions. Inspectors spoke with pupils in lessons and at other times of the school day.
- 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.
- Compliance with the independent school standards was checked throughout the

inspection, including tours of the school site, discussions with leaders and a review of relevant documentation.

### **Inspection team**

Michelle Payne, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Louise Walker

His Majesty's Inspector

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