

Inspection of The Hermitage Infant School

Gorsewood Road, St John's, Woking, Surrey GU21 8WT

Inspection dates:	4 and 5 March 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The executive headteacher of this school is Clare Spires. This school is part of the SWAN Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Elaine Cooper, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ian Girdler.

What is it like to attend this school?

A strong inclusive ethos is at the heart of this school. It is committed to serving and welcoming all pupils and their families. The care given to pupils by staff show the school's motto of inspire, learn and achieve. Pupils embrace the school's values to help them make the right choices, meeting the staff's high expectations and behaving well. They are happy at school.

The school is ambitious for pupils' achievements, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils. The school has a strong understanding of individual pupils' needs. Staff think carefully about how to make every day successful for every pupil. As a result, pupils achieve well.

Pupils are polite, well mannered and respectful. At social times, pupils eat and play sensibly with their friends. Pupil leadership opportunities, such as friendship friends and well-being ambassadors, enable them to learn tolerance and empathy towards others. The school provides a varied set of experiences for pupils. These include visiting local museums and castles. Pupils love clubs the school run, such as dance and football. Pupils also benefit from helping to raise money for local and national charities.

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

Over the last few years, the school has worked hard to develop a more ambitious curriculum for pupils. This includes for pupils with SEND. In nearly all subjects, the school has created a curriculum that ensures pupils learn the most important knowledge. It is well sequenced from the early years to Year 6. Although, in a few subjects this knowledge is not detailed precisely enough. This means that staff are not as clear on what to teach and when in these subjects.

Staff typically create thoughtfully designed activities for pupils to learn and practise their skills. Teachers often recap important content, which helps pupils to connect and build learning over time. However, in a small number of subjects, staff do not check pupils' understanding of previously taught knowledge carefully enough. In these subjects, staff are unable to identify where pupils have gaps in their knowledge to help them inform future teaching. Consequently, pupils do not achieve as well in these subjects as in others.

Staff prioritise building pupils' communication and language skills over time. This begins in Nursery, where children receive an exceptional start to their time in the school. Pupils develop their spoken vocabulary using accurate language about many aspects of their learning, such as numbers.

As soon as children enter Reception, the school prioritises teaching phonics. This means pupils at the earliest stages of reading get effective support. Teachers assess regularly how well pupils are learning phonics. The school provides any necessary additional

support swiftly for pupils. Pupils enjoy the texts that they read. Pupils of all ages speak of the books that their teachers read to them with enthusiasm and understanding.

Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. Pupils work hard and learning is rarely disrupted because pupils want to do well. Pupils play well with one another. The school has a calm and reassuring approach to pupils who sometimes find it hard to behave in the way the school would like. Well-trained staff ensure pupils can recognise and reflect on their feelings and the impact on themselves and others. As a result, there is a warm and happy atmosphere in the school.

The school's approach to developing pupils' personal development is a strength. Pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences that develop their understanding of the world around them. For example, pupils visit places of worship that deepen their understanding of different cultures. Staff help keep pupils as safe as possible by teaching them how to stay safe both on and offline. Pupils display high levels of tolerance and acceptance for the differences they see in each other.

Leaders are highly ambitious for all pupils, staff and the community that they serve. A well-structured programme of training supports strong teaching. The school considers staff workload and well-being diligently. Tailored collaborative approaches for staff to work across schools within the trust help staff to feel valued. The trust and local governing board fulfil their statutory duties. They ensure there is a strong and ever developing partnership across the trust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

- Teachers' use of assessment in some subjects does not support pupils' learning sufficiently well. This means that pupils sometimes have gaps in their learning that go unaddressed. The school should ensure that staff check pupils' understanding of the key content routinely and then use this information to inform future teaching so that gaps in learning and misconceptions are addressed swiftly and consistently.
- In a small number of subjects, the school has not identified the most important knowledge pupils need to learn and in what order. This means staff are sometimes not clear about what they are teaching and when, which can inhibit pupils' learning. The school should ensure it identifies the key content in all subjects, so teachers are clear about the knowledge pupils need to learn from the early years to the end of year 2, and pupils' achievement is even more consistent across subjects.

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	140090
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10341753
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	258
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ian Girdler
CEO of the trust	Elaine Cooper
Executive Headteacher	Clare Spires
Website	www.hermitageschools.com
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 October 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school became an academy school in 2013. In 2019, it joined The SWANTrust.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The executive headteacher joined the school in September 2021. She is also the executive headteacher of the junior school, which shares the same site. The two schools share a governing committee.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also met with representatives of the school's local governing board. The lead inspector also met with representatives of the school's local governing body, a member of the board of trustees and a representative of the trust's chief executive officer.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and art. 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.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online parent survey, Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to the confidential online staff survey and gathered the views of staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- 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.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' plans for improving the school, minutes from governing board meetings, records of attendance and behaviour incidents

Inspection team

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His Majesty's Inspector

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