

# Inspection of Deer Park School

Sika Avenue, Hedge End, Southampton, Hampshire SO30 2HT

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Inspection dates: 29 and 30 November 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Good**

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The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5  
of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Matthew Jones. This school is part of Wildern Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Stephen Mann, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Katie Griffin.

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

There is an extremely positive culture at this school based on the values of inclusion, kindness and community. This culture can be felt throughout the whole school, and the values can be seen in pupils' excellent behaviour and positive relationships with each other and with staff. Parents are also extremely supportive of the school, which many describe as a 'family'.

The school's curriculum is ambitious for every pupil. In all year groups, pupils take a broad range of subjects. Staff ensure that all pupils produce work of a high standard. Where pupils require additional support, staff put targeted help in place swiftly.

The school is committed to pupils' personal development, as well as their academic success. It organises a wide range of opportunities so that pupils can explore existing interests and talents, discover new ones and take on responsibilities. For example, pupils lead the school's 'Rights Respecting School' project, which helps bring the whole community together. A huge number of pupils participate in these activities, including disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, pupils here are resilient and have a strong sense of self. They feel very happy and safe in school. They trust staff to help them if they have a concern.

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

In these first years of operation, the school has worked closely with the trust to share curriculum expertise. Strong subject expertise is now developing in-house. Consequently, the school can offer a wide range of options in Year 9, including subjects that form the English baccalaureate. Staff have carefully considered what pupils must learn and be able to do at each stage. They are mindful of the standards pupils must achieve to secure examination success. However, they also ensure that the curriculum helps pupils place their learning in the context of big ideas and broader themes. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) follow the same curriculum as their peers. Very occasionally, some pupils follow a more bespoke route.

Most teachers introduce new content clearly and select appropriate resources and activities that support learning. They make effective adaptations for pupils with SEND or other additional needs based on the clear information provided. They routinely check pupils' understanding. In many cases, teachers use this information very effectively. For example, they help pupils to embed their learning more securely by providing helpful practice tasks and feedback. In other cases, they ensure that pupils apply their knowledge and skills to increasingly complex questions and problems. However, this is not yet consistently the case. Consequently, some pupils do not achieve as highly as they could in all subjects.

The school has a well-considered reading strategy. Where pupils are not yet fluent readers, the school identifies their gaps precisely and targets support accordingly.

These pupils make strong progress. The school actively supports reading for pleasure. It is now focusing on embedding reading across the curriculum. This is in its early stages, but it aims to ensure that pupils access diverse and ambitious texts in all subject areas.

The school's excellent personal development programme also contributes to the school's strong safeguarding culture. It is carefully mapped out for all years so that pupils learn how to keep themselves and others safe and to stay healthy, including online. Pupils also learn about equality and discuss a range of issues and opinions. The school's careers programme is equally well-designed. It is supported by links with local employers and training providers. Consequently, pupils are being very well prepared for their next steps. The school ensures that personal development and careers sessions are fully inclusive, but staff provide sensitive and bespoke support where necessary.

The trust fully supports the school's ambitious vision and its distinctive culture. There is robust and effective support and challenge for leaders. Statutory duties, including those relating to safeguarding and staff well-being are taken very seriously. Consequently, staff feel valued and are extremely proud to work at the school. They give generously of their time to pupils and each other.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- There is a little variability in the implementation of the curriculum. As a result, some pupils do not fully embed what they have learned with high enough levels of accuracy or depth of understanding. This can be seen in the quality of some pupils' ability to apply what they have learned fluently. The school should continue embedding the best pedagogical practice securely and consistently across the school.
- The school's reading strategy is not yet fully embedded across the curriculum. As a result, pupils are not routinely helped to access diverse and ambitious texts as part of their learning. This means that pupils are not yet developing the breadth of their vocabulary and cultural capital as well as they could. The school should continue to embed this aspect of the reading strategy across the curriculum and support staff to help pupils access these texts.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	143698
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10296518
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy free school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	489
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Katie Griffin
<b>CEO of trust</b>	Stephen Mann
<b>Headteacher</b>	Matthew Jones
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.deerparksecondary.org">www.deerparksecondary.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Deer Park School is a free school that opened in September 2021.
- The school is part of Wildern Academy Trust.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation. The legislation 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

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with trust and school leaders, members of staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector also met with representatives of the trust board and of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, science, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work from all key stages. Inspectors also looked at lessons in a range of other subjects.
- 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 reviewed the school's behaviour, bullying and attendance logs, as well as its self-evaluation and records linked to personal development, careers education and extra-curricular activities.
- Inspectors spoke with staff and pupils to gather their views. They considered parents and carers' responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also took account of responses to the staff and pupil surveys

### **Inspection team**

Mary Davies, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Summerfield	Ofsted Inspector
Julia Mortimore	Ofsted Inspector

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