

Inspection of Undershaw Education Trust

Portsmouth Road, Hindhead, Surrey GU26 6AQ

Inspection dates: 11 to 13 February 2025

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's ambition, dedication and unwavering support results in pupils achieving exceptionally well here. Staff share an unrelenting determination to ensure that pupils are well-prepared for life beyond the school gates. The school's sharp identification of barriers to learning helps to empower staff and pupils alike to succeed.

Pupils thrive in this nurturing and aspirational environment. They develop resilience and independence. Throughout the school, pupils learn to regulate their emotions and access strategies that support their well-being. For example, some pupils use putty to aid self-regulation while others take a regulation walk to visit the school's much-loved chickens, Enola, Miranda and Henrietta. These personalised approaches help equip pupils with the tools they need to succeed both socially and academically.

Relationships between staff and pupils are built on deep mutual respect. This creates a culture where pupils feel valued, understood and safe. Pupils appreciate the opportunities they have to share their own thoughts and feelings. They know that their opinions matter and help to shape the future of the school. Some pupils have previously found being in a school environment challenging but state they now feel a profound sense of belonging.

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

The school's highly personalised approach ensures that the curriculum is meticulously tailored to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff have exceptionally high aspirations for pupils and are dedicated to ensuring these ambitions are realised. The school are adept in identifying any gaps in pupils' learning and providing effective support to close these. Highly trained staff deliver learning in ways that engage, challenge and inspire pupils. This equips pupils with the skills and knowledge they need for the future. There is a well-sequenced and thoughtfully constructed curriculum. This continues into the sixth form where students are provided with vast opportunities which help prepare them for the next stage of their education. The well-embedded routines and structures of school life help pupils to know what they need to do in each lesson and how to be successful.

The school's commitment to preparing pupils for the future is exemplary. The 'Undershaw diploma' is a standout feature of the school's work. The employability programme threads through all the school does. This ensures that pupils gain essential workplace skills while also becoming active and valued members of the local community. Through real-world experiences, pupils develop confidence, independence and a deep understanding of the world of work. This particularly helps the oldest pupils as they transition to life beyond school. Strong connections with past pupils provide current learners with aspirational role models. This helps to show them what they can achieve in the future.

Reading is central to the school's curriculum. There is a sharp focus on ensuring that pupils develop the skills and confidence needed to become fluent readers. The school instils a love of reading across the curriculum. Pupils benefit from highly effective support, including pre-teaching which enables pupils to confidently access increasingly complex and mature themes. Checking pupils' understanding is given a high priority. Pupils reflect on their own learning with increasing maturity. The school's relentless focus on developing the key skills in English and mathematics means that pupils leave the school with the knowledge they need for their future learning.

Pupils' behaviour is exceptionally well supported. This enables them to thrive in a nurturing and highly inclusive environment. Staff demonstrate care, kindness and trust through their interactions with pupils. Highly bespoke approaches and consistent routines help pupils to engage with their learning and create a positive culture. The impact is evident in the calm, purposeful atmosphere which permeates throughout the school during lessons and social times. Pupils are proud to be a member of the school and demonstrate positive attitudes towards school life.

The school's carefully designed personal growth programme ensures that pupils develop a deep understanding of increasingly complex themes. Relationships education is seamlessly woven through the curriculum. This extends into the sixth form. Here students can gain qualifications that further enhance their readiness for adulthood. Meticulously planned trips and visits support pupils' academic learning as well as the development of essential life skills. This includes purchasing train tickets and planning journeys independently. The school's innovative 'discovery day' programme broadens pupils' experiences even further.

Leaders at all levels work relentlessly to ensure that their ambitious ethos is fully lived out through the school. 'Eliminating the impossible' is lived and breathed by staff. The school's rigorous systems for monitoring and professional development mean that staff have the skills and expertise to support pupils and understand specific needs. The school purposefully refines the curriculum to meet the needs of each cohort and ensure that pupils have the best possible outcomes. This encompasses pupils' academic, social and personal development and is achieved through determined and precise leadership at all levels. The proprietor and governing body have a clear and robust oversight of the school and ensure that the independent school standards are consistently met. The school's written accessibility plan identifies the ways in which they ensure equality of access.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

Unique reference number	134833
DfE registration number	936/6584
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10342050
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent School
Age range of pupils	7 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	111
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	8
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Undershaw Education Trust
Chair	Debbie Gerring
Headteacher	Emma West
Annual fees (day pupils)	£29,524 to £60,700
Telephone number	01428 609953
Website	www.undershaw.education
Email address	hello@undershaw.education
Dates of previous inspection	8 to 10 February 2022

Information about this school

- The school provides full-time education for pupils aged 7 to 19 years. All pupils are referred to the school by their local authority and have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school operates from two sites. The main site is located at Portsmouth Road, Hindhead, Surrey GU26 6AQ. The second site is located approximately 200m away at Tower Road, Hindhead, Surrey GU26 6SU. This site caters predominantly for pupils in the sixth form as well as for art and media lessons for pupils in key stages 3, 4 and 5.
- The school's last standard inspection was in February 2022. The school had an additional inspection in July 2023 for a material change. At this time the school's permitted number on roll increased from up to 95 to up to 115.

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.

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteachers and other leaders and staff. The lead inspector held a meeting with seven representatives of the proprietor body including the chair of the governing body.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, art and design and employability. To do this, they met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, had discussions with staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at 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.
- The views of staff and parents were gathered through discussions and Ofsted's online surveys.
- Inspectors toured the school site to gather evidence about compliance with the standards. Inspectors also reviewed a range of other documents and policies, including on the school's website.

Inspection team

Sara Staggs, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mary Davies

Ofsted Inspector

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