

# Inspection of Gildredge House

Compton Place Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN20 8AB

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Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 2024
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

The executive headteacher of this school is Craig Bull. This school is part of Gildredge House Free School, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Richard Thornhill.

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

Pupils strive to uphold the school's core values of ASPIRE (Ambition, Support, Perseverance, Integrity, Reflection and Empathy). Pupils treat each other with courtesy and respect, understanding the importance of inclusivity. Pupils feel safe and well cared for. They trust caring adults to help them if they need it. Vibrant classrooms are calm and orderly, meaning pupils learn well. Pupils typically enjoy learning because staff celebrate pupils' efforts and achievements. A clear sense of purpose is palpable in all that pupils and staff do.

The school has been through some rapid changes recently and pupils recognise that expectations of them have increased. Clear and consistent routines ensure that pupils behave in a kind way. Older pupils are role models for younger children in the school. Pupils attend school well because they value what the school offers them. Many pupils engage with the exciting clubs on offer, such as recording their own podcasts for the school ASPIRE radio station.

Parents and carers, staff and pupils speak positively about the sense of community and belonging that the school exudes. One parent, representing the views of many said, 'My child feels valued and understood, which has made a huge difference in their confidence and development.'

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

The school has made a number of important changes to its curriculum. In most subjects, complex concepts have been carefully broken down into smaller parts. This helps pupils make links from one lesson to the next. Where parts of the curriculum are still new, the school's approaches to check that pupils are learning all that they can is not precise enough.

The school has taken thoughtful action to increase the number of pupils who choose to study the full suite of English Baccalaureate subjects, including modern foreign languages. The school has increased staff expertise in the primary phase to better prepare pupils with essential language skills needed for success in the secondary phase.

The school has high expectations of teachers knowing and supporting pupils well. It sets out the precise strategies that pupils with special educational need and/or disabilities need to help them learn. Most teachers use these strategies effectively to adapt learning. Typically, teachers use strong subject knowledge and teaching expertise to address gaps in pupils' understanding. This is not the case in every classroom. This does mean some pupils do not learn as well as they could. The school recognises this. Staff are enthusiastic about the weekly 'Teaching Masterclasses' and training that they receive to meet the needs of pupils.

Before children join in Reception, staff work with parents and nursery schools to understand children's interests and needs. Staff creatively design a curriculum that helps nurture children's curiosity and fosters their love of learning. Children are industrious

when they play, working together to problem solve and take turns. Children in Reception learn to read well because staff use their expertise to teach early reading skills with clarity and precision.

A love of reading continues through the school. During tutor times, pupils read exciting, high-quality books from a wide range of authors. Those who need additional help to read, receive effective support. However, in some lessons teaching approaches to develop pupils' writing skills are not as successful as intended. They do not always provide pupils with precise support. This is because teachers have not adapted the learning to address pupils' gaps in learning accurately enough. There is variability in how well some pupils can apply writing skills in their work.

The school is tenacious in improving pupils' attendance at school. Staff work closely with families and professionals to help pupils to overcome attendance barriers. The school has established a positive behaviour culture. Pupils value doing the right thing. When needed, staff take a creative approach to re-engage pupils positively with education. The school uses a range of suitable alternative providers of education, such as mechanic courses to enrich pupils' educational experiences.

Pupils learn to be 'Ready, Respectful and Safe' through a well-developed personal development provision. Pupils of all ages know how to take care of their health and well-being. They have an age-appropriate understanding of relationships and online safety. Pupils speak very highly of the well-developed careers education they receive. External speakers from colleges and employers inspire pupils to make aspirational plans for the future.

Leaders are taking effective action to address school improvement priorities. Trustees hold leaders to account, ensuring that the school uses resources effectively. Some aspects of the schools' work are quite new. The school has not fully refined the approaches that they can use to precisely evaluate the impact of their work on pupils' learning and development. The school has made it a priority to address this. Staff enjoy the professional collaborative culture that leaders have instilled in the school. They see themselves as one big team. As a result, they have the necessary knowledge and skills to support pupils towards the best possible outcomes.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- The school's approaches to check on how well pupils learn are not yet fully developed and embedded. This means that pupils do not consistently benefit from all the school has to offer. The school should continue to refine its assessment and assurance

approaches to check how well pupils learn and enable staff to evaluate the schools' curriculum and wider provision.

- At times, learning is not suitably adapted in response to gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. This means some pupils do not learn as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the expertise and training that they need to design learning that meets the needs of pupils, enabling pupils to achieve all that they are capable of.

## 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>	139796
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10321980
<b>Type of school</b>	All-through
<b>School category</b>	Academy free school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1182
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Richard Thornhill
<b>Headteacher</b>	Craig Bull
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.gildredgehouse.org.uk">www.gildredgehouse.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	27 and 28 November 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This school is a single academy trust.
- The school uses five registered and two unregistered providers of alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information 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. 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 and/or sixth form 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.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also met with the representatives from the board of trustees, including the chair of trustees. These trustees are referred to as governors in this school. The lead inspector also had a telephone call with a representative of East Sussex local authority.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, science, physical education and history. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, teachers and pupils, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector also listened to pupils read. Inspectors also looked at other aspects of the school's curriculum.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including the free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff survey and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- 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 and scrutinised a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' plans for improving the school, minutes of governor meetings and records of attendance and behaviour incidents.

## Inspection team

Michelle Payne, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Toby Martlew	His Majesty's Inspector
James Stuart	His Majesty's Inspector
Mike Serridge	Ofsted Inspector
Julia Mortimore	Ofsted Inspector

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