

Inspection of Trafalgar School

London Road, Hilsea, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO2 9RJ

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 June 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive and feel safe in this highly inclusive school. Staff ensure that pupils receive the precise help they need. Relationships are highly positive because staff take time to understand and remove barriers to pupils' learning. Pupils openly share how they are overcoming challenges in the nurturing 'Relational Practice Community Circles' they have twice a week. They take pride in each other's successes and take great care to not 'harm the community' feel of the school through unkind behaviour. Sanctions for poor behaviour are uncommon because pupils do their best to comply with the high expectations of staff.

Pupils are provided with the appropriate help they need. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who attend the 'Autism Resource Centre' (ARC) receive effective help to access learning alongside their peers. Staff are expert at delivering this. Pupils who need help to manage their mental health needs learn to do this through bespoke interventions on self-esteem in the 'Compass Centre'. Additional interventions in the 'Lighthouse' help pupils to catch up with their reading and mathematics. Inclusive practice threads through all aspects of leaders' work to make sure all pupils have the opportunity to succeed.

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

Leaders recognise that pupils have not achieved as well as they should in the past. They have increased the ambition of the curriculum by ensuring that the important knowledge and skills that pupils need to know are precisely identified and ordered. Pupils are more successfully acquiring the linguistic knowledge they need to become fluent in modern foreign languages. There are now more pupils choosing to study languages at GCSE level, such as French and Spanish.

Teachers have expert knowledge about the subjects they teach. In most subjects, they provide precise teaching and feedback to help pupils improve their work. Leaders have placed a strong emphasis on enhancing pupils' ability to talk about their learning. Leaders provide staff training to develop this. However, this is not yet well embedded. This means that pupils do not always explore new learning in sufficient depth. This makes it harder for them to link new learning to prior knowledge. Consequently, some pupils find it harder to build complex connections between ideas.

The majority of pupils behave in a mature and exemplary way towards each other. They value the education that school provides. To keep pupils engaged in education, leaders seek alternative options to manage behaviour. Strong links with alternative providers of education mean that a small number of pupils receive a different curriculum offer that meets their needs.

Leaders provide support for pupils who do not come to school regularly. This has been particularly impactful for some pupils with an education, health and care plan.

However, this work is not yet improving the attendance of some pupils who do not attend regularly. This includes some disadvantaged pupils and some who have SEND. Leaders continue to review plans to improve attendance and help these pupils catch up on vital education.

The personal development of pupils is exceptional. Leaders have constructed a programme of enrichment and opportunity to provide every pupil with valuable life experiences and skills. Numerous badges adorn pupils' blazer lapels to signify their purposeful leadership roles in school and the community. Pupils see themselves as 'Team Trafalgar' and are proud to represent their school. For example, student sports leaders help pupils from the local special schools to fully participate in regional sports festivals. 'Activities Week' provides a wealth of exciting new experiences to develop pupils' interests and cultural awareness. A well-constructed careers programme ensures that pupils get the tailored support they need to make ambitious decisions about their future.

Leaders and governors strive to identify and remove barriers to pupils achieving successful outcomes. They are increasing the expertise of governance to focus on key priorities such as academic progress. Leaders actively engage with their community, sharing their practice with other schools. Staff enjoy coming to work every day because of the shared moral purpose to improve the life chances of pupils. They state that leaders are considerate of their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding. They ensure that every member of staff knows how to identify if a pupil may be at risk of harm. They take quick and effective action to seek help when needed. Leaders actively engage with local services to ensure that they are aware of the risks that pupils may face outside of school. Records indicate the effective communication between staff and external support.

Personal development days teach pupils how to keep safe and healthy. Most recently, pupils explored the impact of different forms of abuse. Pupils could tell inspectors how these experiences have changed their perceptions.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all teachers ensure that pupils explore concepts in sufficient depth and detail. As a result, some pupils do not develop a secure grasp of new learning, making it harder to connect ideas together. Leaders should continue to embed the school's identified teaching strategies to help pupils securely learn and remember the identified ambitious knowledge within the curriculum.

- Not all pupils are attending school as well as they should following the COVID-19 pandemic. This puts them at risk of falling behind in their education. Leaders must continue to sharpen the efficacy of their plans to improve attendance.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	141875
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	10288050
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	963
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Martin Cree
Headteacher	Claire Copeland (Executive headteacher)
Website	www.trafalgarschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 and 3 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Salterns Multi Academy Trust.
- The school uses two registered providers of alternative provision for a small number of pupils.
- Pupils with autistic spectrum disorder attend the school's resource-based provision, the ARC. There are 15 places in the provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 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.

- 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 met senior leaders, subject leaders, the leader responsible for pupils with SEND, teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with governors and trustees and a representative of Portsmouth local authority.
- Inspectors visited the three centres in the school, the ARC, Compass and the Lighthouse. They met with pupils, looked at pupil's work and discussed the support plans in place for these pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, physical education, modern foreign languages, geography and art and design. Inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons and spoke to teachers. They looked at curriculum plans and pupils' work. They met with pupils to discuss their learning.
- Inspectors scrutinised safeguarding arrangements, including the school's central record of recruitment checks. Inspectors spoke to a variety of staff to check how well safeguarding referrals and systems work.
- Inspectors observed pupils around the school site during lunchtimes and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and groups of staff to hear their views. Inspectors also spoke to pupils and staff informally around the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the confidential Ofsted surveys for staff and pupils and Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Michelle Lower, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Mike Boddington	Ofsted Inspector
Andy Johnson	Ofsted Inspector
Philip Wayne	Ofsted Inspector

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