

South West Surrey Short Stay School

Pewley Hill, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 3SQ

Inspection dates 16–17 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teachers do not do enough to measure all students' academic potential when they enter the school. They do not set clear targets to guide their learning and do not measure any progress frequently enough.
- Some students do not make the progress in lessons they are capable of because teachers' expectations about what they could achieve are too low.
- School leaders do not spend enough time working to improve teaching and learning. This is because they are juggling too many other responsibilities, some of which could be delegated to other people.
- In some lessons students disrupt learning because they are not provided with sufficiently challenging tasks. They then become bored and sometimes choose to wander from the classroom.
- The inadequate accommodation limits the type of lessons that can be taught and the way that staff can support students.
- Attendance is not good. Some older students in particular do not attend regularly enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher is knowledgeable and passionate about helping students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. She is making a significant difference to their lives by helping them to overcome the barriers to learning that they face.
- Students feel safe and value their positive relationships with key staff. They appreciate the support they are given. This is because staff are skilled in supporting the pastoral and behavioural needs of students.
- The school provides an effective mentoring programme which re-engages many students with their education.
- School staff develop successful partnerships with secondary school leaders and other professionals.
- Effective outreach support helps students to reintegrate back into their schools successfully.
- Significant progress has been made this year in improving the attendance rates of younger students.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited 12 lessons and observed seven teachers. One lesson was jointly observed with the headteacher, who also accompanied the inspector when visiting a number of lessons.
- There were three responses on Parent View and account was also taken of the school's own parental surveys and other correspondence received from parents.
- Thirteen staff questionnaires were returned.
- Meetings were held with the school leaders, teaching and non-teaching staff, two students, the acting chairperson of the management committee and several representatives from the local authority. A conversation was also held with the school's attached child and adolescent mental health worker.
- Documents looked at included the school's own self-evaluation and development plans, financial records, teachers' planning and assessment files, examples of students' work, policies and procedures, management committee minutes and attendance records.

Inspection team

Lesley Cox, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The South West Surrey Short Stay School (SWS SSS) is a pupil referral unit and provides alternative education for up to 32 students in Key Stages 3 and 4. At the time of the inspection 24 students were on roll at the school with 15 attending the school for lessons. The remaining nine students are educated off site and have personalised learning packages. Numerous alternative education providers including Guildford College and the Lift Off project are used by the school.
- The school works with 13 secondary schools within the large geographical area of south west Surrey. It forms part of the Surrey Alternative Learning Programme (SALP) and offers support to students who have been permanently excluded or who are in danger of exclusion.
- All students have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and most are at school action plus on the special educational needs register. Three students have a statement of special educational needs. Six students currently receive the additional funding known as the pupil premium although this number changes on a regular basis.
- The length of time students spend at SWS SSS varies greatly. Re-integrations back to mainstream or special schools are sought whenever possible but some students remain at the school for longer periods of time.
- Most students are from families of White British heritage. The majority of students are usually boys but there are currently seven girls. There are usually a small number of students in the care of the local authority at any given time.
- The school has National Healthy School status, Artsmark gold award and Investors in Careers designation.
- Surrey inclusion services have undergone significant re-organisation since the last inspection and the school has had to adjust to changes in staffing, line management and methods of working. Further changes to the management committee and funding will happen this year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more lessons are good or better by:
 - ensuring that teachers set challenging learning targets for students, based on their academic ability, and regularly check how much progress they are making towards them
 - providing feedback in marking and other types of assessment so that students know what to do to make more progress.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - developing clearer systems to track how well students are doing in lessons and over time
 - working with the management committee to review the wider roles and responsibilities of the leadership team.
- Improve the attendance of students by:
 - upgrading the quality of accommodation so that it is fit for purpose and enables staff to provide a wider range of lessons and activities that will engage all students
 - challenging non-attendance by involving other professionals as soon as possible.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students arrive with large gaps in their learning due to their behavioural difficulties. Most make adequate academic progress from their starting points but teachers do not do enough to measure the actual amount of progress that students make, taking account of their level of ability.
- The limitations of the school building mean that students are prevented from making progress in a wider range of sports and practical subjects as there are no suitable outdoor or indoor areas for activities to take place.
- In 2012 almost all students gained accreditation in English, literacy and mathematics. Some students also achieved passes in science, information and communication technology and a range of vocational subjects. A few students achieved passes in sport studies and art. Whenever possible students are encouraged and supported to complete courses they may have started before their arrival at the school.
- Students make reasonable and sometimes good progress in English and science lessons and in Key Stage 4 mathematics lessons.
- All students have personalised learning plans and many make significant progress on college courses or work placements. A few students have placements at other organisations such as the Surrey Wildlife Trust and improve their work and life skills by learning more about things that interest them. The school carefully monitors attendance and the progress that students are making and staff visit to carry out checks on how well students are doing.
- Students make significant progress in improving their behaviour and attitudes to learning. This can be seen in the high number of students who successfully re-integrate back into secondary school and the low number of students who are not in education, employment or training when they leave the school.
- The school rarely enters students early for examinations. This is only done when students' personal circumstances mean that a later entry is unlikely to be successful.
- Those students who have statements of special educational needs or are entitled to the pupil premium funding make the same amount of progress as other students, due to the high levels of support that the school provides for them. The school has used the pupil premium funds well, for example to run a breakfast club which has helped students to concentrate on their learning more quickly in the morning. It has also been used to set up a nurture group for more vulnerable students; this is having a significant impact on the achievement of the students who attend.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Not enough teaching at the school is good and the quality of teaching is too variable to enable students to make consistently good progress. Teaching is less than good when teachers do not set work that is interesting or challenging enough; the lesson therefore fails to engage students. Students sometimes do not know how to improve further because marking and feedback are lacking or infrequent.
- Not all teachers set challenging targets for students. Many do not measure the progress students make towards achieving their learning targets. This makes it difficult for staff to know how quickly any gaps in students' knowledge, skills and understanding are being closed, or if students are learning as much as they could.
- Teachers do not always make best use of teaching assistants in their lessons because they are not clear enough about what they want them to do. This means that they are not as effective as they could be in supporting students who need extra help or those who could do more.
- Where teaching is good, teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their subject and plan lessons that engage and interest students. They move learning on quickly, taking account

of students' different abilities and are skilled at questioning and finding ways to help students learn.

- Literacy skills are taught effectively across all subjects and by all teachers, helping students to improve their speech, language and communication skills. Conversations with students showed that they are increasingly self-aware about their emotional and behavioural needs and can reflect upon how they have improved since joining the school. Several letters from parents commented on the big improvements they had noticed in their children.
- Students enjoy and value lessons and activities that teach life skills and wider practical skills such as cooking. All staff promote social, moral, spiritual and cultural values and these underpin the success that the school has in improving students' levels of engagement with learning and allowing many students to be successfully re-integrated back into schools, colleges and work placements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Behaviour is not good as too much teaching time is spent negotiating with some students who are reluctant to participate in lessons. This is because many lessons move too slowly and students become bored.
- The inadequate accommodation makes it difficult for staff to manage the behaviour of students by limiting their access to other areas of the building, if they choose to wander from their classrooms. Some students take advantage of this.
- Although the attendance of many students improves when they join the school, too many older students do not attend regularly enough, particularly towards the end of Year 11. This is due in part to the limitations of the building, as students who are on roll for a long period of time, feel that they miss out on social and sporting opportunities. The school works effectively with other organisations to improve attendance and has been successful in raising the attendance rates of younger students, who usually attend the school for just a few weeks.
- Teachers, mentors and support staff are skilled at helping students to understand the importance of learning and the ways in which their behaviour can stop them achieving as much as they are capable of. They build positive and supportive relationships with students and help them to develop the confidence to re-engage with their learning. Students show high levels of respect towards staff and serious incidents are rare.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions has continued to decline rapidly and the sanction is only used for very serious incidents involving violence to others. Staff mentors take the time to talk to students about lesser disputes and encourage them to accept responsibility for changing their own behaviour.
- Students say they feel safe at the school and bullying when it occurs is dealt with effectively by staff. They appreciate the high levels of support they are given and their views are shared by most parents.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Senior leaders do not have a clear enough picture of how well students are doing during the time they spend at the school. Systems for monitoring how well students are learning are not effective and do not measure their progress over time on a regular basis. This means leaders do not always know if students are making enough progress.
- The headteacher and her senior leaders are held in high regard by staff, students, parents and other professionals, who recognise the commitment that they bring to their roles. However, not enough of their time is spent on developing effective systems for monitoring and improving teaching and learning at the school and ensuring that these are a sufficiently high priority for staff.
- Managers take appropriate action when teaching is seen to be less than effective by supporting staff to improve and setting targets for them to work towards. They plan for further school

improvement appropriately and know the school's strengths and weaknesses.

- The curriculum offers a good balance of academic, practical and vocational subjects and high quality personal learning programmes. Effective systems are in place to ensure that students continue to do well when they return to their school or access other alternative provision. This means nearly all students gain access to further education or employment when they leave school.
- School leaders contribute to different partnerships and work as a key part of the Surrey alternative learning programme. The local authority monitors the school's performance and offers effective support to bring about further improvement by providing access to training and other resources. Local authority officers are aware of the limitations of the current building and are working to find a solution.
- Senior leaders, the local authority and the management committee ensure that all safeguarding procedures are in place and that statutory training is provided as necessary. They tackle all forms of discrimination and promote equality of opportunity within all school policies and procedures.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The management committee is closely involved with the performance and management of the school. Members are kept updated by regular reports from school leaders to ensure that they are informed about the behaviour, attendance and achievement of students. They have agreed with the headteacher how pupil premium funds should be spent to overcome barriers to learning. Together with the local authority, they support the headteacher in managing the performance of teachers and agreeing further pay awards for those who regularly teach to a high standard. They are currently in a stage of transition while they wait for the full impact of the changes to governance to become clear, but are being well supported by the local authority to recruit new members with skills that will be useful to the school. Several existing members are experienced governors of other schools and are practised in holding school leaders to account.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	124923
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	402300

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11– 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	24
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Sarah Selzer
Headteacher	Judith Lindfield
Date of previous school inspection	14 May 2010
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