

SW Surrey Short Stay School

Pewley Hill, Guildford, GU1 3SQ

Inspection dates

15–16 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is good school

- The senior leaders are highly ambitious for the school and are bringing about rapid and sustained improvement. Their vision is strongly supported by staff and the management committee.
- Teaching is good. Teachers know their students well and plan lessons which interest them and help them to make good progress.
- Students behave well in lessons and around the building. They are positive about school and say they feel safe there.
- For many students, attendance at this school gives them their first experience of success at school. Almost all of them improve their attendance and punctuality.
- The management committee has a very clear grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and provides highly effective challenge and support.
- Senior staff check teaching regularly and very thoroughly. They work closely with staff to make sure that they receive high-quality training and support to help them improve their skills.
- The curriculum is well matched to students' individual needs, particularly in the good range of vocational courses offered in school and on placements with partner organisations.
- The pastoral care team work in a very strong partnership with teaching staff to provide excellent support for individual students and their families.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students do not have enough opportunities to use and improve their reading and mathematics skills in other subjects.
- Teachers do not always give students precise guidance on how to improve their work
- Teachers do not always explain clearly what students will be expected to achieve in lessons. This means they do not always make as much progress as they could.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.
- The inspector visited 11 lessons and observed seven teachers. The lessons were all jointly observed with members of the leadership team.
- There were too few responses to Parent View to be considered but account was taken of the school's own records of contact with parents.
- Thirteen staff questionnaires were considered.
- Meetings were held with the school leaders, teaching and non-teaching staff, several students, the chair and three other members of the management committee who are also local headteachers, and a representative from the local authority.
- Documents reviewed included the school's self-evaluation and development plans, financial records, teachers' planning and assessment files, samples of students' work, policies and procedures, management committee minutes and attendance records.

Inspection team

Grace Marriott, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school provides alternative education for up to 32 students in Key Stages 3 and 4. At the time of the inspection there were 24 students on roll on a full- or part-time basis. Several alternative education settings are used to provide individual programmes for students. These include Reigate Valley College.
- The school works with a group of secondary schools in south-west Surrey. It is part of the Surrey Alternative Learning Programme (SALP) and offers support to students who have been permanently excluded or who are at risk of exclusion.
- Most students are from families of White British heritage. Boys usually outnumber girls. Almost all students are entitled to support from the additional funding known as the pupil premium. At any given time a small number of students are usually in the care of the local authority.
- Students have a range of special educational needs which are mostly related to social, emotional and behavioural issues. Currently no students have English as an additional language.
- The length of time students spend at the school varies greatly. Some Key Stage 3 students are on six-week placements for two days a week, while others attend full time but with the aim of reintegration into mainstream education wherever possible. Most students in Years 10 and 11 remain at the school until they are 16.
- The school has undergone considerable change since the previous inspection. A new leadership team led by an executive headteacher from an outstanding pupil referral unit and a new assistant headteacher took over in January 2014. They were joined in April by a new head of school and a new head of the pastoral care team.
- The school is planning to enter into a formal 'soft' federation with Reigate Valley College. The two schools will have the same executive headteacher but keep their own management committees and funding arrangements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise teaching from good to outstanding by ensuring:
 - greater consistency in the implementation of the marking policy so students are given more precise guidance on how to improve their work
 - lesson objectives are more sharply focused on ensuring students understand what they are expected to achieve rather than what they will be doing.
- Raise standards in English and mathematics by:
 - implementing a whole-school approach to using reading and mathematics skills, so that students are given as many opportunities as possible to use and develop their mathematical knowledge and skills in other subjects.
 - widening students' range of reading and increasing the emphasis on reading for pleasure as well as for information

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- After the last inspection, the school went through a period of difficulty and standards were declining rapidly. The new senior team, supported by course and subject leaders, is providing outstanding leadership. Their uncompromisingly high expectations, together with real concern for the welfare of individuals, have brought about rapid and secure improvement in all areas of the school's work. Students and staff are able to work in a caring, supportive and challenging environment.
- Staff are overwhelmingly supportive of the direction the school is taking. They are a strong and cohesive team who work well together and respect each other's skills. They work hard to ensure that the students get the best possible education.
- The pastoral care team is very effectively managed to ensure that the support for students' well-being and personal development meets their needs. The team work hard to involve parents and carers as well as the young people themselves in decisions about their future. Most parents and carers are supportive of what the school is doing.
- Senior staff check the quality of teaching and its impact on students' progress regularly and rigorously, both on the main school site and on the courses provided by partner organisations.
- Whole-staff and individual training is planned to meet specific needs and the regular training sessions are supported by a highly informative weekly teaching and learning bulletin.
- Performance management is used very effectively to improve outcomes for students and inform the leaders and the management committee about the quality of teaching in the school.
- Teachers know that they are accountable for their students' progress and that the school sets high expectations for teaching. They are also encouraged to reflect on their teaching and know that they will be helped to improve.
- Relationships with the schools that this school serves have improved. The appointment of three local headteachers to the management committee has significantly strengthened links. Better communication has improved the provision for students.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs and interests of the students very well. All students study English, mathematics, science, art and physical education. They also learn to cook. Though outside recreational space is very limited, students are encouraged to lead healthy lives and take part in a range of sports.
- The range of vocational subjects varies according to the needs of different year groups but can include construction, countryside management, sport, hair and beauty and childcare through highly effective and well-managed partnerships with other organisations.
- The school prepares students well for life in modern Britain through work-related learning and careers education and guidance as well as a citizenship programme. This promotes equality of opportunity and encourages respect for and tolerance of others. Through the programme they learn about democratic institutions and the dangers of extremism and radicalisation.
- The local authority has provided a very good level of challenge and support for the school.

■ The governance of the school:

- The management committee has considerable expertise and the members bring a wide range of skills and educational experience. This enables them both to challenge leaders of the school and to give strong support. The committee has not been afraid to take robust action where this has been necessary to deal with difficult issues and to ensure that the school provides a good education in a safe environment.
- The committee knows about and regularly considers issues relating to the quality of teachers and other staff and how well the students are learning. Members know where the strengths and weaknesses are in teaching and how performance management and training are used to improve teaching. All necessary safeguarding checks and policies are in place and staff training in safeguarding is up to date and relevant. The management committee monitors how well additional funding is spent to provide individual support for students who need it.

The behaviour and safety of students are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is good. Many students arrive at the school with a long history of poor behaviour but, from the start, staff work successfully with students to help them learn to control their behaviour and make the most of what the school can offer.
- Expectations for behaviour are very clear. The few rules are well understood and students know that they are expected to keep them. They learn that actions have consequences which can be both positive and negative.
- Relationships are good at all levels. Students respect the staff and know that they will be supported if they are going through a difficult time. In discussion, students were very positive about what the staff were doing to help them. Staff are very good at identifying when students need extra support and intervening skilfully before situations get out of hand.
- The pastoral care team and senior staff work closely with parents, carers and a range of different agencies to ensure that students are able to benefit from their time at school and receive specialist help should they need it.
- Students have generally good attitudes to learning, whether being taught on the main site or on the other courses. Their concentration and willingness to work improve during their time at the school, particularly when taking courses that appeal to their particular interests.
- Sometimes, though, students give up too easily or do not work as hard as they could. Staff are patient in these circumstances and continue to encourage them to try again. The quality of displays and artwork illustrates students' increasing pride in their work.
- Attendance is still well below that in most mainstream schools. Almost without exception, however, students' attendance and punctuality improve significantly during their time at the school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe is outstanding and students say that they feel safe. The premises are secure and the students are well supervised on site. Risk assessments and careful supervision ensure that students are safe when being taught off site.
- The impact of a zero-tolerance approach to bullying is reflected in the comments from students themselves. They are confident that any bullying would be very swiftly dealt with. The school's own monitoring records of behaviour incidents show that bullying is very rare.
- Students know about the dangers of all forms of prejudice-based bullying, including cyber bullying, and the negative effects of homophobic and racist views. The school carefully monitors computer use in school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers, teaching assistants and the pastoral care team are exceptionally good at promoting students' personal development and helping them to overcome any barriers to learning. As a result, students gain in confidence and realise that they can succeed.
- Lessons are planned to take account of students' individual learning needs and to enable them to catch up. Teachers are expert at engaging students who have previously not enjoyed school, making good use of a wide range of practical and academic activities both at school and at their other placements. For example, in a good science lesson, students studying issues related to recycling were also enjoying making recycled paper.
- Students always know what they will be doing in lessons and the tasks they should complete. It is not, however, consistently made clear to them what they are expected to achieve in terms of making progress and acquiring specific knowledge and skills. As a result, they do not always as much progress as they could.
- Teachers and teaching assistants promote basic skills effectively, especially in writing. The work in students' books shows that they make good progress in writing accurate English. They have good computer skills which help some to overcome their difficulties in writing accurately as well as, for example, enabling them to produce professional-looking curriculum vitae (CVs) for the next stage of their work.
- Students have opportunities in class to read for information, but the range of reading is not very wide and there is not enough emphasis on reading for pleasure. In general, opportunities to use literacy and numeracy skills are not planned systematically enough across all subjects.

- Teachers and teaching assistants make good use of praise to motivate students but have high expectations and do not over-praise work simply to encourage students. Students know that they have to earn praise and mostly they respond well.
- Students' attainment and progress are regularly and accurately assessed. The quality of marking has improved with the introduction of the new whole-school marking policy. This is being used to give students feedback on the quality of their work. It gives students guidance on how to improve it but the comments are not always specific enough.

The achievement of pupils is good

- When students join the school their attainment is usually below, and often well below, that of their peer groups in mainstream schools. This underachievement is generally because their education has been badly affected by poor attendance or exclusions.
- In Key Stage 3, the short programmes help students to start to catch up and they usually return to school full-time much better able to cope with the demands of mainstream school.
- Students who join the school in Key Stage 4 have often made very little progress in Key Stage 3. Most of them start to catch up and make rapid progress. Almost all students leave with recognised qualifications in English and mathematics. The school sometimes uses early entry to GCSE to help motivate students to achieve more than they expected.
- The most able students are set challenging targets based on assessment of their potential as well as their prior attainment. Some students are currently on track to achieve five GCSE passes at grade C or above, including English and mathematics. They are encouraged to apply for higher-level qualifications when they leave the school.
- Although students' GCSE attainment is below the levels expected nationally, the results in the BTEC vocational courses such as health and social care are broadly in line with national outcomes, and many students leave with the equivalent of good GCSE passes in these courses.
- It was evident in lessons that very good working relationships ensure that students are learning well and making good progress. They make particularly good progress in improving their writing skills.
- Well-focused individual guidance helps them to choose the right courses, training or apprenticeships. Most students achieve the qualifications they need to go on to continue their education or training. The proportion of students staying on in education or going into employment or apprenticeships is well in line with the national average.
- There is little difference in the rate of progress of different groups of students. Boys and girls, those with different learning difficulties and those looked after by local authorities tend to achieve equally well. As almost all students are entitled to support from the additional funding, their progress reflects that of the school as a whole.

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	453483

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 management committee
Chair	Sarah Selzer
Executive headteacher	David Euridge
Headteacher	Sarah Clark
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 January 2013
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