

Aurora Redehall School

Redehall Road, Smallfield, Surrey RH6 9QA

Inspection dates

24–26 April 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since the school opened in September 2017, leaders have worked tirelessly to ensure that pupils who have previously had negative experiences of education are supported to feel positive about school and their learning.
- The headteacher has a clear and aspirational vision for the future of the school. His vision is supported by the proprietor and together they have ensured that the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders have carefully planned and developed an engaging curriculum that provides pupils with plentiful opportunities to develop their personal, social and communication skills. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life beyond the school.
- Despite some initial difficulties in recruiting teaching staff, the quality of teaching across the school is consistently good. Teachers use their knowledge of individual pupils effectively to engage pupils in learning.
- Safeguarding is effective and is given a high priority by the proprietor, leaders and all other staff.
- Governance of the school is a strength. The proprietor knows the school well and is committed to ensuring that pupils receive the best possible education. Governors provide rigorous challenge to leaders for most aspects of the school's work.
- The majority of pupils attend school regularly and are happy to come to school. When attendance for individual pupils is a concern, leaders develop bespoke strategies to re-engage pupils quickly.
- Pupils are positive about school, and the majority of pupils behave well. Plans to support pupils to manage their own behaviour are used consistently by staff. Consequently, pupils' behaviour improves over time.
- Well-trained staff provide effective support for pupils to access learning. However, the deployment of teaching assistants does not consistently facilitate pupils' academic progress.
- As a result of good teaching across the school, pupils make strong progress in English and mathematics. However, the level of challenge that teachers provide pupils beyond these subjects is not consistent. Because of this, pupils do not make similarly strong progress in subjects outside of English and mathematics.
- Leaders' strong focus on securing pupils' emotional well-being has resulted in a lack of clarity from leaders as to what constitutes academic success for individual pupils. As a result, teachers are not consistently held to account for pupils' academic outcomes.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that teaching assistants support pupils effectively in all aspects of their learning
 - making sure that all teachers consistently challenge pupils in their learning across the curriculum so that they are enabled to make rapid progress in subjects outside of English and mathematics.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - refining the school's assessment procedure so that teachers are held more rigorously to account for pupils' academic progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher leads the school with compassion and a determination to ensure that pupils' experiences of school are positive. The proprietor and the headteacher know the school well and have an accurate awareness of its strengths and areas that are continuing to improve.
- Since opening the school in September 2017, leaders have developed robust plans to improve the school's policies and procedures. For example, in January leaders correctly identified the need to refine the school's behaviour policy in order to increase its impact on pupils' personal development. Leaders are now rightly endeavouring to ensure that a more strategic approach to school development is implemented. They are at the early stages of analysing the information that they have gathered to sharpen the work of the school and secure the best possible outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils' best interests are at the heart of all the school does. From the moment a pupil joins the school, staff have pupils' future destinations at the forefront of their minds. This underlying principle has enabled leaders to develop provision that successfully meets the complex needs of all pupils and ensures that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education and/or employment.
- Leaders' checks on teaching and learning across the school mean that they have an accurate view of its quality. Leaders pay close attention to the impact of teaching on pupils' personal and social outcomes. They are beginning to develop a more systematic approach to analysing the impact that teaching has on pupils' academic outcomes in order to better hold teachers to account for the progress pupils make.
- Performance management systems for staff ensure that they receive a wide range of training that supports their professional development. Initial issues with the recruitment of teachers have now been addressed, and this has led to a strengthening and tightening of the school's appraisal system. Current staff appreciate the opportunities that they have been provided with by leaders to develop their expertise. They feel that this is already making a positive difference to the work of the school.
- Staff are proud of what the school does to support pupils. Staff are positive about all aspects of the school's work and feel well supported by leaders. They demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the school's context and the individual needs of pupils. Teamwork and mutual support play a critical role in the success of the school and are well established. One member of staff commented that the school was the best place that they had ever worked.
- Considering the size of the school, the curriculum offer for pupils is broad. The range of subjects available to pupils in key stage 4 is appropriate and provides pupils with suitable qualification routes. There is a careful balance between the core curriculum subjects of English and mathematics and wider curriculum opportunities. This balances the aim for pupils to develop their personal, social and emotional skills as well as ensuring that pupils leave the school with essential numeracy and literacy skills.
- A variety of enrichment experiences for pupils are embedded across the curriculum. Pupils were proud to tell the inspector of the sporting event that they had organised recently to

raise funds for Sport Relief. Pupils' work also demonstrated their knowledge of the Holocaust and its implications for the world today. Leaders have facilitated this through the carefully planned and organised approach to the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- Parents appreciate the difference the school makes for their children. Parents who spoke with the inspector were unreserved in their praise for the school and admiration of staff. They spoke of how it has improved not only their children's lives, but their families' too.
- Leaders' and the proprietor's methodical checks have ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.

Governance

- The proprietor makes a strong contribution to the school's work and shares leaders' passion and commitment to improve the life chances of the vulnerable pupils that attend the school.
- Well-developed plans are in place to provide clarity on the future direction of the school. Those responsible for governance understand their statutory responsibilities and provide both effective support and challenge to leaders.
- The proprietor regularly visits the school in order to see how policies and procedures are being implemented by leaders and the impact this is having on pupils' outcomes. Consequently, the proprietor has an increased understanding of what it is like to be a pupil at the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school complies with all elements of the independent school standards regarding the safety of pupils, including publishing a suitable safeguarding policy on its website.
- Leaders foster a safe culture in which pupils thrive. This is rooted in the knowledge that staff have about individual pupils and their families. As a result, pupils feel safe and are safe.
- Rigorous checks are made on staff and volunteers at the school to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. All staff complete appropriate training and are kept up to date with any changes to statutory guidance and legislation.
- Records of any safeguarding concerns about individual pupils are detailed and indicate that leaders' actions to protect pupils are carried out swiftly. Leaders work closely with parents, the local authority and other professionals to keep pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils extremely well. They are determined to engage pupils in learning, even when pupils lack confidence in their own ability. During the inspection, there were many instances where the inspector witnessed staff successfully encouraging pupils to complete their work. As a result, most pupils are

making strong progress in English and mathematics.

- Strong and positive relationships between pupils and staff contribute to the constructive learning environment seen across the school. In this safe and encouraging atmosphere, pupils are confident to attempt tasks and answer questions posed by teachers. In response to this, teachers question and probe pupils' thinking. As a result, pupils' knowledge and understanding of concepts develop.
- Parents are positive about the progress that their children are making at the school and the support that the children receive from their teachers. One parent commented that they are 'absolutely over the moon' with the progress that their child has made since joining the school.
- The most effective teaching assistants support pupils to manage their behaviour and act as facilitators of pupils' learning. Where this happens, pupils engage in their work, their understanding is deepened and their pace of learning is increased. However, where the support provided by teaching assistants focuses solely on pupils' behaviour, the impact that they have on pupils' learning is reduced.
- While teaching is consistently good across the school, teachers do not always use their knowledge of individual pupil's academic ability in subjects outside of English and mathematics. This sometimes slows pupils' progress and prevents them from being able to reach the standards that they are capable of.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Most pupils who attend the school have had negative experiences in previous educational settings. For many, Aurora Redehall School is their first positive experience of education.
- Most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. This is because staff understand their individual needs and work hard to change pupils' perceptions of themselves and what they are capable of. Consequently, pupils are proud of their work and their achievements.
- Pupils feel safe at the school. They state that there is no bullying and that any unkind behaviour is dealt with quickly by staff. Pupils told the inspector that they can go to any adult in school with their worries and they will be listened to.
- Staff are aware of the importance of creating opportunities for pupils to experience success at school. The school's reward system is used effectively to ensure that pupils are recognised for their individual achievements, no matter how small these may be. As a result, pupils' emotional well-being is protected and their self-confidence improves.
- All aspects of personal safety are embedded across the curriculum. This supports pupils to stay safe and understand the potential dangers of the community and the world they live in. Pupils told the inspector about the importance of staying safe on the internet and when using social media.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Despite the complex needs of pupils, most pupils conduct themselves well both inside and outside of the classroom.
- High levels of staffing ensure that pupils are supervised throughout the day. Staff know pupils well and employ successful strategies to ensure that any incidents of challenging behaviour do not escalate. Consequently, pupils' behaviour improves over time and is key to the success of the school.
- Visits to classrooms demonstrated the progress that individual pupils have made towards improving and managing their own behaviour since joining the school. Timely and effective support from the school's emotional literacy support assistant enables pupils to begin to reflect on their behaviour and the behaviour of others. This impacts positively on pupils' self-awareness.
- Most pupils attend school regularly. School leaders understand the importance of ensuring that pupils attend school, and work hard to support families when problems arise or when individual circumstances mean that attendance is not as good as it could be.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils enter the school with attainment below that typical for their age. The effective use of multi-disciplinary forms of assessment enables staff to quickly gain a clear picture of where pupils' strengths and weaknesses lie. They use this information well to plan learning that meets most pupils' needs.
- Taking pupils' starting points into account, pupils typically make strong progress in a number of areas. Pupils in key stage 4 are working towards a range of qualifications, including GCSEs, entry-level qualifications and functional skills.
- Most pupils join the school with major gaps in their knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects. Pupils' prior experiences of education have often been negative, and most pupils have experienced exclusion from mainstream school at some point in their educational careers. Because of this, leaders initially address pupils' personal, social and emotional needs before meaningful academic learning takes place.
- Pupils at Aurora Redhall School make strong progress in their learning, particularly in English and mathematics. The school's own assessment information indicates that, after an initial period of transition, most pupils are starting to make the progress required in order to fill gaps in their knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils make excellent progress in their social communication skills. Pupils share their views and opinions regularly with staff and other pupils. This helps them to practise and embed these skills successfully.

School details

Unique reference number	144730
DfE registration number	936/6011
Inspection number	10045497

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	6 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	19
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Aurora ASD Ltd
Chair	Kathryn Rudd
Headteacher	Jon Sillar
Annual fees (day pupils)	£52,107
Telephone number	01342 778 650
Website	www.the-aurora-group.com/redehall
Email address	enquiries@the-aurora-group.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Aurora Redehall School is an independent special school located in Surrey. The school opened to pupils in September 2017 and currently provides education for pupils from three surrounding local authorities.
- The Aurora group appointed a headteacher in the year prior to the school opening. Since January 2018, the headteacher has been supported for two days per week by the Aurora group's school improvement adviser. The school is currently recruiting for a deputy headteacher and two senior teachers.
- All pupils have a statement of educational needs or an education, health and care plan.

The majority of pupils have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder or social communication disorder, and experience behavioural, emotional and social difficulties associated with their individual needs. Many have been excluded from mainstream education prior to coming to Aurora Redehall.

- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, and there are significantly more boys than girls.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Her Majesty's Inspector visited all classes over the course of the inspection, jointly with the headteacher. She spoke to pupils and examined pupils' progress through samples of their work. Pupils' behaviour during lessons, as well as in and around the school, was observed.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the school's improvement adviser, staff at the school and a group of pupils. A discussion was held with a representative of the Aurora group on the telephone.
- A range of school documentation was analysed, including the school's development plan, reports provided by placing local authorities, records of leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, a selection of education, health and care plans, and tracking information about pupils' achievement, attendance, behaviour and exclusions.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures were scrutinised, including correspondence between the school and the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Records linked to work with other agencies were reviewed, as well as those relating to how the school has responded to complaints.
- There were a small number of responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Her Majesty's Inspector spoke to two parents and considered nine responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Emma Sanderson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Parent View

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2018