

Inspection of an outstanding school: Fordway Centre

Stanwell Road, Ashford, Middlesex TW15 3DU

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 May 2021

Outcome

Fordway Centre continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils told inspectors that this is a great school. Although most only attend for short periods of time, they settle and make friends quickly. The few pupils who stay longer were equally happy to share their approval of the school with the inspectors.

Pupils enjoy an individualised curriculum. They thrive here because staff are sensitive and caring, yet expect a lot in return. The impact of this is often a rapid turnaround in pupils' attitudes to school and to learning. When pupils need time, staff have the patience and expertise to provide the nurture and measured levels of challenge required to improve things.

Pupils are expected to behave well here. Most achieve this goal. Staff are skilled at anticipating when pupils might struggle. They understand that addressing pupils' anxiety and self-doubt is key in keeping the learning environment calm and purposeful.

Pupils told inspectors that they feel cared for in school. Bullying is not accepted and is not a problem for them. They like the way their school day is designed. They enjoy the opportunity for breakfast with staff. Pancakes on Fridays, Gizmo the dog, and opportunities to cook, dance, and dress and act as superheroes were also rated highly.

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

This is a school where all staff care deeply about making a difference. Some pupils are here because they have been permanently excluded from mainstream schools. Others attend for short intervention programmes before returning to their school. One pupil said: 'I have to admit, it is one of the best places I have been to. I really like it.' Others said that they do not like school much, but were in no doubt that they liked this one, because staff 'understood them', and made learning interesting.

The curriculum is designed to engage pupils and offers a suitable range of subjects. Classroom visits showed pupils enjoying learning about the earth, the impact of pollution and climate change. Pupils, most with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), talked about their learning happily. Their books were neat and reflected the high expectations of staff and the growing pride of pupils in their work.

Teachers are quick to assess pupils' academic development and social and emotional needs on arrival. This helps staff to tailor the curriculum and to personalise pupils' learning. They know this is key in breaking down the negative attitudes to school that many pupils harbour.

Teaching pupils to read is a priority here. Staff teach phonics well. Leaders know how important it is for pupils to read and provide many opportunities for them to do so. Most pupils are positive about reading. However, some were less enthusiastic when talking about books, based on previous experiences in other schools. Those who struggle receive one-to-one support, building confidence through small steps of success.

Staff teach mathematics confidently. They are knowledgeable and deliver lessons that are targeted well. Regular opportunities for problem-solving lead to pupils putting what they know into practice. When pupils need more help, staff make sure that they quickly get the support they need. Pupils appreciate this and say it makes a difference to their learning.

Other aspects of the curriculum are also taught well. In physical education, pupils learn how to move their bodies effectively to develop the skills they need. Basketball, tennis, golf and dance are just some of the many opportunities pupils enjoy. Pupils learn about rules, strategies and tactics. They also learn how to compete safely and about the short- and long-term benefits of sport on their health.

Parents told an inspector that they wished their children could stay longer. However, they understand that Fordway is not a 'forever' school. When pupils move on, staff create a personal 'Farewell Fordway' folder for them, a simple yet high-quality record of their time at the school. These are also reminders of pupils' successes, new friends and a very personal touch that underpins the nurturing ethos of this outstanding provision.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders, staff and those responsible for governance are clear about their duty to promote the welfare, health and safety of pupils. Consequently, there is a strong culture of keeping children safe which is evident in all parts of school life.

Staff understand and are alert to the many potential risks facing their pupils and know them and their families well. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe here. They know that staff will help them if they have worries or are unsure about anything, both in and outside of school.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good school could now be better than good, or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in June 2016.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for published performance information about the school [here](#).

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	124916
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10192875
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	13
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Headteacher	David Euridge (Executive Headteacher) Linda Whitehorn (Head of Centre)
Website	http://fordway-centre.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	30 June and 1 July 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Fordway Centre is a pupil referral unit for pupils who have been permanently excluded from other schools or are at high risk of exclusion. It provides short-term placements and also supports pupils with SEND who require further assessment for specialist provision.
- Governance is provided by a management committee. The school is overseen by an executive headteacher who also leads two other specialist provisions as part of the Reigate Valley College, Wey Valley College and the Fordway Centre federation of schools.
- Plans are well advanced for the three federated schools to join together in a multi-academy trust, the Inclusive Education Trust, in the near future.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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 did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and physical education. Deep dives included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work and talking to leaders, teachers and pupils about how teaching in these subjects builds on pupils' knowledge over time. An inspector also heard pupils read to a member of staff.
- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings during the inspection. These included meetings with leaders, teaching and support staff, pupils and parents. The lead inspector held separate online meetings with the chair of the management committee and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors assessed the school's culture to keep pupils safe throughout the inspection. A wide range of documentation was considered, including policies and staff training records. The single central record of checks on the suitability of adults to work with children was also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Shaun Jarvis

Her Majesty's Inspector

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