

Inspection of Pathways Education

Sundial Stables, Sundial House, Jumps Road, Farnham, Surrey GU10 2LB

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 May 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils arrive at Pathways with a history of poor experiences of education. Staff quickly get to know pupils and their specific needs. They prioritise and help pupils to develop positive, trusting relationships. Before they know it, pupils look forward to learning and attend regularly. For the first time in their school career, pupils feel that they have a voice, a choice and a stake in shaping their future. They positively embrace all that the school offers. Pupils are clear that their school makes them feel very happy and safe.

Leaders have high expectations of behaviour. Pupils have designed their 'school norms'. Through the 'appreciation board', they celebrate and commend others for modelling these expectations. One pupil said, 'It is important that we are kind and caring. This way we look after ourselves and the environment.' Pupils also trust that staff will deal with any incidents of bullying effectively.

Pupils are proud of the responsibilities they take on in school. They enjoy making their own breakfast and lunch. They plant vegetables in their home-made planters and look forward to cooking tasty meals with the fruits of their labour. Pupils relish helping out in the community by volunteering at the local farm.

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

Pathways Education opened its doors to pupils in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2021. Leaders' decision to invite pupils to start at their new school during the national lockdown proved to be highly successful. Pupils who joined the school have a history of long periods of school absence and all have complex needs. Being able to attend school protected these pupils from some of the negative effects of self-isolation during this challenging period.

Leaders ensure that pupils' holistic needs are assessed as soon as they arrive. Appropriate learning pathways and therapeutic interventions are identified and secured effectively. Leaders and staff fully recognise that learning to read well is pivotal to pupils' learning and future achievement. Reading is a top priority. Staff accurately identify any pupils who need support with reading. They skilfully help pupils to learn to read fluently and with comprehension. Leaders provide pupils with a diverse and interesting range of books to read and take home to share with their families. One pupil commented, 'I am so proud that for the first time ever, I can read a book from cover to cover.'

Leaders have developed an interesting and ambitious curriculum. In most subjects, this is delivered through special 'projects'. This gives pupils many opportunities to use and apply their learning and ideas. Through this approach, leaders seek to engage pupils' interest by fostering their natural curiosity of the world around them. Overall, the curriculum sets out how pupils' subject knowledge and skills will be built on and developed over time. However, leaders recognise that in a few subjects, they have not identified clearly the essential knowledge pupils need to learn and

remember. This means that pupils do not achieve as well as they could in some subjects.

Pupils look forward to lessons. They like talking about what they know about the different topics they learn. Lessons are lively and engaging. Pupils told us that they value that staff give them a 'voice and a choice' in which tasks they complete first. Occasionally, pupils become confused and are easily distracted. This is because sometimes, staff introduce new ideas too quickly. They do not check and make sure that pupils have learned the most important knowledge. Leaders are providing training for staff to address this issue.

Pupils' personal development is at the heart of the curriculum. Over time, this work helps to prepare pupils well for life beyond the school gates. The school fulfils its equalities duties well. Pupils talk thoughtfully and with consideration about the fundamental British values. They learn about the importance of mutual respect and individual liberty. Pupils debate and discuss topics around racism, disability and immigration. They also enjoy trips to museums and places of historical significance. Leaders ensure that pupils work with a range of professionals and learn about the different career choices open to them.

Pupils practise yoga and learn healthy strategies to help them regulate their emotions. Pupils learn about the importance of a healthy diet and exercise. The school has appropriate plans in place to comply with statutory guidance on relationships, sex and health education.

Governors and the proprietor are knowledgeable about the school. They have a strong understanding of their roles and functions and keep careful oversight of the school's work. Governors and the chief operating officer (COO) work together constructively to hold leaders to account for their work in order to ensure that pupils benefit from a good-quality education. The proprietor works effectively with leaders to make sure that all of the independent school standards are consistently met. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about leaders' support with their workload. Leaders have created an ethos of support and an environment where expertise is shared. This ensures that best practice is continually cultivated and embedded throughout the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Keeping pupils safe has a very high priority across the school. Staff know what to do when they have any safeguarding worries about a pupil. They are vigilant and well placed to identify when pupils may need help to keep safe. Leaders follow up all concerns tenaciously. Leaders complete all relevant checks to ensure that the adults in school are safe to work with pupils.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, both in practical situations and when online and to minimise any risk of exploitation.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The curriculum in a few subjects is not as well considered. Leaders have not identified clearly the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn and the order in which they should learn this. As a result, pupils are not achieving as well as they could be in some subjects. Leaders need to continue their work to strengthen the curriculum. They need to identify with precision the knowledge they wish pupils to learn and the order in which pupils will learn this.
- Teachers do not always check what pupils know and understand before introducing new concepts or knowledge. When this happens, pupils struggle to make links in their learning and build securely on what they already know. Leaders need to ensure that teachers are confident that pupils' knowledge is secure before they introduce new knowledge or concepts.

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

School details

Unique reference number	147768
DfE registration number	936/6040
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10214668
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	9 to 14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	6
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Pathways Education Ltd
Chair	Joanne Franklin
Headteacher	Nazya Ghalib
Annual fees	£49,500
Telephone number	07384 897599
Website	www.pathways-ed.org
Email address	office@pathways-ed.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Pathways Education is an independent special school catering for pupils with a range of complex needs. Most pupils have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder or have social, emotional and/or mental health needs. All pupils who attend the school have an education, health and care plan.
- The proprietor is a private limited company with two named directors. One of the directors acts as the chair of the governing body.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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 with the proprietor, the COO, the headteacher and the school business manager. The lead inspector met with two governors, one of whom is also a director. She also spoke with an officer from the local authority who is responsible for placing pupils at the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and design technology. For each deep dive, inspectors met with the headteacher, looked at curriculum design, visited lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. For the English deep dive, the lead inspector listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during visits to classrooms, during breaktimes, and as pupils moved around the school.
- There were no responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents. An inspector spoke to parents at the start of the second day of the inspection. Inspectors also considered the views of staff during meetings with them.
- The lead inspector checked the single central record of recruitment checks and talked with leaders responsible for safeguarding. She also considered safeguarding documents and records.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including policies and documents associated with the independent school standards. The lead inspector reviewed the school's website.

Inspection team

Shazia Akram, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Alan Johnson

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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