

Inspection of Cornfield School

53 Hanworth Road, Redhill, Surrey RH1 5HS

Inspection dates:

4 to 6 October 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and the proprietor are ambitious for pupils to leave school well prepared for their future lives. However, pupils do not achieve as well as they should because of weaknesses in the quality of education. Leaders' actions to make the necessary improvements to the quality of education are not as clearly honed and well established as they need to be.

Pupils do not trust that some staff will deal with incidents of bullying and derogatory behaviour fairly. The use of exclusion is high. However, overall, pupils are happy, feel safe and have positive attitudes in classrooms. They look forward to making new friendships and learning new skills. Relationships between staff and pupils are respectful.

While pupils enjoy school, some do not attend regularly. This means that pupils do not fully benefit from the wider experiences and opportunities on offer.

Pupils learn to take responsibility. They are proud of their work to develop the school garden. Pupils have created tranquil, positive spaces, such as the 'hedgehog lodge', 'under the sea area' and 'highlight your spirit murals'. They describe these as places where they relax. Pupils make a positive contribution to the community by donating flowers to the neighbours.

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

Recently, leaders have begun to make the much-needed changes to the curriculum. However, there is still much more work to do. In too many subjects, leaders have not provided teachers with precise information about the order and sequence in which pupils should learn the important knowledge in different year groups. As a result, pupils are not well prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils study a broad range of subjects. All pupils take GCSE examinations in English, mathematics, science, art, religious education and e-safety at the end of Year 11. The curriculum also includes personal, social and health education (PSHE) and physical education.

In most lessons, pupils are easily distracted and become passive. This is because teachers do not provide pupils with work that helps them make links with what they know already. Too often, teachers do not check that pupils have fully understood what they have been taught before moving them on to new ideas. They do not address gaps in pupils' knowledge. Pupils' knowledge in many subjects is shallow. As one pupil said, 'We can't remember what we have learned because all we do is copy work off the board.'

Leaders' work to develop pupils' love of reading is in its infancy. They recognise that pupils do not read often and widely enough. Leaders have recently introduced a routine of daily reading. They are ambitious for all pupils to learn to read fluently and with comprehension. Staff introduce pupils to a range of texts across different

topics and subjects. They check for gaps in pupils' phonics knowledge and provide appropriate support to help them catch up quickly.

Leaders emphasise to pupils the importance of self-belief and perseverance. They work with pupils' placing local authorities to design a personalised careers programme. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to contribute to looking after the local area and achieving individual goals. For example, pupils develop resilience by participating in a variety of community and enterprise projects through The Prince's Trust programme.

Pupils learn about different faiths, cultures and religions. They debate topics such as age discrimination and mutual respect. Members of the newly appointed school council are beginning to work with leaders to discuss ideas to enhance the school environment. Wider opportunities, such as trips and visits, have been affected by COVID-19. Leaders are reinstating these as quickly as possible. They make sure that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Leaders have considered how staff should teach relationships and sex education (RSE). They have consulted with parents and carers about this. Pupils know what makes a healthy relationship. The school has appropriate plans in place to comply with statutory guidance on RSE and health education.

Leaders and the proprietor body do not have a clear enough oversight of the school's work. The proprietor's evaluation of the school's effectiveness is overly reliant on pupils' GCSE outcomes and information provided by the executive headteacher. Staff feel well supported by leaders and enjoy working at the school. The school meets the independent school standards.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff receive the necessary training about important safeguarding information. Staff know the pupils well. They are alert to the slightest changes in the behaviour of individual pupils and the signs that may suggest that a pupil could be at risk. Leaders work effectively with other professional agencies to help pupils get the support they need. Leaders ensure that all staff are checked appropriately and are eligible to work with children and young people. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the practical ways they are taught to keep themselves safe, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- The curriculum in most subjects is not well sequenced. Leaders have not set out clearly and precisely the order in which pupils should learn the essential knowledge. As a result, pupils are not well prepared for the next stage of their

education. Leaders need to make sure that the curriculum in all subjects is well organised and coherent.

- In most lessons, teachers do not check and make sure that pupils embed the important knowledge and make links with what they know already. They do not identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge. Pupils' learning is often too superficial. Leaders need to make sure that all staff are well trained and skilled to identify and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- Leaders have identified that pupils' love of reading is not yet fully developed. They should implement effective reading strategies across all year groups.
- Most pupils have little confidence in staff's ability to tackle incidents of bullying successfully. Pupils say that the sanctions, including the high number of exclusions, are unfair. When incidents of bullying are reported, leaders need to take robust action to ensure that these are resolved appropriately and in a timely manner.
- Pupils' attendance is too low. This means that some pupils with a history of previous non-attendance who have been placed at the school due to their complex needs remain vulnerable. Leaders need to ensure that all pupils have high attendance and benefit fully from all the opportunities that the school has to offer.
- The proprietor does not have clear oversight or a robust evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The proprietor should ensure that leaders are held to account more rigorously and sharpen their improvement and monitoring planning.

How can I feedback 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.

School details

Unique reference number	133477
DfE registration number	936/6581
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10232304
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	11
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Vivienne Spence (Cornerways Children's Services Ltd)
Headteacher	Emma Slaughter (Executive Headteacher) Candida Jarrott-Chase (Headteacher)
Annual fees	£49,863
Telephone number	01737 779 578
Website	www.cornerways.org
Email address	cornfieldschool@cornerways.org
Date of previous inspection	27 February to 1 March 2018

Information about this school

- The school has places for up to 25 girls between the ages of 11 and 18 years who have severe emotional, behavioural and mental health difficulties. Some pupils have been diagnosed with attention deficit disorders and autism spectrum disorder. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school is run by Cornerways Children's Services Ltd, which also manages residential care for children looked after.
- The current headteacher joined the school in February 2022.
- Pupils are placed at the school by a number of different local authorities.
- The school does not currently use 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.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first routine inspection the school had 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 executive headteacher, the headteacher, other senior leaders and staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during visits to classrooms, during breaktimes and as pupils moved around the school.
- There were two responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents. Inspectors also considered the views of staff during meetings with them.
- An inspector checked the single central record of recruitment checks and talked with leaders responsible for safeguarding. Inspectors 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

His Majesty's Inspector

Hilary Macdonald

His Majesty's Inspector

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 <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

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 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022