

Inspection of Burstow Park School

Antlands Lane, Burstow, Surrey RH6 9TF

Inspection dates: 4 to 6 October 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

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?

Adults tune into pupils' complex needs and provide a safe haven for all. Pupils arrive at Burstow Park needing kindness and hope. Many have suffered significant disruption to their education. Pupils are listened to, respected and valued. Some find the concept of 'school' overwhelming. Because of this, leaders produce a bespoke plan for each pupil to build their education at school incrementally.

Pupils attending on site are happy and content. Leaders' rules and routines mean that pupils do not worry about bullying and they feel safe. In lessons, pupils try and accumulate the maximum 'points' on offer to show that they are working hard and behaving appropriately. Staff are consistent in their approach. Break- and lunchtimes are carefully managed to help pupils forge friendships. Pupils can play freely outside or choose a quiet space indoors.

Preparing pupils for adulthood underpins leaders' vision. Pupils learn about travel, health and managing money. Staff help pupils develop an appreciation of the arts, as well as the enjoyment of sport, visiting places and meeting other people.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils academically and have set about improving the quality of the curriculum. However, pupils are not acquiring the core knowledge they need to leave school suitably equipped.

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

Burstow Park is an inviting environment for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The new building is well maintained, and facilities are of a high standard. Classrooms are spacious, with attention paid to lighting and acoustics. This is deliberate because of pupils' sensory needs. In corridors, calming music plays. Adults supervise all areas of the school to maintain pupils' safety.

New leaders at the school have made a promising start in making initial improvements. They expect all staff to have high expectations of pupils' conduct. Leaders ensure that appropriate support is provided to meet pupils' specific needs. Staff teach the social habits that pupils need in order to be successful. They focus on developing pupils' interactions and the way to behave. Agreed protocols are in place if a pupil requires a short break from their learning. This helps prevent disruption to other pupils' education.

Pupils' self-confidence is actively promoted by all. The personal development curriculum teaches pupils well about physical and mental health. Pupils show maturity in how they discuss issues around their personal safety and well-being. Pupils have a positive awareness of the protected characteristics and are accepting of others. Leaders promote the right culture so that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Leaders have not ensured that the school's curriculum outlines exactly what pupils need to know and remember. The sequence of knowledge is not coherently mapped out for different subjects. This then impacts on staff's clarity about what pupils should be learning year by year. Leaders are thinking about the academic end-points pupils must reach. This includes aiming for pupils to secure the right qualifications for further education courses or employment.

Some pupils are struggling to read at an age-appropriate level. Currently, teachers do not have a rigorous phonics programme to follow for the small number of pupils who are unable to read. Leaders have spotted the weaknesses in the school's reading provision, but their strategy is not yet fully implemented. Teachers' assessments are not precisely picking up pupils' reading gaps. To support independent reading, pupils can access a digital library of books. This is widening their reading diet, but it is not helping those who find reading more difficult. Consequently, some pupils are asked to read books that are too hard for them.

Before pupils start school, leaders coordinate well with other agencies. Staff work hard to reintegrate pupils back into education. This begins with each pupil's education, health and care (EHC) plan. Parents and carers are closely involved in the decision-making. Pupils' emotional needs and barriers are unpicked and transition into school is meticulously planned. Many pupils need to start part time as they acclimatise to new surroundings. Where this happens, pupils access remote education.

Nevertheless, pupils learning from home are not learning as well as they could. They are not routinely accessing the curriculum in a logical order. Often, teachers set activities that they hope will motivate pupils. Although well intended, these are not providing pupils with the knowledge practice they need. Pupils learning at home are also missing out on direct teaching. Teachers are unsure of how well these pupils are learning the intended curriculum. They are not able to pick up quickly any misconceptions that pupils may have.

Beyond the school's pastoral support, the education goals in some pupils' EHC plans are not integrated enough into the school's curriculum. Therefore, subject teachers are not familiar with what must be in place for some pupils' learning. There can be a mismatch between the content that teachers deliver and what pupils are able to do. This can lead to pupils' memory being overloaded.

The named proprietor body is not holding leaders to account effectively for the educational performance of the school. There are no mechanisms in place to challenge and seek assurances. This has led to an over-generous view of the quality of education. Furthermore, school improvement planning is not focused on the key curriculum actions that will make a difference to pupils.

Leaders have faced recruitment challenges in securing top-quality staff. The new academic year has brought new committed staff on board. Staff comment favourably on how well everyone is working together. Staff are excited for leaders' plans and the ongoing improvements being made in the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are proactive in keeping pupils safe. Leaders are knowledgeable about the risks pupils could be facing. They communicate continually about each pupil. The daily morning briefings for staff share crucial information to protect pupils. Adults are well trained. Leaders regularly check staff's understanding of policies and processes. This keeps everyone's safeguarding awareness fresh and current.

Adults who work at the school are carefully vetted. Leaders know their statutory responsibilities. They work proactively with other agencies and provide challenge when they feel that pupils are not getting the support they need. Pupils learn to keep themselves safe when online or going out to do things.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some subjects, knowledge is not planned and coherently sequenced towards key stage end-points. The academic goals from pupils' EHC plans are not consistently embedded in leaders' curriculum thinking. Consequently, the curriculum is not effectively meeting some pupils' education needs. Leaders need to ensure that pupils' specialised curriculum builds logically from pupils' starting points, with each knowledge step identified.
- Work set for pupils receiving remote education is not consistently aligned with the taught curriculum. Activities provided can be out of sync with the planned curriculum sequence. Teachers do not have a clear overview of how well all pupils off site are remembering knowledge content. This is leading to pupils falling further behind. Leaders need to ensure that when pupils receive remote education, they still learn a coherently sequenced curriculum.
- There is no rigorous, systematic phonics programme in place for pupils at the early stages of reading. Staff do not have the expertise to help pupils learn to read and pupils are not reading books that are closely matched to the sounds they need to know. Leaders need to urgently implement their planned phonics strategy and ensure that all staff are expertly trained.
- The named proprietor body, which is responsible for governance, is not holding leaders to account effectively for the educational performance of the school. The proprietor body does not have a clear insight into the impact of leaders' actions on the quality of education. The proprietor body needs to develop its knowledge and skills to ensure that robust processes are in place that provide assurances on how well pupils are learning.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	148736
DfE registration number	936/6055
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10243543
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	37
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Burstow Park School Ltd
Chair	Vivienne Spence
Headteacher	Emma Slaughter (Executive Headteacher) Melvin George (Headteacher)
Annual fees	£53,550
Telephone number	01293 226 940
Website	www.burstowparkschool.org
Email address	bps@burstowparkschool.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Burstow Park School caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Additionally, many pupils are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The executive headteacher is part-owner of Burstow Park. The headteacher joined the school in March 2022.
- Several local authorities place pupils at this school.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- This is the school's first standard inspection.

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 executive headteacher, headteacher, staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with the named proprietor body responsible for governance.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, humanities and life skills. To do this, inspectors met with subject teachers, looked at curriculum plans, had discussions with staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- Pupils across the school were observed reading to a familiar adult by the lead inspector.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors spoke with staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to examine records and actions. This included sampling a range of safeguarding documentation. He reviewed checks on the safer recruitment of adults.
- Inspectors talked to pupils from different year groups about their learning and experiences at school.
- The views of staff, pupils and parents were gathered through discussions and Ofsted's online surveys.

- Inspectors looked at the school site and scrutinised a wide range of documentary evidence to check on the statutory requirements of the independent school standards.

Inspection team

James Broadbridge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lucy English

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