

# Inspection of a good school: The Children's Trust School

Tadworth Court, Tadworth, Surrey KT20 5RU

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Inspection dates:

15 and 16 November 2022

## **Outcome**

The Children's Trust School continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils at The Children's Trust School flourish. They are supported exceptionally well to develop their communication and sense of agency. Leaders and staff have such high aspirations for pupils. Rightly, they steadfastly refuse to accept that pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are a reason that pupils should not experience life to the full. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and experiencing a vast array of stimulating activities which enrich their lives. As one parent told us, 'My child is safe, happy and thriving.'

Caring, attentive staff across the school know and understand pupils extremely well. They care deeply about pupils' well-being and make it an absolute priority to notice any signs of communication from pupils, no matter how small. Highly skilled staff interpret pupils' vocalisations, movements and expressions effectively and respond accordingly. Staff are fully aware that pupils' behaviour is a form of communication. Consequently, pupils have their needs met remarkably well.

The feeling of total respect for pupils is palpable throughout the school. Pupils' views are always considered carefully. Activities are always meaningful and appropriate for the pupil's age. Promoting and developing pupils' choice-making skills and independence is at the heart of all the school does.

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

Pupils benefit from a bespoke, tailored curriculum which suits them and their SEND very well. Leaders ensure that pupils' learning is particularly well organised and planned. Leaders have developed a school curriculum which enables pupils to build their knowledge and skills over time, in small, achievable yet aspirational steps. These steps enable pupils to successfully work towards their personal education, health and care plan (EHC plan)

end points. Adept teachers ensure that pupils' personal targets are based on detailed and accurate assessments of their progress. These targets are carefully crafted and meticulously woven throughout all aspects of the school day. Every moment is treated as an opportunity to learn and develop crucial, life-enhancing skills. Consequently, pupils make excellent progress towards their individual goals and leave school well prepared for their next stage of life.

Effective multi-disciplinary working is an absolute strength of the school. The well-organised approach to delivering therapy ensures pupils' quality of life is at the heart of all the school does. Pupils benefit greatly from the range of useful interventions and personalised support, delivered by staff with relevant, specific expertise. Specialists, including physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, music therapists and nurses, work regularly with pupils. As a result of regular class and one-to-one sessions, these specialists have an impressive level of knowledge about pupils and their holistic development. Together with the class teacher, they use this knowledge to plan pupils' provision effectively. Wherever possible, pupils and families are fully involved in any decisions.

Leaders strive to promote pupils' well-being and ensure they are as happy as possible. Recently introduced happiness and well-being profiles are used to understand what motivates a pupil and what makes them happy. Staff have put together accompanying, well-considered bags of resources, chosen to stimulate and engage pupils. Regular discussions between staff and, where possible, pupils lead to these profiles and bags being updated regularly so that they reflect pupils' changing interests. While these profiles and bags are not yet used for all pupils, this thoughtful, personalised strategy is proving very successful.

Pupils' personal development has been carefully considered. They are taught and encouraged to celebrate themselves and their different abilities, for example by using pieces of unneeded specialist equipment and turning them into pieces of celebratory art. Pupils participate in a wide range of enrichment activities, including during the school holidays. In the summer, the school 'Comicon' festival enabled pupils to take part in an exciting, age-appropriate event. They enjoyed time spent having fun with friends, such as dancing in their wheelchairs to a live DJ.

Important topics such as consent and relationships are carefully woven into the curriculum for individual pupils. Teachers use sensory stories to highlight the key messages pupils need.

Leaders have successfully created a culture where staff work collaboratively to share specialist knowledge and expertise across the school. Strong systems are in place which ensure that this extensive knowledge is clearly communicated between all staff. As a result, there is a consistency of approach across the school which successfully supports pupils to thrive.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Comprehensive training means that staff are very knowledgeable about school safeguarding systems and pupils' additional vulnerabilities as a result of their SEND. This, alongside in-depth knowledge of pupils, means staff notice and quickly record any concerns. Leaders act swiftly to address any concerns. Appropriate training means that staff know how to use specialist equipment correctly and how to help pupils safely with any physical support.

There is a multi-disciplinary approach to safeguarding across the school. Whenever appropriate, specialists from within school meet to discuss any concerns, ensuring all aspects of pupils' education, health and care needs are carefully considered. This well-coordinated approach means that pupils are extremely well looked after.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The successful happiness and well-being profiles and accompanying bags of resources have not yet been introduced across the whole school. This means that, currently, only around a third of pupils benefit from these. Leaders should ensure that this strategy is introduced for all pupils and embedded across the school.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2017.

## 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.

## Further information

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

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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	134902
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240104
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	37
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	9
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Duncan Ingram
<b>Headteacher</b>	Samantha Newton
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://thechildrenstrust.org.uk/school">thechildrenstrust.org.uk/school</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	24 and 25 May 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The Children's Trust School is a smaller-than-average special school for pupils aged two to 19. Pupils at the school have profound and multiple learning difficulties, and all pupils have an EHC plan. The school is part of a registered charity known as 'The Children's Trust'.
- Since the last inspection, the school has opened a nursery and provides education for children from the age of two.
- The school currently uses no 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the head of school, senior leaders from across the trust, subject specialist leaders, teachers, support assistants and therapists. The lead inspector also met with members of the board of trustees and governing body and spoke with an external school improvement partner.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: communication, language and literacy, personal development and creative (with a focus on music and art). For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject specialist leaders, visited a sample of lessons with senior leaders, spoke to teachers and support staff, observed pupils and looked at evidence of their learning.
- The lead inspector met with multi-disciplinary staff, including a physiotherapist, an occupational therapist, speech and language therapists, a music therapist and a nurse.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including for individual pupils. This included EHC plans, annual review documentation, therapy reports and individual pupil targets.
- To look closely at safeguarding in the school, inspectors spoke to senior leaders, staff and trustees/governors. The lead inspector looked at a range of safeguarding documentation and systems, including the school's single central record, which contains details of recruitment checks.
- Inspectors considered three free-text responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. They also considered the views of 47 staff who completed the Ofsted survey.
- The inspectors only inspected the education provision at this school.

### **Inspection team**

Maxine McDonald-Taylor, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Shaun Jarvis

His Majesty's Inspector

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